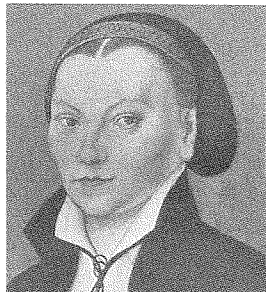


Women In League With the Lord

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*The Story of Lutheran
Women in Mission
and Their Christian
Predecessors*

Marlys Taege Moberg



Organizational meeting for LWML

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—Marlys Taege Moberg

Preface

Encouraged by Example

When women of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) began organizing district mission leagues in the 1930s, their leaders developed topical program materials to encourage them. Besides mission fields and charities, the topics covered women of the Bible and women in Christian history.

Among those featured were Monica, Katherine Luther, Jenny Lind, Mary Moffat, Elizabeth von Muenden, Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Fry, Queen Louise of Prussia, Mrs. C.F.W. Walther, Olympia Morara, Clara Barton, and Argula von Grumbach. Some are barely known today.

Those early districts became part of the new Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) in 1942. As we look back over more than 60 years of League progress, it seems appropriate to begin once more with women of eras past who played important roles in the extension of Christianity around the world—not only those in the Bible but those who stood up for the cause of Christ in the centuries before there was a Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

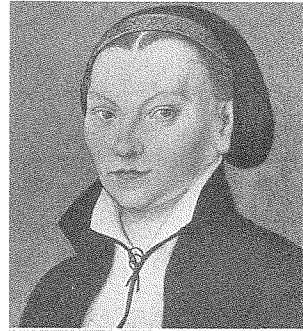
Accordingly, this book is essentially a prelude and a postlude to *Women in God's Service (WINGS)*, the story of the LWML published on its 50th anniversary in 1991. Like *WINGS*, this manuscript is written in thanksgiving to our Triune God:

- To the Father/Creator for the talents He has given to women,
- To Jesus Christ for sacrificing His life for all people, both men AND women, and
- To the Holy Spirit for guiding the leaders of the LWML and encouraging its members to reach out with their time, talent and treasure to help spread the Good News to everyone everywhere.

The history of women in the LWML and throughout the entire Christian church on earth is an amazing story of faith, courage, patience, dedication, martyrdom, human concern, vision, and countless accomplishments locally and worldwide.

May the stories of faithful women past and present encourage us “to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly” (Philippians 1:14). May they also inspire us to greater service to our loving Savior! To God be the glory!

—Marlys Taege Moberg

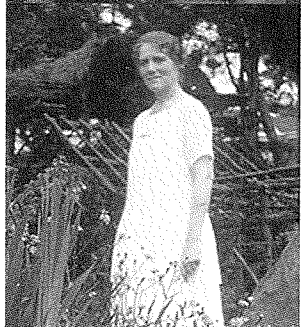
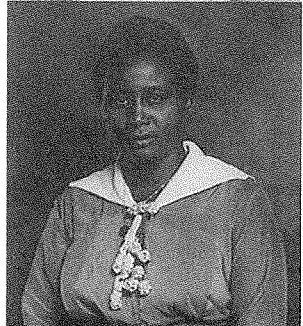
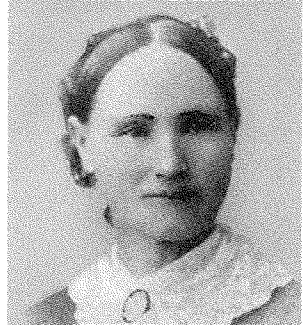
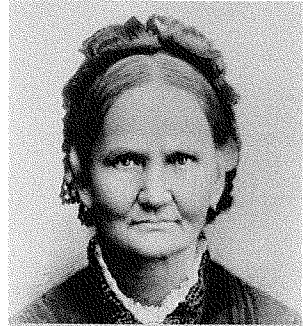


From Good News to Great Challenges

God uses women as well as men to further His cause on earth. In the Bible, we find women among “The Wise,” the prophets, the judges, the teachers, and the exceptional servants of Christ. After Christ’s ascension, women fervently defended the faith and, in league with the Lord, withstood severe testing, even death, rather than deny their faith. In Europe and later in America, whatever the cost, they dared to obey.

The three chapters in this section trace the activities of women who challenged popes and authorities, who dared to call for reform, who joined crusades, who sought freedom on American shores, and who became missionaries. Among them were Lutheran women whose work has often gone unrecognized in modern times.

Their stories cause us to ask, “Lord, what would You have me do today? What am I willing to risk for You?”



Chapter One

Models for Christian Living

(Women in Bible Times)

Live Joyfully as Salt and Light (2005)

Lord of my Heart...our Hope (2003)

Because He First Loved Me (2001)

Let Freedom Ring (1999)

Hold Up The Light (1997)

As those themes of recent national conventions illustrate, members of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) enjoy their kinship with the Lord and share a desire to carry out the Great Commission. Like their predecessors in Scripture and in Christian history, they are "Women—In League with the Lord."

Their motivation, like that of Christian women over the centuries, comes from their love for the Lord and His love for all people, both male and female. As Lutheran women today move forward in mission, they are encouraged by the example of faithful women in both the Old and New Testaments—women who worshipped and shared their wisdom, women who prophesied and gave of their time and talent, women who were strong and capable, women whose worth was affirmed again and again by the Lord's demonstrations of care, compassion and concern despite their sins and imperfections.

The principles of godly living exhibited in their lives have formed the foundations of the LWML and guided its members in learning, teaching, leading, praying, sharing, serving, showing hospitality, exhibiting moral courage and supporting the Lord's work.

Who were these Biblical women? What do they teach us?

Learning God's Word

In the days before there were written Scriptures, God spoke directly to

His people, including Eve, Sarah and Hagar and He provided for them despite their transgressions. Even though forced to leave the only home she had ever known, **Eve** received clothing made of animal skins—leather or furs designed by the Lord (Genesis 3). Despite her amazed disbelief, God blessed **Sarah** with a child at age 90, and He assured **Hagar** and her son of a future when they were forced by Sarah to flee into the wilderness (Genesis 21). In all three cases God met their needs, as He still does for women today.

When Christ came, He opened the doors for women to study the Word. As He began teaching in the home of Mary and Martha, **Mary** sat at His feet to listen. Martha, busily preparing the meal, approached the Lord, asking, “Don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” (Luke 10:40).

Christ’s response was not what Martha expected: “...only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:42). Christ considered it important for women as well as men to deepen their understanding of the Gospel message! Commentators have called His response the cornerstone to the changed status of women.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that **Martha** was a woman of faith, for when Lazarus died and Jesus was late in arriving, it was Martha who ran out to greet Him with her strong testimony, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world” (John 11:27).

Throughout its history, the study of God’s Word has been a strong emphasis of the LWML.

Teaching and Telling the Good News

Among the first persons to whom Jesus revealed that He is “the Messiah” and one of the first to tell others was the **Samaritan Woman** at the well. So excited was she by Jesus’ words that she left her water jar and went back to her town to tell everyone, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” (John 4:29). Many believed because of what she said.

Young women, like Philip the Evangelist’s “**four unmarried daughters** who proclaimed God’s message” (Acts 21:9, TEV) and the **young Israelite girl** in 2 Kings 5, also can be witnesses. The latter was a servant to the wife of Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army. He suffered

from a serious skin disease. In concern, the girl spoke up, “I wish that my master could go to the prophet who lives in Samaria! He would cure him of his disease” (v. 3, TEV). Naaman went, followed Elisha’s directions, was healed and began to worship the Lord.

The Apostle Paul mentions women who were “co-laborers” with him in sharing the Good News. They included **Euodia** and **Syntychē**, who labored at his side in the cause of the Gospel (Philippians 4:2-3); **Junias**, a relative who was imprisoned with Paul (Romans 16:7); **Tryphēna** and **Tryphosa**, “those women who work hard in the Lord” (Romans 16:12); his “dear friend **Persis**, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord” (Romans 16:12)...and of course **Prisca (Priscilla)**.

So highly respected was Priscilla that in his letters Paul usually mentions her name before that of her husband Aquila. Like Paul, the two were tentmakers, and they invited him to stay and work with them in Corinth, where the local church met in their home. When Paul went on to Ephesus, they followed, hosted a new congregation there, and according to Romans 16:3-4, they risked their lives for Paul. Priscilla helped teach the learned Apollos, explaining “to him the way of God more adequately” (Acts 18:24-26).

Paul also cites **Eunice and Lois**, the mother and grandmother of Timothy, who are credited with teaching him the Scripture from infancy on. Women today play a major role in teaching children the Good News at home, in Sunday schools and in parochial schools, as well as in hosting and leading adult Bible studies in their homes, LWML societies and congregations. Following in the footsteps of the **women at the tomb**, who were told to “go and tell” (Matthew 28:10), Leaguers today strive to be ready always to share the Good News that Christ is risen and that all who believe will have eternal life with Him in heaven.

Leading

In the Old Testament, the Lord provided three types of leaders for His people: the priests with the Law, the prophets and prophetesses with visions and the Word, and the wise with their counsel (Jeremiah 18:18; Ezekiel 7:26). Among the wise were **a woman from Tekoa** (2 Samuel 14), who served as a mediator in reconciling David and his eldest son, Absalom, and the **woman at Abel** (2 Samuel 20), who averted the destruction of her city by reasoning with David’s soldiers as they besieged Abel. Learning that they were seeking Sheba, who had started a

rebellion against David, the woman promised to throw Sheba's head over the wall to them. Then she persuaded the people of her city to kill Sheba, and the city was saved.

After the Israelites escaped from Egypt through the Red Sea, **Miriam** led the women in songs and dances of praise to God (Exodus 15:20-21).

When the temple was renovated in King Josiah's day, the Book of the Law that God had given through Moses was rediscovered. The king became extremely concerned, even tearing his robes in dismay when portions of it were read to him. Immediately he designated the priest and three other men to "consult the Lord for me and for the people who still remain in Israel and in Judah. Find out about the teachings of this book" (2 Chronicles 34:21, TEV).

The men went not to the male prophets, but to **Huldah**, a prophetess who lived in a newer part of Jerusalem. She warned them of the Lord's anger, but assured them that because Josiah had repented and instituted reforms, God had heard his prayer and the people would be spared any punishment until after his death. Historians believe Huldah, a brilliant woman, taught school in Jerusalem.

At a time when men like Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, were alive and available for the post, God appointed **Deborah** as judge and ruler over His people (Judges 4 and 5). With 10,000 men under the direction of Barak, Deborah led her people to victory over the Canaanites, and God blessed her rule with peace for 40 years.

Phoebe, identified as a diakonos (a church officer) and a prostatis (one who presides), is believed to have carried Paul's "Letter to the Romans" to Rome. Paul asked the believers there to "give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me" (Romans 16:1-2).

Women in leadership roles today depend on the guidance and inspiration of the Lord as promised in Joel 2:28—"I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days." Their goal as they hold office and serve in LWML societies is to exhibit the qualities of the woman in Proverbs 31:26—"She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue."

Praying

Following Biblical models, LWML members have prayed and depended on God's resulting guidance for every aspect of the League's program. They are encouraged to pray because of the many instances in Scripture where Christ responded to the requests of women who sought His help, including the **woman who endured curvature of the spine** for 18 years (Luke 13:11-13), the **woman with the flow of blood** for 12 years (Mark 5:25-34), and the **woman with the demon-possessed daughter** (Mark 7:24-30).

In the Old Testament, **Hannah**, the most loved wife of Elkanah, frequently wept and refused to eat because she had no child. She also prayed regularly and vowed that if the Lord would give her a son, she would give him to the Lord for all the days of his life. So fervently did she pour out her soul to the Lord that the priest at the temple thought she was drunk (1 Samuel 1:12-15).

In time Hannah conceived and gave birth to Samuel. True to her promise, she dedicated him to the Lord, and Samuel began his life of service in the temple after he was weaned, probably about age three. In her prayer of gratitude Hannah declared, "There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides You; there is no Rock like our God" (1 Samuel 2:2).

Anna, a prophetess, spent every day in the temple, fasting, praying and worshipping night and day. When Mary and Joseph brought Baby Jesus to the temple for circumcision, Anna recognized the Lord, "gave thanks to God, and spoke about the child to all who were waiting for God to redeem Jerusalem" (Luke 2:36-38, TEV). For Anna, age was no deterrent. She was 84 years old and had been widowed after just seven years of marriage.

"I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said" (Luke 1:38). With these words, **Mary** responded in faith to the angel's message that she would become the mother of the Savior. Nevertheless, she was deeply troubled, and with good reason. She lived in a land where unwed mothers could be stoned to death. When her fiancé Joseph heard the news, he decided to put her away privately—until an angel also spoke to him.

But no angel appeared to the relatives and neighbors! Life could not have been easy for Mary. Yet while visiting her cousin Elizabeth, she burst into her "Magnificat," that beautiful prayer of praise which begins,

“My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name” (Luke 1:46, 47, 49).

For the rest of her life, Mary undoubtedly depended on prayer—as she gave birth in a manger far from home, traveled to a foreign country to save her young Son’s life, worried when she discovered the 12-year-old Jesus was not in their homeward-bound caravan, grieved while watching His death on the cross, and then rejoiced at His resurrection.

Showing Moral Courage

Throughout Scripture, God commends women who have the courage of their convictions and stand up for godly principles. In Exodus 1, **Shiprah and Puah**, two Egyptian midwives, were ordered by the king to kill all the Hebrew boy babies as they were born and allow only the girls to live. However, the midwives respected the Lord and did not follow the king’s order, and the Lord blessed them.

Amazingly, **Jael** (Judges 4 and 5) is described as “most blessed of women” (5:24). Obviously, the intent of those words is not to encourage women to kill their opponents, but to inspire them to be courageous in challenging times. When the Israelites were fighting the Canaanites, Sisera, the enemy commander, sought refuge in Jael’s tent. After he fell asleep, Jael drove a tent peg through his head. Thanks to her courage and strength, victory was assured for Israel.

Abigail, a wise woman of principle and honor, courageously chose the moral route when Nabal, her selfish, ill-tempered husband declined to give David and his men anything in payment for protecting Nabal’s flock of 4,000 sheep and goats. Learning that David was planning to kill her husband in revenge, Abigail gathered bread, wine, and other gifts without her husband’s knowledge and presented them to David, so that when he became king, he would not have a guilty conscience for needless bloodshed. David thanked the Lord for her good sense, but Nabal had a stroke and died when he heard what she had done. David then married Abigail.

During the Jews’ Babylonian captivity, King Xerxes of Persia invited all his nobles and officials from 127 provinces to visit the palace for six months. While **Queen Vashti** entertained the women separately, he concluded with a men’s banquet that lasted seven days. Wine flowed in goblets of gold, and each man was allowed to drink as much as he wanted. By the seventh day, the king was in “high spirits” and decided to have

Queen Vashti display her beauty to the men. A woman of principle, the modest queen refused, undoubtedly realizing there would be dire consequences—and there were! In anger, the king divorced her (Esther 1).

Others, like **Esther**, Vashti's successor, were willing to face death for the Lord's cause. Not realizing that Esther was Jewish, King Xerxes was coerced into signing a decree that all the Jewish people living in his kingdom should be killed. You must plead with the king to have mercy on your people, Esther was told—but it wasn't that simple. By law, anyone who went to the inner court of the palace without being summoned could be put to death. Courageously Esther accepted the responsibility, saying, "If I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16). Much to her relief, the king was pleased to see her and generously said, "Tell me what you want, and you shall have it—even if it is half my empire" (5:3). Through her intervention, God's chosen people were spared.

LWML founders also exhibited courage and patience for more than a decade as they prepared and sought permission to launch the organization. Initially, many men doubted its value and feared that the women were trying to take over the church. Eventually the majority recognized the blessings that would result and gave approval.

Practicing Hospitality

Jesus enjoyed hospitality in numerous homes, including that of Mary and Martha and the house where Peter lived with his **wife and mother-in-law**. On one occasion (Mark 1:29-31), the mother-in-law was in bed with a fever when Jesus arrived. He went to her, "took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them."

When Jesus ate at the home of a Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50), a **woman** brought an alabaster jar full of perfume and poured it on his feet after washing them with her tears and drying them with her hair. Commending her, Jesus forgave her sins.

With only a bit of flour and olive oil left in her home, the **Widow of Zarephath** (1 Kings 17) was about to prepare her last meal for herself and her son. Then she expected to starve to death. However, when Elijah asked her to prepare a small cake of bread for him first, she obliged. As Elijah promised, the flour was not used up, her jug of oil did not run dry, and she was also able to provide food every day for Elijah. Later, when her son died, Elijah prayed and the boy was restored to life.

Whenever Elisha was in Shunem, he was invited to stay for a meal at

the home of a well-to-do couple (2 Kings 4:8 ff.). Recognizing that Elisha was a holy man of God, the **Shunamite woman** said to her husband, “Let’s make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us.” Needless to say, Elisha was appreciative.

Lydia also exhibited hospitality. After this businesswoman and the people of her house learned about Jesus and were baptized, Lydia invited Paul, Timothy and Luke to stay in her home.

Besides Priscilla, at least two other New Testament women hosted churches in their homes: **Nympha** in Laodicea (Colossians 4:15) and **Apphia**, with her husband Philemon (Philemon 2).

In a similar vein, LWML members have welcomed missionaries into their homes as the missionaries traveled to and from their assignments. Gracious Christian hospitality also is evident at every LWML gathering, whether it be a local committee meeting or a national convention attracting thousands.

Trusting, Serving and Supporting

Biblical women supported the Lord’s cause with finances and hard work. **The poor widow**, who donated her last two copper coins to the temple treasury, was commended by Christ because she gave all she had (Mark 12:41-44).

Perhaps she knew how the Lord had supplied the needs of the **prophet’s widow** (2 Kings 4:1-7) who had only a little oil left and a creditor was coming to take her two boys as his slaves. Hearing her need, Elisha told her to gather empty jars from her neighbors and then fill them from her meager supply. The oil kept flowing until every jar was full. Then Elisha said, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left.”

God provided for women in other ways too. Through the **five daughters of Zelophehad**, God established the right of women to inherit property after they settled in the Promised Land. When their father died, the five took their case to Moses, Eleazar the priest, the tribal leaders and the whole community, asking, “Just because he had no sons, why should our father’s name disappear from Israel? Give us property among our father’s relatives” (Numbers 27:4, TEV). Moses presented their request to the Lord, and the Lord agreed they were right.

Women in turn did much to support the Lord’s cause and meet the

needs of the people. Ephraim's daughter, **Sheerah**, built the towns of Upper and Lower Beth Horon and Uzen Sheerah (1 Chronicles 7:24). The **daughters of Shallum** helped rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 3:12).

And, of course, there were the **women who followed Jesus** and ministered to Him. They included "women who had been healed of evil spirits and diseases: **Mary (who was called Magdalene)**, from whom seven demons had been driven out; **Joanna**, whose husband Chuza was an officer in Herod's court; and **Susanna and many other women** who used their own resources to help Jesus and his disciples" (Luke 8:3, TEV).

Dorcas, a disciple in Joppa, was always doing good and helping the poor (Acts 9:36-43). When she died, all the widows cried and showed Peter the shirts and coats Dorcas had made for them. Peter, in the first raising of the dead after the Ascension of Christ, directed her to get up. She opened her eyes and sat up. As the news spread, many people believed.

Trusting that the Lord will also meet their needs today, LWML members have likewise generously given their time and talent—and millions of dollars for missions around the world.

Jesus: Inclusive, Affirming, Forgiving

The great motivator for women through the ages and for Lutheran Women in Mission today is the love and forgiveness that Christ offers to all believers now and in eternity. The four women listed in His lineage—Bathsheba, Rahab, Ruth and Tamar—teach us much about God's inclusiveness and forgiveness.

Bathsheba, who committed adultery with King David at his invitation, became pregnant with his child. After having her husband killed by placing him in the front battle lines, David married Bathsheba. Their first son died within a week after birth, but a later son, Solomon, became the next king and an ancestor of Jesus.

Rahab, a prostitute in Jericho, lived in a house built into the city wall. When the Hebrews sent two spies to Jericho, she hid them in her home and helped them escape. As a result, she and her family were saved when Jericho was destroyed. She later married one of the spies and became the mother of Boaz and thereby an ancestor of Jesus.

Ruth, a resident of Moab and thus a Gentile, foreigner and heathen, married a son of Naomi and Elimelech when this Hebrew couple moved

to Moab during a famine in Israel. After Elimelech and both of their sons died, Naomi returned to her homeland accompanied by Ruth, her daughter-in-law. There Ruth met and married the wealthy Boaz. Their son Jesse was the grandfather of King David.

Tamar, a widow, became an unwed mother by seducing her father-in-law after he failed to follow the custom of the day and require another of his sons to impregnate her so her husband could have an heir. She then gave birth to twins, one of whom became an ancestor of Jesus.

Throughout Scripture, as with these four, the Lord has affirmed the value of all women, who, like men, were created in His image (Genesis 1:27). He gave women opportunities and responsibilities of great importance in the work of His kingdom on earth. LWML women today have responded like those of the past—with service and sacrifice, through prayer and praise, and in mission and ministry, as subsequent chapters will demonstrate.

Chapter Two

From Martyrs to Reformers

(Christian Women in European History)

As God's Good News spread throughout the world after Christ's ascension, faithful men and women began dedicating their lives to serving the Lord, despite the challenges involved. For some it meant martyrdom. Knowing Christ's prediction, "If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20), they accepted it willingly as an honor.

Early Martyrs

A number of the early Christian martyrs were women. They included:

Blandina, a frail, young slave, taken into custody with her Christian master in Lyons, France (then Gaul); died in 177. Under Emperor Marcus Aurelius, Christians were persecuted and accused of incest and cannibalism, probably because of a misunderstanding of Holy Communion. After being tortured in an attempt to get her to renounce her faith, Blandina was taken into the amphitheater and bound to a cross-shaped stake to be devoured by wild beasts. Amazingly, according to the historian Eusebius, none of the animals touched her. After several beatings, she was taken down and brought back daily to watch the torture of other martyrs. Finally she was thrown in front of a bull, which mauled and gored her to death. Observers agreed that no woman had ever been forced to endure so much for so long. Throughout the ordeal, she was sustained by intense prayer and by reminding her torturers, "I am a Christian and nothing vile is done by us." Her courage and prayers were an inspiration to other martyrs.

Perpetua, a woman from a wealthy family, and **Felicitas**, her slave, who was pregnant when she was arrested (both died in 202 or 203). The 22-year-old Perpetua was the mother of a baby son, whom she nursed in prison. Details of Perpetua's prison experiences are recorded in a diary, one of the few remaining writings by a woman from this period.

Perpetua's father tried to convince her to renounce her faith, but she refused and was baptized in prison. Because it was illegal to kill a pregnant woman, the two women and others arrested with them prayed that Felicitas would give birth early so she could die with them rather than separately at a later date. Their prayers were answered. The two women faced a mad cow in the arena, and then a gladiator was sent in to complete the kill. As he approached Perpetua, his hand trembled, so she grabbed the sword and directed it to her throat. The tombs of the two women were discovered in Carthage in 1907 and a basilica has been erected over the spot.

Lists of martyrs contain records of many other women who were beheaded, tossed into rivers after being weighted down with stones, crucified, burned with hot irons, and killed by other sadistic means. Their crime: they refused to deny Christ or to sacrifice to idols during the second and third centuries in the Roman Empire.

Most people today think of martyrdom as something of the past, but historians say that more Christians died or suffered for their faith in the 20th century than in all the previous years together. It continues today around the world.

Promoters of the Faith

Thankfully, most women were not forced into martyrdom during the early centuries of the Christian church, and many made significant contributions to the spread of the faith. Some established convents that provided opportunities for women to receive an education at a time when it normally was available only among the nobility.

Among those who founded the Roman Catholic orders of nuns were mystics and ascetics who focused on prayer and contemplation, but most chose goals of service and charity. Those who were extremely pious followed the example of St. Francis and determined never to own property but to exist on day-to-day donations as they meditated, prayed and/or served the poor.

Among the most notable women who helped to extend the Christian faith were:

Helena (225–330), mother of the first Christian emperor, Constantine (274–337). After becoming a Christian, she devoted her life to helping the poor and aiding prisoners. When she was almost 80, Helena traveled throughout the Palestinian and Sinai regions, encouraging the establish-

ment and spread of the Christian faith. Sometimes termed the first female archeologist, she sought out the original locations associated with the life of Jesus and then oversaw the construction of churches that Constantine ordered built at Bethlehem, Calvary, Bethany and the Mount of Olives to mark those sites. A pagan temple to Aphrodite covered the areas that her excavations determined to be the site of Jesus' tomb and resurrection. Constantine had it torn down and replaced by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Since then, it has been destroyed by earthquakes and conquerors and subsequently rebuilt several times.

Catherine of Alexandria (early 4th century), a teenage convert in Egypt. Catherine was an intelligent and courageous woman who rebuked the emperor for persecuting Christians. He called in 50 learned philosophers to debate with her. Some of them were converted, as were 200 of his soldiers. Angered, the emperor threw her in prison. When the empress visited her there, she was converted. As a result, Catherine was sentenced to die on a spiked wheel. The wheel broke as they placed her on it, so she was beheaded.

Macrina (327–379) of Pontus, one of the areas to which the First Letter of Peter was written. When the man to whom her parents had betrothed her at age 12 died, she determined to devote her life to prayer, meditation and works of charity. After the death of her father, she and her mother formed a community of women who shared Christian goals. Macrina often brought poor and hungry women home to be nursed and sheltered. Most eventually joined the community, as did numerous women of means. After her mother died, Macrina was chiefly responsible for the upbringing of her ten younger brothers, three of whom became bishops and referred to her as “The Teacher.”

Monica (331–387), the mother of St. Augustine, the noted 4th century bishop, theologian, philosopher, orator and scholar. He credits her prayers for his conversion to the Christian faith. He described her as “womanly in her dress but virile in her faith, mature in her serenity, motherly in her love, Christian in her piety” (Augustine, Confessions, 3.11-12).

Paula (347–404), a rich Roman widow who, with her daughter **Eustochium**, made a pilgrimage in 385 to Africa and Israel. They then settled in Bethlehem where they befriended and financially assisted Jerome. Paula devoted herself to the study of Scripture, which Jerome said she knew by heart. She used her wealth for works of charity and to

establish a convent for nuns and a guesthouse for pilgrims in Bethlehem. Having learned Greek as a child, she studied Hebrew in Bethlehem and assisted Jerome with his translation of the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Latin. It became the Vulgate, the official translation of the medieval Catholic Church.

Princess Olga of Kiev (879–969), credited with helping prevent Russia from turning Islamic. When her husband, Igor I, was assassinated in 954, Olga became regent for her son, Svyatoslav. She executed Igor’s murderers and ruled for the next 20 years, implementing fiscal and other reforms. Possibly already a convert to Christianity, she visited Constantinople and in 957 was baptized there. She returned as a passionate evangelist and attempted to lead her people to the faith. Although her efforts failed, due in part to her son’s opposition, a remnant of strong believers remained.

When her grandson Vladimir became ruler, he realized that a common faith could give his country unity. Legend says that he sent messengers to investigate the three great faiths of the Middle East: Islam, Judaism, and the Roman and Orthodox branches of Christianity. The envoys decided against Judaism and Islam because of their dietary restrictions. They termed Roman Catholicism “too simple,” but the Orthodox worship in Istanbul made them feel as if they were in heaven. They reported that it was “impossible to find on earth any splendor greater than this....Never shall we be able to forget so great a beauty.” Vladimir accepted their report, converted, and became a more compassionate person. The Orthodox Christian faith took root and spread to Northeastern Europe and Northwest Asia.

Margaret of Scotland (1050–1093), described as the woman who “civilized” that country. The daughter of an exiled member of British royalty, Margaret arrived in Scotland aboard a refugee ship. There she met and married King Malcolm III. A devout woman, it is said that she secretly went to a cave each night to pray for her husband. Her godly influence transformed him, his court and the nation. The couple prayed together, took in orphans, invited the poor to dine at their table (as many as 300 at a time), and set an example of personal worship for the court. They also founded churches, hospices, monasteries, and almshouses throughout the country. At her insistence, a council of church leaders was called to correct religious abuses that abounded. To attract people to Christianity, she

encouraged the start of new churches and improved existing ones.

Elizabeth of Hungary (1207–1231), who is said to have worked herself to death caring for the poor. Betrothed to Louis IV of Thuringia (Germany) at age four, she was married at 14. Impressed by her devoutness, her husband took as his motto, “Piety, Chastity, Justice.” In the spring of 1226, when floods, famine, and pestilence wrought havoc in Thuringia while her husband was in Italy, she assumed control of affairs, distributing money, opening the royal granaries and even giving state robes and ornaments to the poor. In order to care for the needy, she built a 28-bed hospital and daily helped nurse the patients, while at the same time feeding 900 poor people at the palace gates. She also opened Eastern Europe’s first orphanage and personally cared for lepers.

Catherine of Genoa (1447–1510). Married at 16 to a pleasure-loving spendthrift who reduced them to bankruptcy, Catherine turned in faith to the Lord, and her example motivated her husband to change his ways. They then moved to a hospital where they devoted themselves to works of charity. After her husband’s death, Catherine took over the management of the hospital. She and the other Catherine’s in this chapter have been declared to be saints by the Roman Catholic Church.

Crusaders

After control of Jerusalem passed to the Turks in 1071, a Byzantine emperor appealed to European Christians for aid in reclaiming the Holy Land from the Muslims. At least nine crusades took place from 1099 through 1291 at the encouragement of popes and kings. Only the first was successful, but even that success was temporary. Eventually a truce left the Muslims in control, but Christians remained free to visit their own religious shrines.

Not only men but also large numbers of women participated in the Holy Land Crusades, either with their husbands or traveling on their own with their husbands’ permission. During the Second Crusade, **Queen Eleanor** of France, accompanied by 300 of her female servants, went along to tend the wounded. Meanwhile women who remained at home took on new responsibilities as they headed households, castles, and kingdoms.

Sparked by a boy in France and another in Germany, thousands of children launched their own Crusade in 1212. Although some men and women accompanied them, most of the boys and girls never returned home. Some fell victim to unscrupulous individuals who sold them into

slavery, while others died of hunger and disease.

The Crusades led to other military expeditions sanctioned or promoted by successive Catholic popes against Jews, Spanish Muslims, European “heretics” (Protestants), and Baltic “pagans.”

Supporters of Reform

Many of the popes and clerics from the 10th through the 16th centuries indulged in murder, theft, drunkenness, and sexual sins. As morality deteriorated in the Catholic Church, it was often women who first spoke out against the corruption. Among those who promoted reform were:

Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), a powerful abbess, an outspoken evangelist, author, composer, musician, artist, doctor, theologian, and consultant to bishops, popes, and kings in Germany. Frustrated by the corruption of the Catholic Church and the immorality of the clergy, Hildegard urged the people to repent and to depend on Scripture as their authority and on Christ for salvation.

Catherine of Siena (1347–1380). Unafraid of authority and fearless in the face of death, Catherine influenced popes, kings and queens to support what she understood to be the will of God. Before she was 20, she began to work with lepers and served the sick and dying. She is remembered especially for her selfless efforts during the Black Plague and for persuading the pope to return his headquarters from France to Rome. That move brought a degree of peace to the warring Papal States in Italy. Catherine prayed daily for church unity and risked death by her fearless letters to the authorities of her time. She was unafraid, she said, because she trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ, not in herself. She dared to tell one pope that he needed to control his temper, and she told another to be manly and stand up for what is right.

Vittoria Colonna (1490–1547), Italian poet, advocate of religious reform, and one of the foremost female writers of the Renaissance. Noted for her religious sonnets and her meditations on the life of Christ, she was one of the first women to write religious poetry. She is acclaimed for making goodness attractive and religion interesting. She was also a close friend and inspiration to Michelangelo in his senior years. The artist addressed sonnets to her, made drawings for her, and spent long hours in her company.

Margaret of Navarre (1492–1549), an ardent supporter of religious liberty and church reform. An author and patron of artists and religious

reformers, she served as a mediator between Roman Catholics and Protestants. She has been called “The First Modern Woman” and “Godmother of the Reformation,” but she called herself, “The Prime Minister of the Poor.” The embodiment of charity, she and her second husband, King Henry II of Navarre, financed the education of needy students. She also influenced him to set up a public works system that became a model for France. Although they remained Roman Catholic, their daughter, Jeanne d’Albert (1528–1572), made a public confession of her Protestant faith on Christmas Day 1560.

Lutheran Supporters of the Reformation

As the teachings of Luther and other reformers spread throughout Europe, nuns in convents began seeking freedom from their rigid rules. One of these was **Katherine von Bora** (1499–1552). Katie’s mother died shortly after her birth. When her father remarried, he placed her in a convent at age five or six.

There she not only learned farming but also how to write German and understand Latin. When she and seven other nuns heard about the exciting changes taking place in the religious world, they began to long for a different life. Their relatives refused to help them leave the convent, so they communicated with Luther. Tradition says that Luther contacted the merchant who delivered barrels of herring to the convent. After a delivery, he concealed the nuns in the empty barrels and brought them out. All except Katie, who was very particular, soon found husbands. She let it be known that Martin Luther would be



Katherine von Bora

acceptable, and after two years, he proposed to her.

As Luther’s wife, Katie managed their home, formerly a monastery with 40 rooms on the first floor alone. She also was an excellent hostess, entertaining as many as 120 people at a time. An amazing woman, Katie maintained her own pond to supply fish for the family table, an orchard to provide fruit and nuts, and a barnyard complete with chickens, ducks,

pigs, and cows, even doing the slaughtering herself on occasion. She also raised herbs in her garden for use as medicines, and even though she had spent her youth in a convent, she knew how to brew beer.

“Best of all, she succeeded in managing her husband—something a succession of popes were unable to do,” comments Charles Ludwig. In his article, “Queen of the Reformation,” he says, “Katie Luther was as necessary to the Reformation as the newly invented printing press.” Calling her his “bright and morning star,” Luther said, “I would not exchange Katie for France or Venice. God has given her to me” (*The Lutheran Journal*, Winter 1978, pp. 13-16).

Other women also encouraged and supported Luther and the various reformers:

Argula von Grumbach (1492–1568), writer and German “lobbyist” for the reformers. Frustrated by her husband’s complacency with the system, she wrote letters to university leaders, city councils and noblemen regarding the tensions within the Catholic Church. At age 10, her father gave her a rare German Bible, but a friar told her not to study it because she would find it confusing. As she grew older and became a lady-in-waiting to the queen in Munich, she began reading Scripture in earnest. Although her husband remained Catholic, she placed all four of her children in Protestant schools.

Influenced by Luther’s writings, she came to the defense of reformers who agreed with him and urged university leaders to follow Scripture, not church traditions, in dealing with the reformers. When an 18-year-old university student was arrested and made to renounce his support of Luther’s teachings, Argula challenged the school’s actions. Her letter of complaint, citing over 80 Scripture references, soon found its way into pamphlet form, thanks to the advent of the printing press. As she continued to write, it is estimated that 30,000 copies of her articles were in circulation within two years.

Although her writing did not transform the religious face of Bavaria, she is remembered for her emphasis on Scripture and her support of the priesthood of all believers, including women. Gospelnet.com notes that theologians of her day called her “a wretched and pathetic daughter of Eve,” “a female desperado,” and “an arrogant devil,” but reformers compared her with Deborah, Huldah and the daughters of Philip and viewed her as pious and “a Christian woman who knows the Divine Word better

than clergy.” Luther referred to her as “Argula, the follower of Christ.” Because she would not disavow the teachings of Luther, she was eventually banished from the country.

Katherine Zell (1497–1562), writer and hospitable hostess to Reformers. Married to a Catholic priest who later became a Lutheran pastor, Katherine offered food and lodging to the Protestant travelers and floods of refugees who came through Strasbourg. In fact, during one three-week period, 60 victims of religious persecution benefited from her hospitality at the parsonage. She enjoyed talking with her guests and, even before Luther posted his 95 Theses, she was so outspoken on spiritual issues that she was accused of disturbing the peace. Because her husband was excommunicated for marrying her, she wrote a defense of clerical marriage. Later she published a tract to encourage women whose husbands were exiled due to their Protestant faith. She also wrote hymns, campaigned for better-run hospitals, and visited the troops in the field during the Peasants’ War.

Elizabeth von Muenden (1510–1558), Lutheran convert, writer and reformer. Married at age 15 to a 55-year-old Catholic duke, Erich I, Elizabeth adopted the evangelical (Lutheran) faith, celebrating Communion in a Lutheran rite for the first time in 1538 and often thereafter. When Erich died in 1540, Elizabeth ruled for her 12-year-old son, Erich II. In cooperation with the reformers, she developed guidelines and orders of service for Protestant worship throughout the duchy. She also wrote hymns. After her son came of age and ascended the throne, he restored the ceremonies of the Catholic Church, much to his mother’s chagrin. Later when her son was conquered, Elizabeth was banished. She died in poverty.

When the Reformation reached England, some women quit attending Mass and for their defiance were imprisoned and burned at the stake for refusal to recant. One woman, **Joan Waste** of Derby, was blind. Although she could not read, her dearest desire as a child was to have a Bible. By helping her father make ropes, she eventually saved enough of her earnings to purchase a New Testament. She hired a 70-year old man in debtors’ prison to read to her daily, and she memorized long passages. When the Catholic Queen Mary took over the throne in 1553, the fires of persecution were rekindled. Because Joan no longer believed the Catholic doctrine regarding Holy Communion, she quit going to the Catholic wor-

ship services. For this she was sentenced as a heretic and imprisoned until the pyre could be prepared for her death. She was just 22 years old.

A similar fate befell **Anne Askew** (1521–1546) a decade earlier for the same reason, when she also was in her early twenties. During her interrogation, she stated that she would rather read five lines in the Bible than attend a Catholic Mass. She left a written record that gives details of her torture, including being placed on a rack that stretched her limbs out of their sockets. The goal was to get her to incriminate herself and others with similar beliefs. On the day of her execution, she had to be carried to the stake on a chair because she was no longer able to walk.

Women also lost their lives in the witch hunts throughout Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. England finally repealed its witchcraft laws in 1736.

European Women Evangelists

As time went on, however, women gained more influence and embarked on new mission opportunities and reforms. Those who accepted these challenges included:

Elizabeth Fry (1780–1845), a Quaker evangelist, philanthropist, and prison reformer in England. There in Newgate Prison, 300 women were confined in two wards and two cells and forced to sleep on the floor with no bedclothes or bedding. Appalled by those conditions, Fry began to visit the prisoners, supplied clothing, established a school and chapel, and got laws changed to mandate female supervision, along with compulsory sewing and Bible reading. Today Canada has an association of Elizabeth Fry Societies that work with women and girls involved in the justice system.

Mary Moffat (1795–1870) and **Mary Moffat Livingstone** (1820–1862), missionaries to Africa. Demonstrating that women could survive life in mud huts with no conveniences, deal with snakes and wild animals, and still be effective witnesses for Christ, this mother and daughter provided inspiration for other women to serve in foreign fields. It was Mary and Robert Moffat who persuaded David Livingstone to work in Africa, where he gained renown as a missionary and explorer. During a stay with them, Livingstone met his future wife, their oldest daughter.

Catherine Booth (1829–1890), co-founder of the Salvation Army with her husband, William. An orator who is remembered for her passion to evangelize the masses, she held religious services in London that were

attended by people from all walks of life. Convinced that women should have roles equal to men in the religious, social and political sphere, she served as a mediator at the Army's headquarters. All eight of the Booth children were active in the Salvation Army, and one daughter, **Evangeline**, became national commander in the U.S. from 1904–1934.

Mary Slessor (1848–1915), missionary to Nigeria. A redheaded Scottish factory worker who was converted as a teen, Mary volunteered for Presbyterian mission work at age 27. Sent to the Calabar Coast of Nigeria in West Africa, she built churches and schools and helped bring law and order. She also was instrumental in ending many tribal abuses, such as the murder of twin babies, human sacrifice, and witchcraft. In recognition of “Ma” Slessor’s abilities, the British government made her the first woman vice consul in the empire when British rule was established in Nigeria in 1905.

Lutheran Deaconess Movement

The revival of the deaconess movement offered Protestant women a unique avenue for service. Although mentioned in the Bible, little is known about the role of deaconesses until the end of the fourth century. A book of church guidelines from that period indicates that deaconesses were assigned responsibilities related to women, such as baptizing them, serving the poor or sick, teaching female catechumens, and acting as intermediaries between women and the clergy. Most were eventually assimilated into convents, however, so little is heard about deaconesses from the 11th until the 18th centuries, when a few people began suggesting that the office be revived.

A German Lutheran pastor, Theodor Fliedner, became interested in the concept. He heard that the Moravians and Dutch Mennonites were reinstating the deaconess role. He also learned about the new women’s societies in Russia and Prussia and the work of Elizabeth Fry in England. This led him to buy a house for use as a hospital at Kaiserwerth, near Dusseldorf, Germany, in 1836 and to found a Lutheran Deaconess Society to staff it. In time, he added a rehabilitation center for former prisoners, a girls’ school and an orphans’ home. The deaconess concept was soon adopted by the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, and the Methodists.

Florence Nightingale (1820–1910), founder of the modern nursing profession, received some of her education at Kaiserwerth. Believing that

“Christ is the author of our profession,” she dedicated her life to the care of the sick and raised nursing to the level of a respectable career for women. Moved by the religious atmosphere and the attitudes of the deaconesses at Kaiserwerth, she wrote, “Now I know what it is to live and to love life...I wish for no other on earth, no other world than this” (*Great Women of the Christian Faith*, by Edith Deen, p. 216).

At the time of the Crimean War, she gathered 38 nurses and went to Turkey to care for the wounded—as many as 3,000 at one time. Sometimes working 20-hour days, she overcame the reticence of the doctors and eventually was put in charge of the hospital.

Both in books* and on the Internet, dozens of other stories can be found about women who dedicated their lives to the service of the Triune God. Their influence continued when Christians, many of them seeking religious freedom, emigrated to America.

(*) Especially interesting and helpful are *Great Women of the Christian Faith*, by Edith Deen, Harper and Row, 1959, and *Daughters of the Church*, by Ruth A. Tucker and Walter Liefeld, Zondervan, 1987.

Chapter Three

The Struggle to Be Free

(Christian Women in America)

Assisted by the invention of the printing press and tired of corruption in the Catholic hierarchy, religious reformers sought to purify the church in the Middle Ages.

When Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the Wittenburg Church door in 1519, he unintentionally set in motion a movement that would result in a plethora of Protestant denominations, such as the Presbyterians in Scotland, the Anglicans and Baptists in England, the Huguenots (Reformed Church) in France and the Lutherans in Germany and Scandinavia.

In Europe, religious freedom was a new and little-understood concept. The faith of a country's ruler was expected to determine the faith of its citizens, so as Protestantism spread, Catholic monarchs began to imprison and kill those who criticized the Church or refused to give up their new understandings of what Scripture says. The reverse also occurred in some instances when the ruler was Protestant.

With the discovery and exploration of America, Europeans began to see emigration to the New World as a way to achieve economic stability, escape persecution, and worship as they pleased. However, as the Puritans, Pilgrims and others arrived on North American shores, unity of faith rather than freedom of choice remained a governing priority. The group that arrived first determined the faith of each colony.

As a consequence, people with divergent beliefs or unusual habits came under suspicion. In the late 1600s in Salem, Massachusetts, 150 individuals were accused of being witches and imprisoned. Most were middle-aged women who were simply social misfits. Nineteen were hanged.

Educational Advances

In colonial America, women rarely received a formal education unless the family hired a tutor. By the late 1700s, women began to outnumber men, so marriage became less certain, and society began to realize that some women might have to earn their own living. In addition, people agreed that educated women would do a better job of raising their children to be moral citizens, future leaders and faithful Christians. Men also began to realize that women could worship the Lord more fully if they could read Scripture. This led to the founding of “female seminaries,” enabling more women to read and write.

Children’s education benefited from the establishment of Sunday schools. Begun in England in 1780, the Sunday School Movement soon spread to America. Although it was started by men, women played an important role as teachers. Offering reading and writing as well as religious instruction, Sunday schools at first provided the only education most working-class children received. Sunday schools in New York were begun by **Joanna Bethune** (1770–1860). From 136 students in 1816, enrollment grew to 7,000 students with 600 teachers in 1822.

Leaders of Religious Causes

Although pioneer women had no more rights in America than they did in Europe, a number from various religious persuasions have gone down in history for the causes they led. They include:

Anne Hutchinson (1591–1643), of Massachusetts. When she challenged the church’s teaching that good works were an evidence of salvation, she was banished. She and her followers then moved to Rhode Island and helped to found a colony there. Today the First Church of Boston, which tried and condemned her in 1637, bears a plaque honoring her as a woman “of ready wit and bold spirit...a persuasive advocate of the right of Independent Judgment.”

Mary Fisher (1623–1698) and **Anne Austin** (d. 1665), Quaker missionaries from England. The first Quakers to arrive in Boston, they were immediately jailed and their 100 books were burned. The ship captain who brought them was forced to post bond and take them back. After sharing the Gospel in Barbados enroute, Mary made mission trips to Jerusalem and Turkey. Eventually she returned to America, settling in Charleston, where she and her granddaughter became pillars of its Quaker Meeting. Meanwhile in Massachusetts, **Mary Dyer** was hanged

on the Boston Common in 1660 for sharing her Quaker beliefs publicly after the Quaker faith was banned in the colony.

Anne Lee (1736–1784), better known as “Mother Ann,” led eight Shakers to America in 1774, making her the first woman to found a religious sect in this country. Although their “shaking, whirling, shouting, prophesying, dancing and singing in strange tongues led to arrests and imprisonment for disturbing the peace,” *Collier’s Encyclopedia* says the Shakers were in many respects “the most successful experiment in religious communitarian living in the new World” (New York: Macmillan, 1978, XX, 631).

Phoebe Palmer (1807–1874), mother of the Holiness Movement in the Methodist Church. Informal prayer meetings held in her home for over 20 years inspired scores of other women to do the same, leading to dozens of such meetings throughout the country. Phoebe and her husband later conducted prayer meetings in New York State, Canada and eventually England, resulting in revivals and thousands of conversions.

Ellen White (1827–1915), of Maine, co-founder of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Interested in health reform, she promoted vegetarianism and drugless health remedies. She also supported educational reform that included not just intellectual but also manual skills, and she encouraged education for African-Americans in the South.

Isabella Thoburn (1840–1901), first female missionary educator in India. A graduate of Wheeling Female Seminary in Ohio, she was sent to India in 1870 by the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society. There she opened the first mission school for girls and the first Christian college for women. That college is now affiliated with Calcutta University.

Lottie Moon (1840–1912), Southern Baptist missionary to China. A native of Virginia, she volunteered for mission service after hearing a sermon about the fields being white unto the harvest. In 1873 she was sent to North China, where she taught and ministered to women and children for the rest of her life. When famine struck there in 1911, she gave away her rations, eating less and less herself, and finally died of starvation. Her plea for reinforcements in 1888 launched the first Lottie Moon Christmas offering, which provided three additional missionaries. By the beginning of the 21st century, the Lottie Moon offering was raising \$150,000,000 annually and supporting over 5,000 missionaries among 1,300 people groups.

To this list of memorable women could also be added: **Pocohontas** (1595–1617), the first Indian woman converted at Jamestown, Virginia; **Barbara Heck** (1734–1804), the mother of Methodism in America; **Sophronia Harrington**, the first single woman sent as a missionary by the Methodists (to Liberia in 1837); **Narcissa Whitman** (1808–1847), missionary to the Indians in Oregon; **Dr. Clara N. Swain** (1834–1910), the first female medical missionary doctor to women in India, where she treated as many as 7,000 patients a year; **Amanda McFarland** (1837?–1898), the first woman missionary to Alaska; **Francis Willard** (1839–1898), Methodist educator and president of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union for 20 years; **Helen Barrett Montgomery** (1861–1934), the first woman to translate the New Testament from the Greek into “common English,” and numerous other Christian women.

Even before Willard’s day, American women began organizing societies to deal with human needs and religious concerns. Beginning in the late 1700s, they worked to support missions at home and abroad, start Sunday schools, and help poor women, widows, orphans, prisoners and people who were mentally ill. Later they moved on to educational needs, moral problems and political issues.

To provide the “influence and protection of a Christian home” for young women and girls who took jobs in cities during the Industrial Revolution, or as they said, for girls who were “dependent on their own exertions for support,” the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) was founded in Britain in 1855 and in America in 1866. Beginning as a prayer society, it expanded into clubs, boarding houses and educational classes. Today the World YWCA helps meet the needs of women and girls in over 100 countries.

Praising God in Song

Both in Europe and in America, as more women were educated, they began to share their talents through the ministry of music and writing. They published novels, tracts, devotions, poetry and hymns.

The most prolific female hymn writer was **Fanny Crosby** (1820–1915) of New York. Blind from infancy, she was educated at the New York Institute for the Blind and later taught there. After marrying another faculty member who was blind and a church organist, she devoted her time to writing. Assisted by his musical knowledge, she composed over 9,000 hymns and Gospel songs, many of which have been translated into other

languages. Among the best-known are “Blessed Assurance,” “To God Be the Glory,” and “Near the Cross.” The music for “Blessed Assurance” was composed by **Phoebe Palmer Knapp** (1839–1908), who also published 500 Gospel songs.

Other well-known hymns by women include “Jesus Loves Me” by **Anna B. Warner**, “I Love to Tell the Story” by **A. Katherine Hankey**, “Beneath the Cross of Jesus” by **Elizabeth Clephane**, “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” by **Julia Ward Howe**, and “Take My Life and Let It Be” by **Frances Havergal**.

Lutheran Immigrants

As Lutheranism spread from Germany to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Finland, the New World beckoned to its adherents also. Dutch Lutherans landed in the West Indies by 1613, and in the 1620s other Scandinavian Lutherans settled along the Hudson River in what is now New York and New Jersey. As more arrived from various countries, they gravitated to sites where Lutherans of their nationality were already living and speaking their language. Then they began to form synods. By 1875, there were 58 Lutheran synods in the United States! Most depended on their homelands for pastors and worship materials.

One of these synods was The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), organized in 1847 as *Die Deutsche Evangelisch-Lutherische Synode von Missouri, Ohio und Anderen Staaten* (The German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States). Although its official language was German and its first magazine was *Der Lutheraner*, the churchbody urged the younger generation to learn English. By the late 1800s, a few churches were beginning to have services in English, sometimes just once a month.

Women Begin Teaching

Even aboard ship enroute to the U.S. in 1839, LCMS founders made plans for the establishment of parochial schools—with only men as teachers. Before long, out of necessity, women were also being hired to teach, even though the churchbody had no training programs for them.

As early as 1854, it was suggested by Trinity Lutheran Church, Springfield, Illinois, that a girls’ school and teachers’ seminary (college) be opened in that city, but it never became a reality. Not until 1919 did the Synod allow the first five women to enroll at Concordia Teachers College,

Seward, Nebraska. Seven years later in 1926, “because it had been carried on without particular expense to Synod,” the LCMS convention put its stamp of approval on this action and also give permission to Concordia College, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, to admit women.

Even then, men were always preferred as teachers because it was believed that God’s purpose for each woman was to be a helpmeet to her husband, to preserve the human race by bearing children, and to bring up her children according to the will of God. In an article entitled “Woman’s Vocation and Its Deterioration,” in *Der Lutheraner* (Feb. 1, 1872), Seminary President Wilhelm Sihler expressed concern about women’s desire for education, voting rights and participation in government. He concluded that “most daughters of the immigrant Germans were best suited as maids or to do sewing.”

By contrast a century later, **Lois Voelz** was one of two students appointed to the Student Life Commission of the LCMS Board for Higher Education (BHE) in the fall of 1968. A senior at Concordia College, Seward, Nebraska, Lois went on to become the only full-time female religion teacher in the Synod’s 70 Lutheran high schools. From 1996–2003, she served as Religious Education Facilitator at the LCMS-sponsored Hong Kong International School. (The other BHE appointee was Dean Nadasdy, a senior at Concordia, Fort Wayne, Indiana, who would later become an international LWML counselor.)

Thanks to dedicated pastors, supportive husbands and faithful female leaders throughout LCMS history, God continued to open doors for women to more fully use their talents in synod churches, schools and organizations.

Women’s Auxiliaries

Long before the first LCMS founders arrived in America in 1839, women of other denominations were developing organizations to spread the Gospel. In 1800, **Mary Webb** gathered some Baptist and Congregational women to start the Boston Female Society for Missionary Purposes. Presbyterian women organized in 1803 and the Methodists in 1819. Some of the early society names sound strange today—Female Benevolent Society, Pious Female Praying Society and Female Mite Society.

“The significant thing,” notes the *Christian Cyclopedia* (LCMS website) “is that in spite of the terrific handicap they faced, church women

had the temerity to form societies in days when such a movement was not looked upon with favor by the brethren—not even by the male members of their own families, to say nothing of the pastors and elders.

“These early women had no precedent to guide them. They developed their own idea and relied largely on prayer and the Holy Spirit to lead them. Their loyalty to Christ and missions, in prayer and Bible reading, is an example for Christian women also in this age.”

Motivated by the parable of the widow’s mite, “cent societies” soon sprang up in various cities. Members believed that together they could make a big difference if they denied themselves something each week and then gave the one or two cents they saved to missions.

During the Civil War, many women worked as volunteers, gathering supplies for the soldiers. Wanting to continue serving in some capacity after the war, they turned their attention to foreign missions. They heard of countries where women were kept hidden and male missionaries could not speak with them. In some nations, women were dying because their husbands would not let a male doctor touch them. Yet, even in America, women doctors still were not accepted. The solution, they reasoned, was to send these women physicians to the mission field, so the ecumenical Women’s Union Missionary Society was started in 1861 to further that goal.

As various Christian women’s societies developed, all were concerned with overseas missions, but in 1880 the first home mission group was started by the Methodists to assist with work among Southern black people. The first president of this Women’s Home Missionary Society was **Mrs. Rutherford B. Hayes**, wife of the president of the U.S.

Mite boxes were introduced as a fund-raising device by the Woman’s Mission to Woman (Baptist) in 1871. In 1884, the Methodist Woman’s Home Mission began publishing an eight-page monthly newsletter. The subscription price was 25 cents a year.

Formal organization of a churchwide mission society in the United Lutheran Church (now part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) was motivated in 1879 by a story about two women who wanted to be missionaries but were refused because the church body lacked funds. What’s needed, said a college professor’s wife, is “a little systematic and united effort,” and she began to lead that effort.

The first missionary sent out by the United Lutheran Church was edu-

cated for his work and supported in the field totally by women who began the Hartwick Synod's Female Association for the Education of Foreign Missionaries. A sewing circle was started in 1862 in Decorah, Iowa, to sew and sell articles to help pay the debt of the new Luther College. That same year, a Ladies Aid in St. Ansgar, Iowa, brought two boys to the U.S. from Madagascar and educated one to be a pastor and the other a teacher.

LCMS Women's Service

In league with the Lord, women of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) have used their talents for the cause of Christ ever since the arrival of the first Saxon settlers in Missouri. It was these pioneer women who wove altar cloths and vestments on their looms for the early churches. They hosted circuit-riding pastors, and when seminaries were founded, they helped gather food for the students.

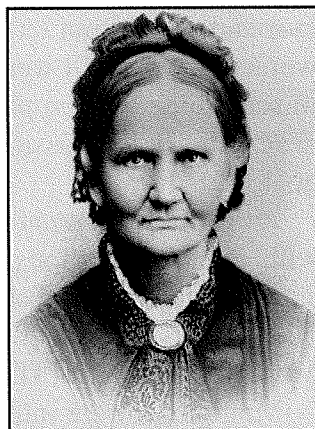
Recognizing that students at the Synod's two seminaries needed someone to sew, mend, wash and iron their clothes, women in St. Louis, Missouri, and Fort Wayne, Indiana, began a sewing circle in each city in 1852. Their leaders were the wives of the seminary presidents, **Mrs. C.F.W. Walther** in St. Louis and **Mrs. Wilhelm Sihler** in Fort Wayne. It is said that



Mrs. Wilhelm Sihler

by the time these frugal women finished patching a garment, it often resembled Joseph's coat of many colors!

After a Lutheran Hospital was estab-



Mrs. C.F.W. Walther

lished in St. Louis, women organized a Ladies Aid Society in 1899 and raised funds for hospital equipment, as well as for bedding and clothing for the Lutheran Orphans' Home. It was also a woman, **Louise Krauss**, who founded the hospital's School of Nursing. To help poor children in the city, **Mrs. William Rohlfsing** established a Lutheran Ladies' Mission Aid Society in 1901. That same organization also created the Lutheran Convalescent Home Fund and purchased a home for afflicted women and girls.

Almost as soon as the Missouri Synod was organized, it began sending missionaries to the Indians and the settlers across North America. Their spouses assisted in this pioneering work.

A black educator, the daughter of a Methodist circuit rider, was responsible for the LCMS beginning missions among Southern black people. Having opened a private school for African Americans in Rosebud, Alabama, **Rosa Young** (1890–1971) remained concerned about the large number of uneducated black children handicapped by state laws that made it a crime to teach blacks to read and write.

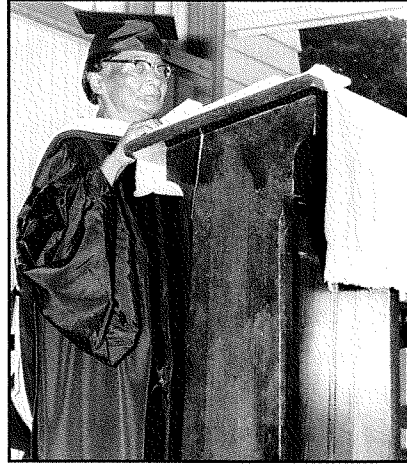
Unsuccessfully she pleaded for assistance from various church groups.

At the suggestion of Booker T. Washington, Young at last approached the Synod Conference, a federation of confessional Lutherans founded in 1872. Through her efforts, an Academy, now Concordia College, was established at Selma to train black missionaries and teachers, and the Missouri Synod began mission work in Alabama in the 1920s. Her story has been told in *Light in the Dark Belt*, published by Concordia Publishing House.

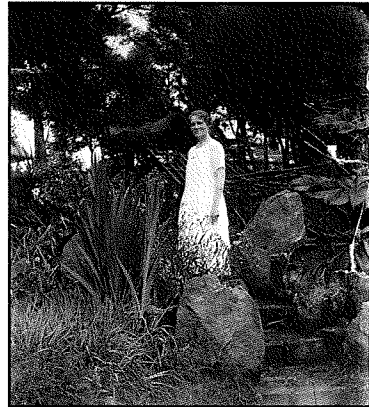
LCMS Women in Foreign Missions

Originally the LCMS conducted foreign mission work through the European Lutheran mission societies, but in 1893 it created its own Board for Foreign Missions. The first missionaries were sent to India in 1894. Later, through the Synod Conference, the LCMS began work in China.

In 1913, **Lulu Ellermann**, R.N., was sent to India to begin medical mission



Rosa Young speaks at the May 1965 dedication of the women's residence hall named in her honor on the campus of Selma Academy and College.



Lulu Ellermann, R.N., began LCMS medical mission work in India in 1913.

work. She started with a dispensary on the veranda of her bungalow in Bargur, India. Eventually a doctor was sent also, and Bethesda Hospital was established at Ambur. However, it was **Angela Rehwinkel**, the facility's nursing supervisor, who became "the glue that held the hospital together as doctor after doctor came and went." She served in India from 1920–1959, retiring at age 76.

As Lutheran efforts grew in India, other women followed—missionary wives, nurses, and deaconesses. Their stories are told in *A Rainbow of Saris*, published by the LWML in 1996. Besides Rehwinkel, they included **Deaconess Louise Rathke**, in India for 35 years, **Deaconess Rose Ziemke**, there from 1947–1978, and **Mary Esther Otten**, whose husband was sent to India to work among the Muslims. She accompanied him in 1950 and served there until 1992, developing her own literature ministry.

Work in China began in 1912, and there too women served admirably. Their stories are chronicled in *One Cup of Water*, also published by the LWML. They include:

Olive Gruen, the first LCMS woman commissioned as a missionary to China (1921) and **Gertrude Simon**, who went to China as a nurse in 1926. Together they were working at an orphanage when the Japanese invasion forced them to transport 22 children more than 200 miles to safety. The journey took weeks on foot as the two carried their charges, many of them infants, across a mountain range and a major river. Frequently they camped in caves to escape Japanese bombing. After they were forced from China by Communist policies in 1948, they continued to work among Chinese refugees—Miss Gruen in Taiwan and Miss Simon in Hong Kong.

Deaconess Martha Boss, Lutheran nurse, teacher, and evangelist, who was a missionary to China and Hong Kong from 1945–1973. She invested her life savings in the Lutheran Handicraft Center so refugees might have a means of livelihood.

The "mother of women's foreign missionary societies in the LCMS" was **Mrs. F. R. Zucker**, who was born in India and served in that mission field with her husband for many years. After returning to the United States, she launched an India Mission Society in Fort Wayne in 1904 and three years later a chapter was begun in St. Louis. Members sewed for missions and expanded their efforts to raise thousands of dollars for India and China missions. Funds donated by these women made it possible for

the LCMS Foreign Mission Board to send Nurse Ellermann to India.

As time went on and homes for the elderly and for people with disabilities were established, women organized auxiliaries to raise funds and provide volunteer assistance. Most of these activities were carried on by older women. However, when the Walther League, originally intended as a young men's society, was started in 1893, one society applying for membership had a woman as president and another as vice-president. Their acceptance as full members in the new organization marked a turning point for the church body. As a result, young women were drawn into action and training as leaders of the future.

Until this time, most organized work of women, including the ladies aids that were springing up in congregations, was conducted in German, as were most worship services and church meetings. The Walther League, however, introduced the use of English, paving the way for its increasing acceptance throughout the denomination.

American Deaconesses

When U.S. Lutherans began opening hospitals, they asked Pastor Theodor Fliedner to send some German deaconesses to America to serve as nurses and begin a motherhouse. The first one opened in Philadelphia in 1850, and the second in 1889 in the same city. Others, started by Norwegian Lutherans, opened in Brooklyn (1885), Minneapolis (1889) and Chicago (1897). All focused on nursing. In 1895, the General Lutheran Synod began its first motherhouse for parish deaconess training.

As the LCMS grew, the male leadership began to recognize the need for "the assistance of trained women workers in our various harvest fields," as Pastor F. W. Herzberger, known as the "father of Lutheran charitable endeavors," stated at the 1911 convention of the Associated Lutheran Charities. The result was the establishment in 1919 of the Lutheran Deaconess Association "for the care of the sick and poor" in Lutheran congregations and "for other assistance in the inner and outer missions" (home and foreign). The LCMS Deaconess program has produced hundreds of women teachers, nurses and missionaries for service throughout the world.

Initially deaconess training was provided only at Lutheran Hospital in Fort Wayne. The first graduate was **Martha Eber** (1924). Although she dreamed of serving in India, her first call was to Immanuel Lutheran Church in New York City, where she tended to the medical needs of

newly-arrived German immigrants. From 1957–1976 (and as a volunteer until her death in 1991), her international ministry grew when she moved to St. Luke’s Lutheran Church in the same city. That mission field included immigrants from Africa, China, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Norway, Portugal and Puerto Rico.

Following World War I, pressing needs for workers developed among charitable institutions throughout the Synod, and additional deaconess training sites were established. One was at Bethesda Lutheran Home, Watertown, Wisconsin. After their graduation, deaconesses frequently returned for visits. On one such occasion, a visitor was asked to help in the laundry during her stay. The Bethesda newsletter commented, “We are always glad to have our former students come back to Bethesda, especially when we can give them a job while they are resting themselves.”

Regional Organization Begins

With the blossoming of *frauenvereins* (ladies aids), *naehvereins* (sewing circles), women’s auxiliaries and mission societies in the early 1900s, it was natural that LCMS women would soon recognize the advantage of meeting together regionally for inspiration and joint service projects. Beginning in March 1928 in Oklahoma, it started spontaneously and almost simultaneously in numerous locations across the country.

Commenting on that first Oklahoma convention, Dr. Alfred M. Rehwinkel, president of St. John’s College, wrote, “It occurred to me that here was the beginning of a movement that is bound to spread to wider circles and that will bring into more active service a force which has been more or less dormant in our church.”

He was right!



From Opposition to Jubilee

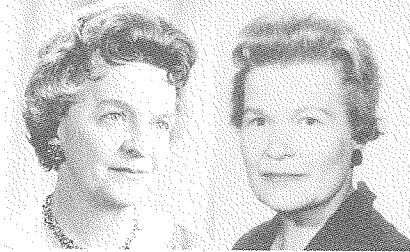
Take a quick trip through 50 years of LWML progress in the two chapters of this section:

—From the days when some pastors worried that an organized group of women would take over the church,

—To the League's 50th anniversary when a church historian told the members, "There's no question the church is behind you women because in so many ways you are ahead of the church!"

Get acquainted with the 11 women who led the League during this time—each different, each dedicated. See how they faced difficult decisions, like canceling a national convention after learning that the city's hotels discriminated against black LWML members, or how one president continued her Christian service even after her hair caught fire from a faulty hair dryer.

Afterwards read the stories behind their stories in *Women in God's Service (WINGS)*, which this section condenses.



Chapter Four

‘When the Lord Taps You on the Shoulder’

*(LCMS Women in Mission,
1928–1991)*

(For details and stories of the 1928–1991 period of LWML development, see Women in God’s Service (WINGS), the League’s 50th anniversary history, available from the LWML Office.)

Despite President Rehwinkel’s positive appraisal in 1928, it would be 14 years before a national women’s organization became a reality. Until then, LCMS women continued organizing district federations not only in Oklahoma, but from coast to coast, just as their counterparts in other Christian churchbodies had done 50 years or even a century earlier.

Facing varied concerns about a national organization, the movement’s leaders met in September 1929 to explore an invitation from the Lutheran Laymen’s League (LLL) to establish a “National Ladies’ Aid Federation” as an auxiliary to the LLL. After discussing the pros and cons until the early hours of the morning, they opted for a separate Lutheran Women’s League (LWL).

Their hopes were dashed when the LCMS College of (District) Presidents in May 1930 advised against their plan because 1) they saw no need, 2) many pastors were opposed, and 3) an additional organization would mean more work for pastors, who might have to neglect their other duties. Synod advisors also believed the Great Depression made this an inopportune time to organize and said the League’s objectives were properly those of the local congregation.

Once again the planning committee considered the LLL invitation and its offer of a \$1,000 start-up loan, but decided to postpone organization.

The movement, however, had taken on a life of its own. As indicated above, districts began to organize. One factor fanning the process was the simultaneous attempt by Valparaiso University in Indiana to organize an

auxiliary. One woman commented, "Valparaiso is knocking at the door of every district in its vicinity and beyond, asking the Ladies' Aids to form chapters...for the benefit of the university. They are doing what we asked to be permitted to do, only they are limiting the women to one objective, that of higher education, which was only one of the objectives of our proposed league.

"Surely we would not want to limit the marvelous possibilities of our womanhood to one thing, worthy as this one thing may be....Should the Valparaiso idea succeed, we would have what Synod objected to, one more organization."

As the women's federation seed sprouted in the Western District, based in Missouri, its Concordia Seminary Students' Welfare Committee began sponsoring an annual fall shower. In 1937, attendance reached 1,600 when 250 women came by train from Chicago and Milwaukee and enjoyed two days of hospitality in St. Louis homes. Four thousand jars of jelly and preserves were contributed that year!

In 1939, that donation day program was changed to a one-day conference on women's work in the church, complete with speakers, discussions, tours and music by seminary students.

When the Western District LWL began printing 10 topics annually to supplement society programs, orders were received from 32 states, four Canadian provinces and Australia after the topics were reviewed favorably in the Lutheran Witness.

At this time, a young Northern Illinois pastor who was also a doctor was called to medical missions in India. He hesitated because of the inadequacy of clinic facilities there. As the word spread, women of many congregations banded together to raise funds to equip a hospital for the pastor.

Despite the support of the Northern Illinois District president, the district board was concerned. "It would be difficult for our district officers to control so many organized women," said one. Another commented, "Their support of special projects will decrease their contributions to Synod." One elderly pastor warned against the danger of feminism in the church. Nevertheless, at the June 1937 district convention, approval was loud and clear!

And so it continued! By 1938, the Western District Lutheran Woman's League was almost a national organization with member societies in Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Ohio,

Oregon, Tennessee, Texas and Utah. (Later in 1941, five women in China also joined.)

Yet the League was not officially approved nor recognized outside the Western District. Leaders therefore determined to memorialize the LCMS for approval at its 1938 convention. The Central District did likewise.

To plead their cause in 1938, a committee of women appeared—for the first time in LCMS history—before a convention Floor Committee. In response, the committee presented two resolutions to the delegates. One called for a Survey Committee to consider the question of women's work and organizations in the Synod and to submit definite proposals to Synod at its next convention in 1941. The second recommended "that Synod gratefully recognize the zealous endeavor of our women for the cause of Christ and His Church." Both were adopted!

By adopting those two resolutions in 1938—a decade after the women began organizing and a century after their "foremothers" had arrived in North America—the Synod had at last acknowledged the value of women's work in the church and had promised to help them find a God-pleasing way to enhance their efforts.

As a result, in 1941 the Synod gave its "approval and encouragement to the creation of a national organization of women," noting that "it is highly desirable that all the gifts and talents given by God to the church in its members, be they men or women, young or old, be utilized."

1938-1941: The League Is Launched

As the five advisory pastors appointed by LCMS President John W. Behnken began planning for the organizational meeting on July 7–8, 1942, no one could have anticipated that the U.S. would be at war by then due to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941. Nevertheless, despite wartime rationing and travel priorities for servicemen, arrangements moved forward to convene at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in Chicago, nine miles south of the Loop.

The ladies of St. Stephen's worked hard to arrange lodging and breakfast for all the delegates in private homes. Delegate travel costs were borne by the districts. Lunch and dinner were covered by the Synod. Visitors could eat with the delegates but had to stay in hotels. The hotel rates were \$2 - \$3.50 for single rooms and \$3 - \$4.50 for a double.

Even the best-laid plans have their challenging moments. When Evelyn (Mrs. H.W.) Lembke, a California-Nevada delegate, arrived by



Hats and dresses were the appropriate attire at the LWML organizing convention July 7–8, 1942 at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Chicago.

train from California, the family she was to stay with had houseguests. Sent to a hotel, she was told that all the rooms were booked. As she was about to go out the door, though, a guest checked out—a room was available! After she had climbed in bed that night, a huge thunderstorm hit the city, and Mrs. Lembke began to doubt the wisdom of her determination to attend this meeting. The next morning when the Chicago ladies heard of her plight, arrangements were made in short order to host her in a nice home.

The 28 delegates and 80 guests represented 15 districts: Atlantic, California-Nevada, Central, Iowa East, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Northern Illinois, Northern Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Southeastern, Southern Nebraska, Texas and Western.

The planning committee selected three women as temporary chairmen, each to serve for one session, apparently without telling them ahead of time. One of those chosen, Mrs. Dorothea Priebe, Atlantic district, had sat up all night on the train from New York and then taken a cab to the church to be on time. She had barely settled into her seat when she was asked to chair the Tuesday afternoon opening session. "I consented—with my heart in my mouth," she commented afterwards. Clara (Mrs. Otto F.) Schmitt, Western district, chaired the Wednesday morning sessions, and

Mrs. Lembke presided at the Wednesday afternoon session.

Delegates approved a constitution and elected officers. (Mrs. Schmitt became President and Mrs. Lembke first Vice-President.) When the slate of candidates for all offices was presented, some women were apprehensive about accepting the responsibility. Pastor Oscar Fedder reminded them, "When the Lord taps you on the shoulder and says, 'I need you for this job,' you must not turn Him down. If He thought you were incapable, He would not have selected you."

Delegates also selected the League's first projects and chose a name for the new organization. Among the 10 names suggested, many delegates favored Lutheran Women's League for simplicity's sake. However, two of the advisory pastors strongly insisted on the inclusion of "Missionary" and the delegates acquiesced by a vote of 15-10. Thus the Lutheran Women's Missionary League was born.

The purposes of the LWML, it was decided, would be to develop and maintain mission consciousness among women through missionary education, missionary inspiration and missionary service and to gather funds for mission projects, especially those for which no adequate provision has been made in the LCMS budget. "Missionary" referred to the individual member, who would be encouraged and enabled to win and hold souls for the Master.

Delegates established a Committee on Literature to publish books, a quarterly national magazine, tracts and programs. They also determined that 25% of all mission contributions would be given to the national organization, with 75% retained for district projects.

The first projects chosen were 1) chapels for "deaf-mute congregations" and 2) post-war relief missions. Little did anyone that day realize the magnitude of those relief needs nor the difficulties that would be encountered in carrying out that resolution.

1942-1947: Charting the Course **(Clara Schmitt, President)**

Immediately the first officers:

—Approved plans for a quarterly magazine. By January 1943 the first issue of the *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly* was off the press—all 60,000 copies. The first two issues were circulated gratis, with circulation manager Bertha (Mrs. R.H.C.) Meyer handling all the business from her home. Editor of the first five issues was a pastor, Rev. W.C. Birkner. He

was succeeded in 1944 by Edith (Mrs. Melvin C.) Kenn, the first woman editor.

—Selected a “uniform collection device,” now known as a Mite Box.

—Paid off loans for the first operating funds within one year.

—Planned a convention in 1943 even though the country was at war.

Since the government encouraged the holding of church-related gatherings, the LWML leaders accepted the invitation of Concordia Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, which offered reasonably priced meals (breakfast 35¢, dinner 50¢, and supper 35¢) and promised “solid” comfort in the dorms for just 75¢ a night. The women jokingly termed the sagging beds “foxholes.”

The dates were August 31 and September 1, and with no air conditioning, the 300 attendees soon removed their hats and gloves. Nevertheless, the convention was a success, and the convention motto, “Serve the Lord with gladness!” became the League motto.

It was a different story in 1945. With the war still on, the convention was cancelled, and only the Board met. It allocated \$15,000 for the League’s first monetary project, the chapel for the deaf in Cleveland, and voted to move forward with the postwar relief project to benefit Europe’s orphaned and dislocated children. Societies responded with enthusiasm.

When the final European Relief report was given by Chairman Ruth Schuermann, the figures were staggering. Societies had shipped tons of food, clothing, medical kits, patterns, bedding and raw cotton for making bed linens, laundry equipment and a carload of grain. Offerings sent to cover religious literature, equipment and special needs totaled \$88,262.

With the war over, the Chicago convention in 1947 drew 1,100 members.

Our Redeemer Women’s Guild, Honolulu, Hawaii, joined in 1946, the first society outside the continental USA.

1947–1953: Missions! Missionaries! Missions!

(Sadie Fulk Roehrs, President)

As foreign mission work expanded dramatically in the Missouri Synod, mission festivals abounded, and missionary speakers drew full houses. With almost tunnel vision, the LWML focused on mission support, mission outreach and service to missionaries.

All *Quarterly* articles had to have a mission emphasis, and the magazine ran a three year “Go-Tell” series, featuring women who, as martyrs,

missionaries and teachers, carried the mission torch through the ages. Some LWML societies even had members answer roll call by reporting how many strangers they had greeted at church and how many calls they had made to share Christ's love since their last meeting.

The *Quarterly* was praised as "the only periodical in LCMS circles published solely in the interest of missions for the lay reader." Besides the "Go and Tell" stories, it featured women involved in "Each One Reach One" programs at home. Among them were Mary Banta, who opened the first Chinese Sunday School in New York; Mrs. Dan Schoof, founder of Japanese mission work in St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Minneapolis (the U.S. relocated many Japanese from coastal states to the midwest during World War II); and Mrs. Paul Hansen of Chicago, who mailed religious material to 4,000 shut-ins and isolated individuals every six weeks.

The first Mission Hospice Committee, appointed in 1950, arranged for Leaguers in port cities to bid farewell to missionaries leaving for overseas. Upon return, missionaries were helped through customs, taken shopping, provided with babysitters, and given gifts of cash and seasonal clothing enroute to their final destination.

Other firsts during this period included:

- A part-time office was established in November 1947, with the secretary, Erna (Mrs. Oscar) Feucht, paid \$20 a month. After six months at a desk in the Western District office, Concordia Publishing House made space available with a desk, chair and file for \$7.50 a month. Before long the job was full-time, and Erna served for 22 years.
- With the addition of Bethlehem Women's Missionary Society, Bruderheim, Alberta, the League became international in 1948. Soon entire Canadian districts joined: Laurentian and Ontario, 1950; Alberta-British Columbia, 1951, and the Manitoba/Saskatchewan, 1953. Use of the name, International LWML, was authorized in 1951 but not officially changed until 1975.
- Featuring League achievements since its founding, the first LWML filmstrip was shown at the 1950 Synod convention.
- Membership topped the 100,000 mark, reaching 139,097 in 1953.

1953--1959: Courageous Decisions

(Lillian Preisinger, President)

In support of a new Synod plan to employ women mission workers, the League created a Leadership Training Committee in 1953, headed by

Eleanor (“Ellie”/Mrs. Harold) Brandt. In 1956 it was combined with a Bible Study Advance program, renamed Christian Growth, and made a standing committee.

After a trial seminar in California, Ellie enthusiastically reported to the board: “If the women’s groups within the church allow themselves to be satisfied with sheer ‘activism’ instead of with activities making Christ the center of their planning and thinking, then their program will be shallow and ineffectual.”

To prevent this, the

League instituted a series of 76 Women’s Guidance Institutes (leadership training programs) emphasizing: 1) Deepening the Inner Spiritual Life, 2) Personal Evangelism, and 3) Training Kingdom Workers. Evaluating their experience, women who attended indicated that spiritually they would “never shrink back to their former dimensions.”

Like the institutes, the LWML’s plan to sponsor an annual Day of Prayer initially was met with skepticism and concern by some pastors. However, the 1957 LWML convention approved the suggested outline for such a service. Later a new Prayer Service was written annually and published as an insert in the Winter *Quarterly* from 1964 until 2004, when it became a downloadable resource on the LWML Website.

But the most challenging decision the officers made was to cancel the New Orleans convention in 1955 and hold a delegates-only meeting the next year in Denver, Colorado. For the first time in 1955, the League had some black delegates. After the New Orleans plans were underway, it was learned that delegates from “colored” congregations would not be



Officers in 1957 included: (Front) Emma (Mrs. Walter) Hoppe, First Vice President; Lillian (Mrs. Arthur) Preisinger, President; Selma (Mrs. William) Fischer, Second Vice President; (Back) Ruth (Mrs. E.C.) Lehman, Treasurer; Norma (Mrs. L.S.) Kenyon, Financial Secretary; Louise (Mrs. F.A.) Eggert, Recording Secretary, and Lydia (Mrs. John) Luecke, Corresponding Secretary.

allowed to stay at the convention hotel. To avoid discrimination, the president, after many meetings and much prayer, cancelled the convention.

Other firsts included:

- Hiring a second worker in the LWML office. Erna Feucht selected her sister, Luella Eisenhauer, because "I can ask her to work harder than I could someone else."
- The League was incorporated December 28, 1956.
- *Quarterly* circulation rose to 230,000 in 1959, and the League had 194,080 members in 4,750 societies in 37 districts.
- The first LWML convention outside U.S. borders was held in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, in July 1959. It was a learning experience for hostesses and guests alike. A woman in Chicago wrote to ask if Canadians spoke English. Another Leaguer wondered if they would need warm clothes and snowshoes—and would they see Eskimos?

1959–1963: Research and Recognition

(Emma Hoppe, President)

To assess "mid-century needs as they apply to women of the church," the League had approved a two-part study in 1955. To accomplish this, leaders surveyed pastors in 1958 and organized 270 zone discussion groups that involved 3,000 members in 1960. The evaluations showed:

—Although LWML societies were not essentially different from non-affiliated groups, members liked the LWML fellowship, topic studies, Bible studies, mission projects and opportunities to use their individual talents.

—Since women were not permitted to vote in congregational matters, the LWML gave them an opportunity to express themselves.

—LWML's primary weaknesses were boring business meetings and the lack of good society leaders.

LWML firsts during this period included:

- The Mission Service Committee was established (1961) to help women discover and meet mission needs at home because civil strife, customs duties and import regulations were closing the doors of foreign countries to shipments of clothing and literature.
- In 1961, believing that "followers of Jesus must ever be active in the battle for decency and morality," delegates passed a resolution asking members to be alert to problems of obscenity and "personally guard against offensive influences upon our homes via publications,

radio, television, the theater and the movies.” In contrast, delegates in 1947 took no action on a similar memorial because they doubted that it met the purpose of the League.

- The LCMS recognized the LWML as the official women’s auxiliary of Synod (1962).
- The League sponsored its first post-convention mission tour in 1963—a 36-day trip to Hawaii, Japan, Formosa, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Thailand, India, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Italy and England.

1963–1967: Celebrating 25 Years

(Eula Hankel, President)

For 25 years of blessings and progress, it was time to give thanks to the Lord. The month of July 1967 was proclaimed as a period of remembrance during which each society was to recognize these blessings in a special way. Prayers and birthday cakes topped the list in popularity as *Quarterly News* Editor Dorothy Rosin could attest. Her desk was literally buried in birthday cake pictures from societies across the continent. (Dorothy later became the first woman to serve on the LCMS Mission Board.)

International LWML, as it was known by now, published “Women on a Mission,” a 300-page history of the organization by Ruth Fritz Meyer. A silver anniversary thankoffering brought in \$139,638.68 to assist mission work in Japan, Venezuela and New York’s Chinatown. International mission grants for the first 25 years totaled \$1,863,262.33—and with district projects at three times that amount, the combined result was nearly \$7.5 million.

Although a railroad strike made travel difficult, Leaguers found creative solutions and 2,020 attended the 25th anniversary convention in Washington, D.C., July 18–20. New bylaws were adopted, giving voice, but not vote, at LWML conventions to similar organizations of sister churches in other countries.

For the first time at an international LWML convention, Bible study involved the use of small discussion groups. Women in alternate rows simply turned their seats around and formed groups of four to six people. It was so successful that the idea was adopted at many district gatherings too.

One of the convention speakers was Italian-born Lisa Sergio, the first woman radio commentator in Europe, who also had been an official inter-

preter for Mussolini. When she realized the evils of fascism, she escaped to the U.S.A. In Washington, D.C., she began conducting a weekly Sunday program entitled "Prayer Through the Ages" and published a book, *Prayers of Women* (Harper & Row), the first known collection of prayers of women throughout 2,000 years of Christendom.

Other highlights:

- "Operation Bible Study" was so successfully promoted throughout the League beginning in 1963 that Dr. Oscar E. Feucht, the LCMS Secretary of Adult Education, later credited the LWML with starting an upsurge of Bible study throughout the entire Synod. "So Live in Him," the first annual LWML Bible study, was published that year and sold over 58,000 copies.
- Two subsequent studies dealt with social concerns—"Amos—God's Spokesman for Social Justice" in 1965 and "The Christian and Social Concerns" in 1967. The women were beginning to realize the importance of reaching out in Christ's name to alleviate human needs. They recognized that Christ had commanded it, and it was an effective way of sharing the Gospel. The 1966–1967 Christian Growth theme, "God's People Prepared for Action," led to over 600 Social Concerns workshops at the district, zone and society levels.
- Prior to the San Diego convention in 1965, Leaguers were encouraged to come early for a Christian Growth workshop on evangelism. After motivational training on how to share the Christian faith, 255 participants went into 14 San Diego neighborhoods to ring doorbells for Christ. Their 1,931 calls yielded 658 prospects for local churches.
- The 1965 convention asked LWML members to extend hospitality and Christian concern to foreign students attending universities and colleges in their area.
- A third paid staff member, Catherine Hedden, was added at the LWML office in 1965.
- The League appointed Marlys Taege as its first Public Relations Director in 1964. (All LWML leaders serve as volunteers, with only expenses paid.) Under her direction, a press room, the first in LWML history, was established at the San Diego convention and utilized by radio, TV, local newspaper and wire service reporters. For the first time also, Synod, through its Southern California PR director, officially assisted in publicizing an LWML event.

1967–1971: Extending the Personal Touch *(Evelyn Hartman, President)*

As the LWML held its 1969 convention in Houston, Texas, the U.S. landed its first astronauts on the moon. Speakers reminded the women:

—“We have a greater mission than even the astronauts.”

—“The church is a missile—something that is sent!”

—“For the love of God, blast off!”

The LWML did just that!

It sent LWML President Evelyn Hartman and PR Director Lu Greenwood as observers to the Lutheran Women’s Consultation in Bastad, Sweden, in June 1969. Attended by women from five continents, the theme of the six-day gathering was “Sent into the World—Responsible Participation of Christian Women in Today’s Society.” Among the subjects discussed were how to be human in a technical world, political responsibility of Christian women today, generational differences, and being Christian in a pluralistic world.

It commissioned Ursula (Mrs. Harold) Glander and Barbara (Mrs. Herbert) Voelkert as “Bridge Builders to Japan” in 1971. Christian women in Japan responded, “Your coming has given us courage....Now we see that we too must reach out and share Christ’s love.”

And, through an “Each One—Reach One” program, the 1971 convention delegates adopted a personal project, asking each Leaguer to pray and then personally distribute a copy of God’s Word to at least one individual.

Other highlights:

- The first LWML Sunday was held in church services throughout the LCMS October 1, 1967.
- The LWML sent 10 representatives to the U.S. Congress on Evangelism in Minneapolis, Minnesota (1969).
- For the second time in its history, the LWML inaugurated a Leadership Training Program (1970).
- After five years of participating as observers, LWML in 1970 joined the Lutheran Women’s Cooperating Committee (LWCC), composed of women’s auxiliary leaders of the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church.
- Succeeding Erna Feucht, Louise (Mrs. Howard) Mueller became the second LWML headquarters secretary (1970).

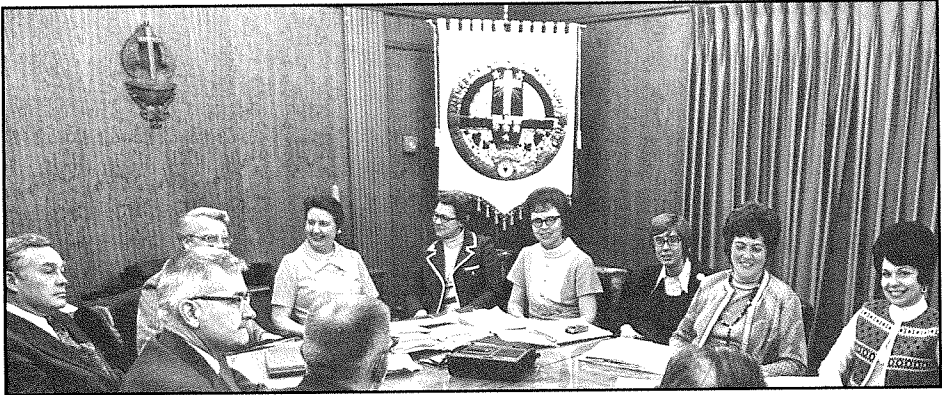
- Because the LCMS approved woman suffrage in the church at its 1969 convention, LWML delegates responded by encouraging members to utilize their talents and abilities on the parish level.
- Over 3,400 women participated in 17 regional "Strengthening the Home" institutes, developed by the Christian Growth Committee, on the joys, responsibilities and rewards for the Christian woman in family relationships (1968–1969).
- In response to requests from women employed outside the home, the LWML published the first in its "Mustard Seed" series of mini-Bible studies in 1971. The purpose was to help them share their faith during coffee breaks and lunch hour discussions.
- With the election of the Rev. Dr. J.A.O. Preus as LCMS president in 1969, new opportunities opened for women within the churchbody. He appointed Jean Garton, a member of the LWML, to the Synod's Public Relations Board that year. The first woman to serve on an LCMS board, she later chaired the new LCMS Task Force on Women (1974–1981) and the LCMS Commission on Women (1984–1994), and in 1995 was the second woman elected to the Synod Board of Directors. She also co-founded Lutherans for Life in 1978 and served as its president for 17 years.

1971–1975: Communicating Amidst Change ***(Florence Montz, President)***

Amidst the turmoil created by the "walkout" of professors and students at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1974 and their subsequent founding of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, the LWML determined that it would not get bogged down in issues that could properly be determined only by the Synod. Instead, encouraged by President Florence Montz, who was a nurse and the wife of a medical doctor, the League focussed on wholistic mission and ministry.

In the League's first Mission Statement, which Florence wrote, the League emphasized its intention to be "a willing instrument of God's great mission to the whole world, the whole church, the whole society and the whole man." Through mission service, the League would "prayerfully seek to serve the needs of the total man: his body, soul, and mind, all related into one being; whether he is the neighbor next door or the person in a faraway land."

For the first time, a Native American addressed an LWML convention



To discuss abortion concerns and woman's changing role, the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations invited six women to its January 1973 meeting. The women, left to right, were Dr. Lucille Wassman, Lutheran Deaconess Association Executive Director; Florence Montz, LWML President; Marlys Taege, *Quarterly* Editor-in-Chief; Jan Larson, a member of Lutheran Women's Caucus; Signe Carlson, LWML Iowa West Christian Growth Chairman, and Jean Garton, Secretary of the LCMS Board for Public Relations. LCMS president J.A.O. Preus is at the left.

at Mobile, Alabama, in 1973. Action groups taught members how to reach out in new directions. Instead of traditional building projects, delegates chose creative mission efforts to receive its mite funds, including: TV outreach, scholarships for minority students, an airplane ministry in Canada, medical missions in Nigeria, New Guinea churchworker scholarships, daycare and teen services in Hawaii, and captioned films for deaf people.

Trying to involve younger women, eight districts brought the first youth representatives to the Mobile convention. Texas LWMLers received special training in youth evangelism in preparation for the All-Lutheran Youth Gathering in Houston in 1973, where the League shared "Mustard Seeds" and Bible studies. In 1972, it was decided to send three to six copies of each *Quarterly* to every dormitory at LCMS colleges, and the Leadership Training Committee conducted a six-week course in leadership for wives of seminarians.

Other firsts:

- As a result of an LCMS convention resolution, six women for the first time ever were invited to meet for one day with the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations. Representing "a

cross section of LCMS women," they included President Montz and *Quarterly* Editor-in-Chief Marlys Taege. The subjects were abortion concerns and women's changing role.

- At Mobile, women for the first time led the convention Bible studies. Sharing the honor were Pauline (Mrs. James) Groerich, Minte Brohm and Carrie (Mrs. Willis) Wright, the first black woman to address an international LWML convention. One of the convention speakers was Annie Vallotton, Paris, France, illustrator of *Good News for Modern Man*, the American Bible Society's newly-published version of the "Bible in Today's English."
- At the president's suggestion, committee reports at the 1973 LWML convention took on more interesting formats via skits, poetry, song, and even a *Quarterly* staff style show during which Counselor Erhard Eifert staged a mock protest seeking "E.R.A. for Men."
- Communication was improved with other Synod leaders through a Consultation on Auxiliaries in 1972 and the establishment of an LWML "Know Your Synod" day for the board. At the 1973 LCMS convention, Synod established a Task Force on Women to study the changing role of women in the church. Its nine members included LWML Counselor Eugene Kramer and Headquarters Secretary Louise Mueller, with President Montz as a consultant.
- Bringing together eight women from India, Taiwan, the Philippines, Japan, Hong Kong, Canada and the U.S., the Lutheran Women's Cooperating Committee sponsored "Faith Sharing—Hong Kong 1974." The LWML's representative was Recording Secretary Esther Schoessow, the first LCMS woman to chair the LWCC.
- The first LWML president to travel to an overseas sister auxiliary convention, Florence Montz attended the eighth congress of the Liga das Senhoras Luteranas do Brasil in 1975. The Brazilian women unanimously voted to affiliate with the LWML and were represented at the 1975 convention in St. Paul, Minnesota. Missionary speakers at LWML conventions strengthened its overseas links.
- PR Director Lois Dankenbring represented LWML at the World Hunger Seminar, 1975.
- To better coordinate LWML programming, the first interdepartmental meeting of international committees and officers was held in 1974.

- The Mobile convention encouraged societies to distribute the *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly* to every woman in the congregation. With woman's suffrage being adopted in many congregations, women were encouraged to seek and accept new responsibilities at all levels of the organized church.
- Lutheran Library for the Blind began to produce copies of the *Quarterly* in Braille with the Spring 1973 issue.
- By achieving the international mite goal of \$500,000 for the 1973–1975 biennium, the entire league raised over \$2,000,000 for mission projects during that period, when the districts' 75% is added.

1975–1979: Improving Organization, Extending Outreach *(Helen Morris, President)*

Peace-building in the world and strengthening ties with overseas sisters motivated Leaguers as they celebrated the ILWML's 35th anniversary.

To sensitize members to the world's problems and to stir their consciences, ILWML members participated in LWCC-sponsored Shalom-Peace Seminars at three U.S. sites. There they learned that two-thirds of the human family went to bed hungry each night and 15,000 starved to death every day. Among the solutions suggested were prayer, Bible study (especially Amos and Hosea), letter-writing to government leaders, support of efforts to teach people to read, and continued learning about the needs of the world's people.

Fifteen ILWML districts also participated in the LCMS Special Training Assistance Program for Overseas Churches (STAPOC) by hosting two women from India as they attended rallies, retreats and workshops. The ladies' stories of the poverty and struggles of women in India were eye-opening. "I shudder to think," commented an Omaha Leaguer, "that the \$20 I might spend on an occasional and supposedly much-deserved family night out would provide a noon meal for 80 children for 15 days there."

An unforgettable moment at the 1979 convention was the appearance of Walter Mondale, Vice-President of the United States. Leaguers from his home state of Minnesota contacted his entourage when they realized he was staying in the same hotel. Official contacts followed, informing the vice-president's staff that 6,000 ILWMLers from all over the U.S. were meeting in the city. (This was an election year!) Yes, was the answer, he would come.

In his brief talk, the Vice President informed the audience that "I know the work of this magnificent organization." He continued with amusing stories of his life as a P.K. (preacher's kid) in another denomination living next door to the Lutheran parsonage. He closed with an emphasis on the importance of strong families.

Other firsts:

- The use of "International" in the League name, authorized in 1951, was officially adopted in 1975.
- The first Assembly of Leaders brought together 183 district Christian Growth chairmen, leadership training coordinators, mission service chairmen, and editors for training and networking with the corresponding national leaders in 1976. (The editors had been meeting separately every two years since 1969.)
- The first non-congregational chapters were organized in a senior residential facility (Lutheran Home for the Aged, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, 1977), on a college campus (St. John's, Winfield, Kansas, 1976), and for seminary wives (Concordia, St. Louis, Missouri, 1978).
- An ILWML Talent Bank was established in 1979 to maintain lists of speakers for ILWML events.
- The 1977 convention urged members to write letters of protest to broadcasting companies and sponsors of programs with open sex and violence and to commend broadcast companies and program sponsors for wholesome, worthwhile programming.
- In 1976, ILWML societies also celebrated the U.S. bicentennial with patriotic programs, pageants and musicals. Some members chose specific government officials for whom they prayed, and the *Quarterly* printed a series on "exceptional Christian women who put compassion into North America's history" and another on "the women behind Missouri's founding fathers."
- \$6,000 in bequest funds were given by the ILWML Board for air-mailing the *Reporter* and *Lutheran Witness* to missionaries throughout the world.

1979–1983: Improving Organization, Extending Outreach **(Helen Gienapp, President)**

With a woman who still worked in the business world as its president, ILWML began re-examining and updating its business and organization-

al procedures. A *Program Planner* was developed to help societies do a better job of planning meetings and special events. The goal was to encourage more varied programs, enable greater publicity, and involve more women by delegating responsibility.

The League's first Meeting Manager (Doris Durkee) and first Convention Coordinator (Virginia Von Seggern) were appointed.

The office was enlarged, an IBM computer was installed, and forms were created to simplify office procedures in 1982. New ILWML stationery was developed, plus a new mite box design in two colors, purple and gold.

The first *League Catalog* was produced in 1981, and all sales items were given code numbers for easy identification and billing. The 1983 *Catalog* listed 56 Christian Leadership Training materials, 155 program resources, 60 Loan Library materials, plus filmstrips, slides, *Mustard Seeds*, supplies, jewelry and *Gleanings* (large print Bible studies). The first *Gleanings* (1981), for use in hospitals and nursing homes, was translated into Spanish in 1982. The second set (1983) was for busy mothers with young children.

To learn more about fundraising, the president and treasurer attended a 1981 estate-planning seminar for Lutheran development officers. Subsequently an ILWML brochure was produced to encourage women to write a will and include a bequest for ILWML.

The ILWML was also represented at a variety of conferences, such as the U.S. Department of State program on the Decade for Women, 1979; a "Think Tank" session of the LCMS Board for Evangelism, 1981; a consultation on Equality and Justice of Women and Men in Church and Society, sponsored by the LCA, 1982, and the National Assembly on Lutheran Social Ministry, 1981.

Other firsts:

- "You Are God's Gift" seminars, held 1979–81, covered personal needs, leadership skills for use in the church, and mission service in the community and world.
- Leadership Training seminars, 1981–82, were geared to achieving the goal of "Every Member a Trained Member." The Christian Leadership Training Committee developed a new Bible study, "The Confident Christian Woman."
- A new Long Range Advisory Committee conducted a survey of soci-

eties in 1982 and another of individual women in 1983. They found that only 30% of LCMS women were members of ILWML. Despite the efforts of a Member Development Committee appointed in 1981 and despite an increase in societies, membership fell for the first time from 194,245 in 1981 to 179,543 in 1983.

- The 40th anniversary thankoffering benefited the Sierra Leon mission field (\$105,794) and four North American mission starts (\$100,000). The Board allocated a special grant of \$100,000 to the Seminary Scholarship Endowment Fund.
- The Concordia Historical Institute designated November 13, 1981, as "Esther Stahlke Day" in honor of the ILWML historian who retired in 1979 after 12 years of service.
- Emy (Mrs. Max) Goodman was appointed Hispanic Translation Coordinator in 1982, and five packets of *Mustard Seeds* were translated as *Semillas de Mostaza*.
- In response to requests for more but shorter Bible studies, the League published the 1981 convention Bible study by Donna (Mrs. Daniel) Streufert, the first woman to have sole responsibility for leading all the Bible study sessions at an international ILWML convention.
- Upon the retirement of Louise Mueller, Joan Puig became the League's third Headquarters Secretary, serving from 1982–83.
- Over 22,000 layettes were gathered for Lutheran World Relief at the 1981 convention in Milwaukee.

1983–1987: Forging New Links **(Alberta Barnes, President)**

The largest number in ILWML history—8,023 Leaguers and guests—attended the 1985 convention in Ames, Iowa. The opening festival service drew 10,000 worshippers. The convenient location, plus affordable rates of \$47 per day for room and meals at Iowa State University, drew 3,000 Leaguers from Iowa alone.

The convention introduced the first devotional book published by the League, *You Are Special* by Alma (Mrs. Herbert) Kern, who was also the first woman ever to write devotions for *Portals of Prayer*, a Concordia Publishing House product.

At the 1987 "Million Dollar Convention" in Fort Worth, Texas, delegates adopted the League's first \$1 million mission goal. Two ILWML-funded videos were premiered: "Salifu's Harvest," an African mission

film, whose showing was climaxed by the surprise appearance on stage of Nicholas Salifu himself from Ghana, and “Big Joe,” the story of a Liberian who brought several hundred of his Kisi tribespeople to Christ. Big Joe also was present and gave President Barnes a cross he had woven for her.



Alma Kern signing her first devotional book, *You Are Special*, at the 1985 Convention.

Special visitors also included 16 wives of Lutheran Hour representatives, four women from Japan, and several participants in the League’s “Discipling Woman to Woman” (DWW) program. To gain understanding of the common challenges Christian women encounter in various cultures, DWW offered Leaguers the opportunity for personal interaction with women of LCMS partner churches. During the 1983–85 biennium, two women from Nigeria and two from England were brought to the U.S. where they attended ILWML activities and toured several districts.

The next biennium, two came from the Philippines and two from Korea. Four Leaguers were commissioned as DWW visitors to England in response to an invitation from the Lutheran Women’s League of Great Britain. They shared programming ideas, skits, table graces, prayer needs and encouragement. In addition to increased understanding of other cultures, DWW led to prayer partnerships, pen pals, telephone calls, establishment of sister (“twin”) societies, and special offerings.

To prepare Leaguers for modern service and witnessing, the League sponsored its third series of Family Life Seminars in 15 years—“Strengthening the Christian Woman to Live in Today’s World.” Nearly 12,000 women participated, discussing marriage, mid-life challenges, growing older, dealing with stress, family life, and singleness in today’s society, and divorce and the single parent.

Other firsts:

- A fourth vice-president was added, and the vice-presidential positions were renamed, making them all equal by creating vice-presi-

dencies of Mission Education, Mission Inspiration, Mission Service, and Mission Projects.

- Bequest money enabled the League to give \$100,000 as seed money for the first indepth LCMS Bible study, eventually named the *LifeLight* series.
- Iri Skinner was elected president of Louisiana District in 1984, the first black woman to hold a district presidency.
- "Linked in Prayer" program was adopted in 1986, encouraging all Leaguers to pray each Monday at 12 noon.
- The Philippine Women's League was accepted as an ILWML partner organization in 1985.
- Setting a precedent, ILWML sponsored a luncheon for women at the LCMS Great Commission Convocation in 1984 and at both the 1983 and 1986 Synod conventions.
- Shirley Meckfessel became the fourth Headquarters Office Manager in 1983.

1987-1991: Touching Lives at Home and Abroad

(Betty Duda, President)

Among the speakers at the 1988 Assembly of Leaders was a young man with AIDS. Although he shared his story of ostracism by his church, there was no instant call for action among the 285 ILWML leaders in attendance. Wasn't this something that happened in other churches, not the LCMS? Then a district mission service chairman stood up and said quietly, "My son has AIDS."

Her statement ignited the room. Immediately the women vowed, "We must do something," and the ILWML Caring Ministry was born. With \$50,000 allocated from ILWML bequests and interest moneys, a video-cassette package entitled, "I Feel So Alone," was produced. Videos on spousal and child abuse, substance and alcohol abuse, and emotional and mental illness followed. President Duda called them "a Library of Compassion on subjects most people don't want to talk about."

Because of the success of its first two African mission films, the ILWML also funded a third, "The Least of These," featuring the work of Missionary Nurse Alice Brauer in India's Community Health Program at Ambur. Miss Brauer was a surprise guest at the 1989 ILWML convention in Rapid City, South Dakota, where the film premiered.

The opening communion service in Rapid City utilized a century-old

liturgy brought to America by the Saxon immigrants. Clergy wore black robes with white collar tabs (*Beffchens*) like those used in the 1800s. Oneida Indians handcrafted the pottery communionware for the occasion.

LCMS President Ralph Bohlmann urged the women to “continue the leadership you have been giving the church in mission awareness.” Another speaker, Dr. Charles Mueller, had recently visited several mission fields. “As I took pictures of dedication plaques there, I was surprised by how many women there are in foreign mission work,” he reported. Mission Executive Edward Westcott emphasized the need for “opportunity eyes” because more and more countries were closing their doors to missionaries.

Instead of sponsoring more overseas visits, the ILWML Discipling Woman to Woman program turned its focus to ethnic women in North America. A seminar brought district presidents and DWW coordinators together with 46 women of varying ethnicity—Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Bahamian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, Filipino, Laotian, Cambodian, Hmong, Cuban, Puerto Rican and Indonesian—all of them active in U.S. or Canadian congregations. To continue the minority mission emphasis, 11 ethnic women were invited as guests of the League at its four-day 50th anniversary convention in Cleveland in 1991.

DWW funds also enabled President Duda and Anita Gaede, former Vice President for Mission Service, to spend 20 days in Korea visiting Lutheran churches and ILWML mission projects and to attend the general assembly of the Korea United Lutheran Women and the assembly of the Lutheran Church of Korea.

Yet, despite the outstanding accomplishments of the ILWML during its first 50 years, despite the many ways the Lord had blessed the organ-



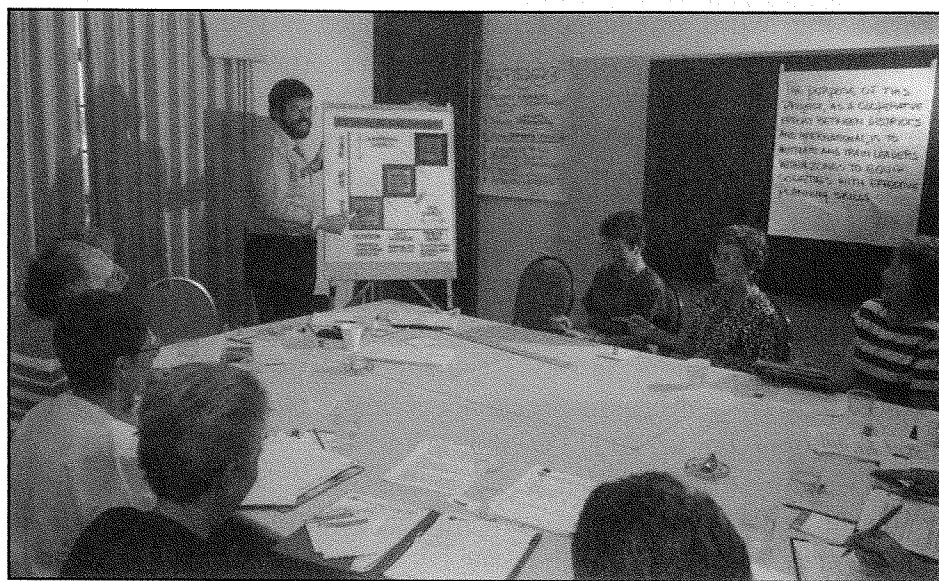
Betty Duda presents LCMS President Ralph A. Bohlmann with the first Head of Christ hologram, an LCMS witnessing tool developed in 1989. Over the next two years 82,000 were distributed.

ization and its members, and despite predictions of an even greater future that the 1991 Jubilee convention speakers would make, the organization was entering an era of unprecedented new challenges.

This became particularly evident to President Duda when she participated in a Concordia Publishing House meeting of women writers and speakers. The purpose of the consultation was to determine what types of books and spiritual materials were desired by modern Christian women. As the discussion progressed, Betty was shocked to see how little some attendees thought of the ILWML. Some said it was dull, dead or dying and no longer met the needs of women of the church, especially the younger generation. Some called it a collection of "old ladies' aids," claiming that quilting, knitting and crocheting were what the League did best.

"That really crushed me—I was really down," Betty said. But, as a result, "we took a good look at ourselves and lots of good things came into being."

One was Effective Society Planning (ESP). It began with the adoption of a new succinct mission statement: "The mission of the ILWML is to assist each woman of the LCMS and the LCC (Lutheran Church Canada) in affirming her relationship with the Triune God so that she may use her gifts in ministry to the people of the world."



EPS session led by Les Stroh, the author and trainer for ESP program.

Six critical targets were listed: Younger women, women in the workplace, women who joined ILWML from 1942–76, local congregations, LCMS clergy, and Synod leadership. Later a seventh—ethnic women—was added. Goal statements were developed for each target that were SMART (Specific, Measurable, Acceptable, and Realistic within designated Timelines).

Under the leadership of Ida Mall, the League's first Program Planner, who was appointed in 1989, and with the aid of an \$80,000 grant from Aid Association for Lutherans, ESP training was conducted in districts, then in zones and societies, to teach women the value of planning as opposed to simply organizing. Planning under the ESP approach involved developing a statement of purpose, doing a needs assessment of members and non-members, establishing critical targets, writing goal statements, and evaluating activities in light of the mission statement. An interactive video was produced as a training tool.

A Joyous Celebration

The value of ESP would be determined in the decades to come. In the meantime, the League celebrated its jubilee at its 24th biennial convention.

It was a JOYOUS celebration—all that the planners had prayed for and more!

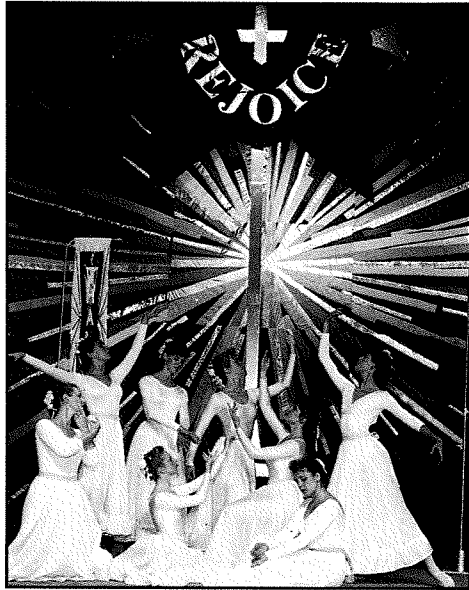
“Trumpets sounded...the organ played...lights flashed...people prayed...the Word proclaimed...voices praised...joy expressed...hands upraised.” Thus the *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly* described the ILWML's 50th anniversary convention held June 27-30, 1991, in Cleveland, Ohio, where 7,232 delegates and guests gathered to “remember, respond, reach out and rededicate” under the theme, “Celebrate the Jubilee—Glorify His Name!”

From the opening gavel to the closing on-stage fireworks display, it was an unforgettable gathering marked by outstanding speakers, music, liturgical dance, a moving historical pageant, a magnificent stage backdrop, helpful workshops, inspiring worship services, dedication of a new 42-pound silver and bronze processional cross, cheers, waves of light, and the adoption of a \$1,111,000 mission goal.

As Housing Chairman Jan Wendorf carried in the new processional cross, she could hear people commenting, “Beautiful...stunning...wow!” “I knew they weren't talking about me but the cross!” Jan said afterwards, adding this sidelight: “The next day in the workers' room, a woman came

up to me and said, 'Are you the woman who is carrying the cross?' When I replied, 'Yes,' she said, 'You look so much younger on stage!'" Jan took it in stride, concluding, "I guess the Lord knew I needed a dose of humility at that time!" Jan continued her ILWML involvement and in 2001 was elected Vice President of Christian Life.

Symbolic of LWML unity, the huge stage backdrop provided a sunburst of radiance behind a large free-standing cross, bedecked with a banner proclaiming, "Rejoice." The backdrop consisted of 45 sections each made by a different LWML district and sewn together by a St. Louis firm.



Interpretive Dancers "Rejoice" with Hallelujah Chorus at the 50th Anniversary Convention in Cleveland Ohio, 1991.

The convention included a banquet to which Leaguers wore hats and gloves, just as the founders did to the first convention. The purple dresses of host committee members aroused the curiosity of Clevelanders. One businessman told a friend he had figured out who they were—Lutheran nuns!

"The women of the ILWML have been teaching The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod the spirit of mission and celebration for 50 years," LCMS President Ralph Bohlmann commented in his convention remarks.

Recalling the Old Testament Jubilee year when all debts were cancelled, property reverted to original owners and slaves were set free, Lutheran Hour Speaker Dale Meyer said, "For the children of Israel the year of jubilee was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, but our freedom in Jesus is for every day, every moment. Each time we hear God's Word preached, study it, commune with Him in prayer or talk of Christ with each other, we are entering into the year of jubilee."

Communion Service Preacher Oswald Hoffman challenged the women with "two great needs of the church today—open proclamation of the Gospel and open testimony of the fruits of faith in our lives."

Missionaries gave first-hand accounts of life in mission fields from Africa and Latin America to New Guinea and Hong Kong. Urging a changed view of missions, Dr. Edward Westcott, retired director of the LCMS Board for Missions, said, "Look what's happening! He's dropping refugees right next to you. By design, He's turning this country into the largest mission field in the world. At the same time, He's opening doors all over the world."

"Reach out and touch someone with a different twist," Marilyn Bader, chairman of the LCMS Board for Youth Services, challenged the Leaguers. "Reach out and tell someone what He has done!" She emphasized that "being a disciple in your hometown is more important than the job you might have."

The audience also appreciated the story Bader told of a strong man who took a lemon and squeezed all the juice out. Then he dared someone to get more out of it. A frail, elderly woman took the lemon and squeezed until juice poured all over the table and down to the floor. "How did you do that?" he asked in amazement. "Easy," she answered, "For 31 years I was treasurer of our local LWML."

Stressing the importance of women and the LWML in the church, Dr. Paul Maier, professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University, shared these nuggets:

—"There's no question the church is behind you women because in so many ways you are ahead of the church!"

—"How do you respond to the quantum leap in the women's movement of the last 50 years? Yesterday's suffragettes are today's senators. As professor of ancient history, I cringe at the Rabbinical prayer thanking God for making me a man instead of a slave, Gentile or woman."

—"But Scripture has a higher view of women than other literature. It cites Deborah (the political and religious leader), Queen Esther, Prophetess Huldah whose batting average was 100 percent, and Mary, the bearer of Jesus."

—"If you read between the lines, there were as many women followers of Jesus as men. The males in the Passion Story failed. They didn't stay awake, or they abandoned Him. All the women came out in a positive light, coming through when the chips were down, staying at the cross until the end, being the first witnesses of the Resurrection. They were first at the cradle and last at the cross."

—“Paul writes there is neither male nor female. If only church and society had adhered to that treatment of women!”

—“This late in history, right here in God-blessed America, some argue against woman suffrage in the church. They should be embarrassed it came this late.”

—“The LWML skirted the movement to get rid of non-gender nomenclature such as ‘Father, Son.’ You chose the positive. No other organization on earth is so Biblically oriented. You’ve kept your sanctified senses. Your contributions are a tremendous blessing to the church. You see the need and respond with most creative and successful programs. You respond with trumpets to the goal of the founders, inspiring the rest of Synod by your admirable success.”

—“I predict the next 50 years will be awesome. A few among the clergy need education on the advantages of LWML for their church and ministry. I have no doubt you can reach them.” (Quotations are from *Lutheran Woman’s Quarterly*, Fall 1991.)

Other firsts:

- A future planning committee was established in 1988.
- A Task Force on Abuse was added, with Pearl Biar as chairman, 1990.
- A Canadian Committee was established in 1988 to found the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League - Canada. The ILWML provided seed money and two years later approved a protocol document covering the future relationships of the two organizations.
- The LCMS convention passed a resolution making the presidents of the ILWML and the ILLL advisory members of the LCMS Mission Services Board. It was noted that, second only to the 6,000 congregations of Synod, the ILWML was the largest individual contributor to the Synod’s mission outreach program.
- As a follow-up to the DWW visits, all congregations in England were added to the Quarterly mailing list.
- “A Light That Endures” program was created as a planned giving partnership with the LCMS Stewardship department in 1990.
- Karen Curry, hired as the League’s first Financial Director in 1989, was appointed to the LCMS Council on Stewardship. At least 10 other Leaguers were appointed to various LCMS boards and committees during this period. In 1997, Karen was elected to the Board of Trustees of the LCMS Foundation, which then managed assets of more than \$558 million to provide income for the Lord’s work.

Chapter Five

Chosen to Lead *(Presidents of the LWML, 1942–1991)*

Obviously the progress of the LWML's first 50 years could not have been achieved without the guidance and blessing of the Lord. To accomplish this, He utilized the abilities of some uniquely talented women, both as leaders and members. Due to space limitations, this chapter concentrates on the presidents, even though everyone who has served in a leadership role has stories of how they were blessed and challenged by their positions.

All the national/international presidents were deeply dedicated to enabling and encouraging women to share the Gospel. Yet each possessed very different gifts and personalities, and each seems especially suited for the era in which she served.

Clara Schmitt, 1942–1947: ***An Exceptional Organizer***

The first LWML president, Clara (Mrs. Otto) Schmitt of St. Louis, Missouri, brought to her new role outstanding organizational ability and extensive leadership experience. Dedicated and efficient, she had worked for 14 years to gain support for a national organization of LCMS women. After participating in the 1929 LLL meeting, she served as president of the expansive Western District LWL.

An amazing woman, Clara Louise



Clara Schmitt

Elizabeth Senniger Schmitt was one of the few young women to graduate from the only high school in St. Louis in 1895. She was offered a four-year scholarship to Washington University but decided instead to work in her father's business, the Senniger and Schmitt Wallpaper and Painting Co. Upon his death, she inherited a portion of the company and became a full legal partner with co-owner, Otto Schmitt, whom she married in 1900. They liked to travel and made an annual trip to New York City to purchase wallpaper stock.

Otto was an artist who also enjoyed wrestling and weight-lifting. The couple raised their three children well, and the two sons became internationally known scientists. When a daughter, Viola, was widowed after just nine years of marriage, the Schmitts welcomed her back home with her five children. At one time Mrs. Schmitt's mother and mother-in-law also lived with the family.

Well off but not wealthy, the Schmitts "didn't make a lot of money but they gave a lot away—to the poor and the church," said Rev. Kenneth Young, one of Viola's children, who recalls his grandfather distributing clothes to the people who lived in cardboard shacks along the Mississippi River.

The Schmitt home was "filled with fun and laughter," Pastor Young added. They had animals galore, including at various times pet snakes, pigeons, champion Great Danes, a mockingbird, canaries, dogs, horses, an opossum and a wolf! Pastor Young described his grandmother as "a good speaker...a unique combination of kindness, tact and determination...a woman with a lot of 'get up and go'...a real organizer!"

In her photos, Clara always looked like an ordinary German *hausfrau*, and her hair style never changed. There was good reason! One day her home hair dryer shorted and set her hair on fire. The family housekeeper extinguished the blaze, saving Clara's life. While others might have become recluses after such a horrible experience, Mrs. Schmitt simply donned a wig and got busy again when her scalp was healed. After all, she always believed that women could and should do a lot more in the church!

As LWML president, "busy" meant traveling and speaking extensively to promote the League. It also meant mailing *Quarterlies*, membership applications and society membership certificates from her home to those who requested them, as well as 2,000 handbooks and almost 50,000 mite boxes. Until the LWML rented an office, she even stored the extra copies of back issues of the *Quarterly* at her home.

When wartime paper shortages made it difficult to get paper for printing the *Quarterly*, she boldly wrote to Washington twice to secure paper allocations. Although the Executive Board finally granted the president \$50 a month for secretarial help in 1945, Mrs. Schmitt suffered a breakdown in 1946, requiring hospitalization and a long period of rest. Upon her death in 1950, the LWML purchased a baptismal font for the Lutheran Church of the Deaf, Cleveland, Ohio, as a memorial.

Her legacy to the League was a solid organizational foundation.

Sadie Fulk Roehrs, 1947–1953:

Focused on Missions



Sadie Fulk Roehrs

As the first LWML national president who was a convert to Lutheranism, Sadie Fulk Roehrs insisted that the sole purpose and focus of the LWML was MISSIONS! Raised in a devout Christian home in Indiana, she was typical of the church members of her day, for this was a period when people flocked to mission festivals, foreign mission work expanded dramatically, and most Christian children at one time or another dreamed of becoming a missionary.

President Roehrs' biggest concern, which she continued to voice until her death in 1962, was that the League would forsake its missionary emphasis.

"Urgency is pressed upon us not to rest until all have heard," she wrote in her first message to members. How she rejoiced when LWML membership reached 100,000 because this meant 100,000 women praying, studying and working for missions!

A tall, dignified woman of English descent, with dark wavy hair and blue eyes, Sadie had a natural reserve. Yet she allowed her stepdaughters, Marian and Charlotte, to call her by her first name, perhaps because of their ages, 12 and 8, when Sadie married their father.

After teaching elementary school for two years, Sadie decided to change her profession and enrolled at the International Business College, Fort Wayne, Indiana, studying bookkeeping. She also took a Bible

Training course at Moody Bible Institute and taught Sunday school for 20 years.

Her business training led to a position with a coal company, partly owned by J. William Roehrs. After his first wife was killed in a car accident, Roehrs chose the serene, sedate Sadie as his second wife, bringing her into a large, informal German family with many relatives. She was middle-aged by then, and he was considerably older, but they had 10 good years together before he died.

“One thing I always remember about Sadie was her reading,” said stepdaughter Marian Roehrs Meyer of St. Louis, Missouri. “She was an avid reader. She always read her Bible and frequently read it aloud to her aged, sight-impaired father when he came to visit. She was well-read on many other subjects. She could talk about politics and current events and almost any subject and had very much her own opinion on things” (*Quarterly*, Spring 1982, p. 21).

After joining the Lutheran Church at the time of her marriage, Sadie became active in her local Ladies’ Aid and was elected its president in 1941. Her talents were quickly recognized, and she was appointed to the Organization Committee of the Central District LWML, becoming its first president from 1942–1946. In this capacity, she served on the national LWML Executive Board from its beginning. In 1943, she chaired the national LWML convention in Fort Wayne.

As the League’s first historian, she compiled the LWML’s first *Facts and Figures* booklet, presenting the statistics in a play format. It featured Mrs. Woodknow, Mrs. Lovall, and Mrs. Gotell, who described the League’s story as “a real thriller!” Board members enjoyed Sadie’s speeches so much that they had them mimeographed!

Re-elected in 1949 and 1951, Sadie and her successor were the only two national LWML presidents to serve for



At the 1943 LWML convention, Chairman Sadie Fulk Roehrs shows LCMS President John Behnken (left) and Rev. W.C. Birkner, a model of Grace Lutheran Church, Muncie, Indiana, built with the help of a \$4,000 gift from the Central District Women's Missionary Endeavor, one of the LWML predecessor organizations. Sadie served as the Endeavor president.

six years. A very caring individual, Sadie often went to the depot to welcome new district presidents the first time they came to board meetings. She loved to travel and even made a trip around the world.

During her term, the LWML experienced the largest growth in its entire history (from 87,000 to 194,000 members), solidified its focus on missions, pledged to cooperate with all Synod efforts to promote evangelism, and became international in membership (but not in name) when the first Canadian society joined in 1948.

Lillian Preisinger, 1953–1959: *Steadfast Amidst Controversy*



Lillian Preisinger

A dynamic woman of principle and determination, Lillian Preisinger faced some tough decisions during her presidency. The most difficult was the cancellation of the New Orleans convention because of hotel segregation rules. The Walther League and LLL had met there previously, but they had no black delegates. The LWML did.

After sleepless nights, much prayer, and hundreds of letters, telegrams and phone calls with Synod leaders and League members, Lillian cancelled the convention and opted for a delegate-only gathering in Colorado the next year.

She also faced controversy when the League established a Day of Prayer with a suggested order of service. Some pastors believed this was not the province of the League, and some members feared the pastors' reaction would damage the LWML's good image. Leaders persevered, nevertheless, and soon a new service was published annually in the *Quarterly*. When the League began its own Leadership Training Program, the president also had to deal with pastoral skeptics.

But Lillian was a woman who knew how to overcome obstacles. As a newlywed, she traveled with her pastor husband (Rev. Arthur Preisinger) to Hamilton, Ontario, where the "church" was an unfurnished store. They started with a kitchen table for the altar. By the time they left, a "lovely

little chapel” had been established.

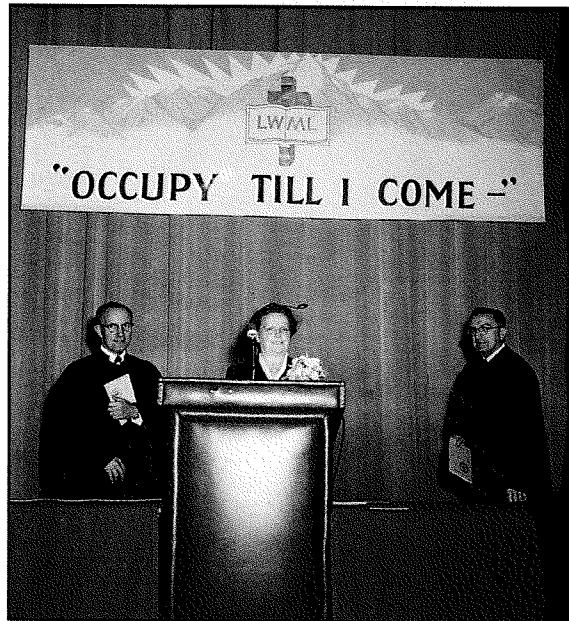
A parochial school teacher in her home congregation before her marriage, Lillian taught Sunday school for 35 years. The Preisingers had four children, three sons and a daughter, all grown by the time Lillian was elected LWML vice president in 1947. Their daughter was a nurse, and all three sons followed in their father’s footsteps and became pastors—and they also married pastor’s daughters.

Lillian’s 12 years in national LWML offices took her away from home a great deal. This left her husband to fend for himself, sometimes for days at a time. Yet she never heard one word of complaint.

Her daughter had a different reaction, as Lillian reported in the Summer 1982 *Quarterly*: “My daughter said she was proud of her mother but nevertheless somewhat disappointed that I was not there when her second child was born. She felt that the axiom, ‘Charity begins at home,’ certainly applied. Where was mother? She was conventioning.

“All three boys thought that having the same name as the president of the LWML was good public relations for them. Besides, they said, it gave them a sense of family pride.” When son David took a call to Hawaii, the parents visited, and Lillian had an opportunity to see Redeemer Church, a 1949 LWML project, and to attend an LWML zone rally.

Lillian liked to laugh about one embarrassing convention experience. Returning to her hotel room at noon to freshen up, she found herself in the bathroom with an uncooperative lock. She couldn’t get out! When she failed to appear to open the afternoon session, a hotel employee was sent



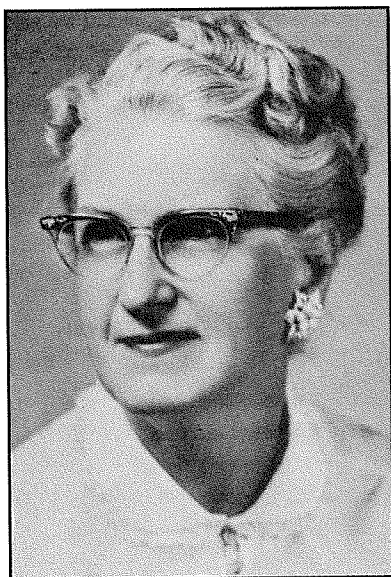
“Occupy Till I Come” was the theme of the delegates-only convention held in Denver in 1956. President Preisinger is at the podium. With her are the Rev. O.J. Reeb, Liturgist, and the Rev. H.H. Hellbusch, speaker.

to check on her. Freed, she hustled down to the convention hall and sheepishly walked to the podium amidst applause. The president had arrived at last!

Mrs. Preisinger is remembered for her courageous effort to assure the inclusion of women of all races, the beginning of leadership training, establishment of an annual LWML Day of Prayer, and creation of a Christian Growth Committee.

Emma Hoppe, 1959–1963:

Gracious and Inspirational



Emma Hoppe

Always gracious and tactful, Emma Hoppe was a woman of vision and intelligence who inspired many other women to become involved in LWML. Tall, slim and stately, she could also be witty and had a keen sense of humor, making her a popular toastmistress.

“Her ready smile, willing hands and keen mind were always there to help,” says Alberta Barnes, who admits to standing in awe of Emma initially. So did many others. Emma’s charisma led Alberta to become more than a “mite box member,” a decision that eventually led her to the presidency also.

Born on a farm near Pittsburg, Kansas, Emma, a typical “little German girl,” attended Zion Parochial School and went on to become valedictorian of her high school class. She continued her education at Kansas State Teachers College and Kansas University and for three years taught German and sewing in her hometown high school.

Emma moved to Lakewood, Ohio, when she married Walter N. Hoppe. Their union was blessed with one son and three grandchildren and lasted until his death 65 years later. Theirs was a real partnership. Emma loved homemaking and enjoyed cooking and sewing, but she did not type. So, during all the offices she held in Cleveland women’s clubs, Lutheran institutional auxiliaries and the LWML, Walter served as her secretary and did all her typing.

An experienced parliamentarian, she held membership in the National Association of Parliamentarians, leading one male author to suggest that she should be the parliamentarian for Synod conventions. In 1956, she was the first woman ever to receive the *Lumen Christi* (Light of Christ) award given annually by Valparaiso University in recognition of outstanding service by a layperson.

In LWML, she was instrumental in organizing her local society and served on the Central District League Executive Committee from its beginning, becoming president from 1946–1950.

Despite her honors and widely recognized skills, she was still a very humble lady and during her senior years did not think it beneath



Mrs. Walter N. Hoppe, LWML President, speaking with missionaries.

her dignity to serve as a waitress in a small restaurant. She was 98-1/2 years old when she died in 1989.

During Emma Hoppe's term, the Mission Service Committee was established and the LWML was recognized as the official women's auxiliary of the LCMS. The 20th anniversary issue of the *Quarterly* had a circulation of 260,000.

Eula Hankel, 1963–1967:

Strengthened in Christ

Eula Hankel's presidency was a time of turmoil and transformation in the U.S. The country was bombarded with race riots, and the citizenry was in shock over the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

In March 1965, Eula was scheduled to participate in the dedication of the Rosa Young Dormitory, an LWML project at Alabama Lutheran Academy and College in Selma, Alabama. Although others worried about her attending, she was not afraid "because I knew the Lord would go with me." When the situation got worse, the ceremony was postponed, but



Eula Hankel

three months later, Eula was there, thrilled to be able to walk in hand-in-hand with Rosa Young, who by then was quite elderly.

Another thrill was celebrating the 25th anniversary of the LWML and working with Ruth Meyer, author of the League's 25-year history, *Women on A Mission*. Together with Past Presidents Lillian Preisinger and Emma Hoppe, they autographed 500 copies of the book during the convention boat cruise down the Potomac River.

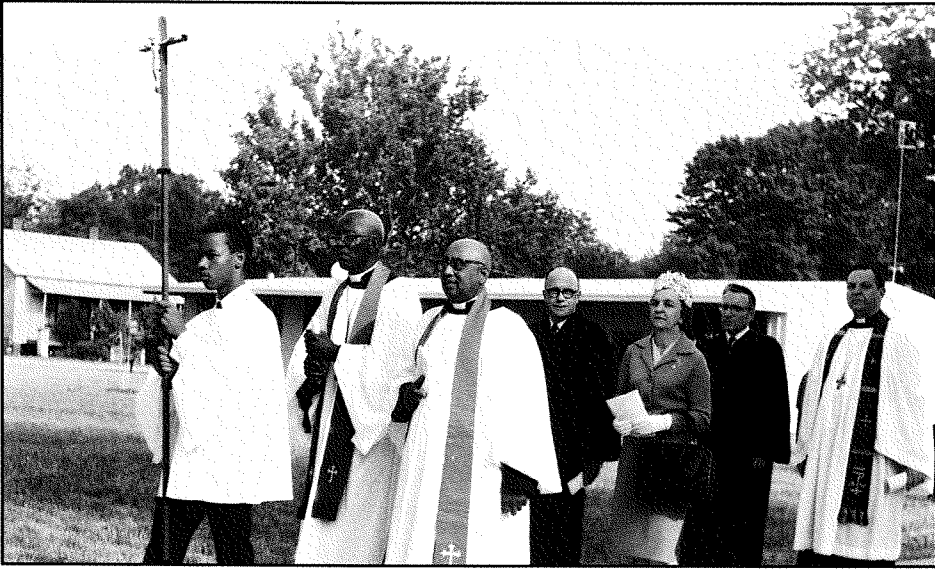
Prior to holding national office, one of Eula's first LWML challenges was preparing for the 1956 delegate convention in Colorado after the cancellation of the 1955 gathering planned for New Orleans. The committee, which she chaired, had only a few months to plan for it, but "with God's help and everyone's cooperation, we were ready."

Eula often spent her time marking New Testaments for evangelism gifts while flying to meetings. When one stewardess commented that she didn't know where her own Bible was, Eula gave her one and was overjoyed a few months later to receive a note from the stewardess saying that she had read it and was attending church again.

The flight Eula would never forget was the trip home after her election as president. Colorado Leaguers gave her a beautiful corsage to celebrate her new responsibility. When a stewardess inquired about the reason for the flowers, the airline went into VIP mode. Not only did Eula and her husband, Gil, receive a bottle of champagne, but upon their arrival in Denver, a red carpet was unrolled for their walk into the airport, and they were escorted off the plane first!

Not always did Eula enjoy such royal transportation. Because the elevators were so busy during the Washington, D.C., convention, she humbly rode the freight elevator to get to meetings on time!

Educated at the Denver University School of Commerce and experienced as a bookkeeper and stenographer, Eula was well prepared for her



President Eula Hankel joins the procession at the dedication of the new Rosa J. Young Women's Hall on the campus of Selma Academy and College.

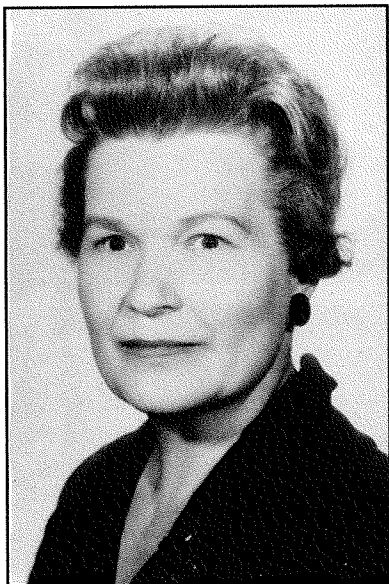
first International LWML office as corresponding secretary. She also had experience as a district LWML president and was a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians and several Denver area boards. Nevertheless, when elected International LWML president, she felt very inadequate, so she took as her theme verse, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

During Eula Hankel's term, members were encouraged and trained in personal witnessing. The League began publishing an annual Bible study, and many societies started small group studies led by members. Several studies focussed on Christian concern for human needs.

Eula died in January 2005.

Evelyn Hartman, 1967–1971: *Her Passion: Winning "Lost Souls"*

The third International LWML president to have the initials "E.H.," Evelyn Hartman of Richland, Washington, was the first from the far west, the first whose husband was not a Lutheran (he was a Christian Scientist), and the first to still have children at home during her term. High school students Ruth, 16, and Ted, 19, were "pretty well accustomed" to their mother's travels, for she had been Washington District President and



Evelyn Hartman

International First Vice President before election to the presidency.

Another son, Warren, 24, lived in Seattle. For him the Washington, D.C., convention brought a special blessing—a bride. It was there he met Joanne Nieman, daughter of Lorraine Nieman, International Recording Secretary. Their marriage a year later was blessed with four children, and the family later spent time in Jos, Nigeria, as houseparents for children of missionaries. Evelyn had a special interest in Nigeria because the development of a language center there was an LWML project she had promoted, and left-over monies from a previous African project helped build ELM House,

where the missionary children stayed to get an education.

An attractive, charming woman, Evelyn was an excellent seamstress who enjoyed making liturgical vestments and paraments. She sewed most of her own and her daughter's clothing. Her good sense of humor was obvious when she wore a purchased suit to one meeting. As another officer walked in wearing an identical outfit, Evelyn announced, "Just call us the Gold Dust twins!"

Throughout her term, Evelyn faced health problems, making it impossible for her to attend some meetings. As others filled in for her, they gained experience, though, and were prepared for future leadership roles. In a 1969 letter informing the officers that her doctor had ordered two months of rest because of high blood pressure and exhaustion, Evelyn wrote, "I sincerely crave your prayers that my Lord will see fit to restore me to a measure of health so that I can continue to serve Him and the League, both of whom I love so dearly!" The prayers were answered. Vice-President Florence Montz became acting president in the interim.

With her passion for sharing Christ with "lost souls," Evelyn was delighted to attend the dedication of LWML-funded chapels in Chinatown, San Francisco, and Kenai, Alaska. She was also thankful that her health permitted her to attend the Lutheran Women's Consultation in Sweden.

“Evelyn recognized the beginnings of a new role for women in the church,” noted Second Vice-President Lillian Swanson (Fall 1982 *Quarterly*, p. 22). “In 1967, she said, ‘I hope to see women voting in the church while I’m still alive.’ That wish was granted just two years later.

“Those of us who worked with Evelyn admired her deep loyalty. She could be counted on for support, empathy and sisterly love,” Lillian added. “She was well aware that the LWML is not the International Executive Committee but rather the members living in town and country, and she made every effort to get acquainted with the grassroots.”

In recognition of her devotion to the Lord and the League, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, bestowed its Christus Vivit (Christ lives in you) award on Evelyn “and in her person on all of you (LWML members)” at the League’s 1971 Louisville convention. The award praised her devoted work for the church, her administrative strength and her leadership by example.

At the close of her presidency, Evelyn was appointed to the LCMS Board of Evangelism. She was later elected to two consecutive four-year terms and served as the Board secretary for nine years.

Evelyn died in December 2002 at age 86. In a tribute at the 2003 convention, Florence Montz used an acrostic to describe Evelyn: E = Encourager; V = Valiant; E = Evian; L = Living for Christ; Y = Yes (Evelyn was “yes” person); N = New. (Her approach to mission/ministry in LWML was “on with the new!”) Evian, a city in France, was the site of a Lutheran World Federation Assembly. Evelyn was the first woman to be appointed as an official LCMS visitor to the Assembly. When she became ill and was unable to attend at the last minute, she called Florence, asking, “How would you like a free trip to France?” Without hesitating, Florence answered, “I’d love to go!”



The emblem of the Liga das Senhoras Luteranas do Brasil was presented to President Hartman by Mrs. Elmer Reimnitz of Brazil at the Louisville convention.

During her presidency, Evelyn Hartman demonstrated that one could serve despite health problems. With the commissioning of two “Bridge Builders to Japan,” her term became a period of expanded interest in the role of Christian women in other countries. When the LCMS adopted woman suffrage in 1969, LWML convention delegates encouraged women to use “their talents and abilities in building the kingdom of God on the parish level.”

Florence Montz, 1971–1975:
A Calm Influence Amidst Synod Storms



Florence Montz

Just 46 years old when she was elected president, Florence Montz was at that time the youngest woman to head the LWML. However, she was experienced as a board member of Dakota Boys Ranch, through her activities in medical and hospital auxiliaries, and as North Dakota LWML president.

While growing up on a farm in eastern Iowa, Florence attended Trinity Lutheran School in Lowden and graduated with honors from the local high school. She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from the University of Iowa. Bob (C.R.) Montz a young man from her community, was also studying there to become a doctor. The two married in 1947 and had two children, Jennifer and Frederick (Rick). Jennifer was in college and Rick in high school when Florence became LWML president.

As a nurse who had lived in Italy for a year, visited missions in South America and toured England, it was natural that “mission” to Florence meant serving the needs of the total person: body, soul, and mind, as she indicated in the League’s first mission statement, which she wrote as a preamble to the bylaws.

Refusing to let the League get bogged down in Synod issues resulting from the “walkout” of many professors and students at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Florence made peace and joy in Jesus her goals for



President Florence Montz presents the keys for a new Cessna plane to the Rev. Lester Stahlke, Executive Director of Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots (LAMP). In gratitude, LAMP named the plane CF-LWM.

the LWML. Cooperation and communication were hallmarks of her administration, beginning with “Montz Memos,” mailed monthly to the LWML Board of Directors, and the installation of an LWML phone line in her home.

Her *Quarterly* column, “What Is an Auxiliary?” laid the groundwork for the “Criteria for LCMS Auxiliaries and Listed Service Organizations” adopted at the 1979 Synod convention. She also instituted Bible study at each Executive Committee and Board meeting, and she continued the small group discussion format for convention Bible studies.

For Florence, the presidency led to opportunities to serve her church in other capacities. Shortly after the end of her term she became president of the LCMS Council for Christian Medical Work. One of her concerns was pastoral health, so she founded *Better Health*, a periodical to encourage pastors to take good care of their bodies.

In 1975 Florence was asked to head the Synod’s medical mission program around the world. She filled that role, without taking a salary, until 1983 when she became the first woman elected to the LCMS Board of Directors. (Synod employees may not serve on the Board.)

The medical mission leadership required traveling to every area of the world where the LCMS was involved in medical outreach—Guatemala, El Salvador, India, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea. From 1976 to 1983, besides her home in Bismarck, North Dakota, Florence maintained

an apartment in St. Louis. Either she or Bob would fly to see the other on weekends. It worked, she says, because their children were grown and Bob was at the busiest time of his career, during which he delivered 15,000 babies. It also helped that whenever she was about to enter another field, Bob took the time to accompany her at his expense on the first visit.

Her role in each country was to assess the needs and find people to serve as health workers in small villages. In each case, she says, “The Synod was there because we wanted to share Christ, so as the health worker dealt with medical problems, training was always provided in Christian living.”

Over the last 20 years, Florence has been a popular speaker at church conventions and events. At the 1996 Assembly of Leaders, she described the qualities of a good leader: “Leadership is NOT control, not status-seeking, not something that is imported—it comes from within. It does not mean you must have a certain type of personality—I’ve seen leaders at work who are quiet and soft spoken. One would hardly notice them in a crowd. When we use the word, ‘leadership,’ in the church, we really mean ‘followership.’ An empowered leader is a faithful follower, not of a movement nor blindly following another human being, but a follower of THE ONE!”

Then she challenged the LWML leaders to ask: “Are we a living League marching into the future? Or have we boxed God and ourselves into the present or the past? Are we so preoccupied with the today of our lives that we no longer dream or do any visioning toward the future, much less planning for change?”

Recognizing her contributions to the church, both Concordia College, Bronxville, New York, and Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota, have each awarded Florence an honorary doctorate. In 1975, the State of North Dakota designated her “Woman of the Year in Religion,” and in 1998, her district LWML named her “Mrs. LWML of North Dakota.” For its 2000 convention, the district LWML created a CD tribute to her years of service in the LWML and LCMS. It’s still available for viewing.

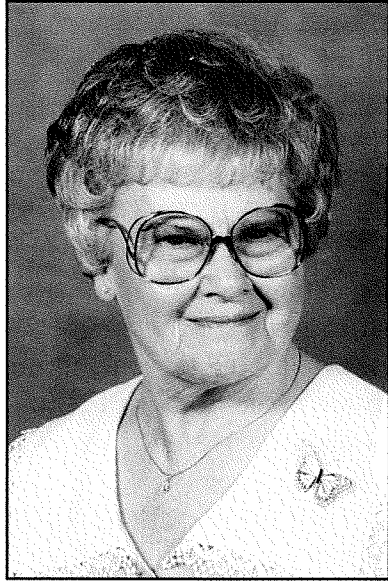
In the LWML, Florence is remembered especially for maintaining peace in a situation that could have torn the League apart. The League also established sister relationships with Lutheran women in overseas sister churches, and Florence was the first president to travel to an overseas

sister auxiliary convention (Brazil in 1975). The League also encouraged congregations, districts and Synod leaders to nominate or appoint women in large numbers to councils, committees, boards, and commissions at all levels of the organized church.

Helen Morris, 1975–1979:

Traveling with the Lord

After growing up in simple surroundings in Nebraska, Helen Morris became an elementary teacher and youth director. Not until her marriage to William (Bill) Morris and the birth of their son, Bill, Jr., did Helen join her local LWML society. “We had been hiring a babysitter for bridge club and other things we wanted to do,” she said, “so it seemed we needed to get our priorities straight and do the same for the Lord.” Before long, she was holding a district office.



Helen Morris

The couple moved from Nebraska to Mankato, Minnesota, when Bill, Sr., took a teaching/administrative position at Minnesota State College. Her LWML involvement continued, leading to district offices in Minnesota. She also held PTA offices, was president of the College Faculty Wives, president of the Community Study Club, a member of the Library Guild, and a Bible study leader.

During her presidency, the League established a Program Planning Council that selected annual emphases for ILWML programs. Helen was also appointed as an advisory member of the LCMS Task Force on Women, which began gathering names of capable women who were willing to accept appointments to LCMS committees and boards. This led to a Talent Bank in the ILWML too.

Although Helen did not enjoy flying, she accepted many speaking engagements as ILWML president—always with the words, “The Lord and I will be there.” When questioned about this, she assured people, “I never travel alone.”

Despite her dislike of airplanes, Helen and Bill did fly in a small

LAMP (Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots) plane to visit LAMP missionaries in northern Canada. As they crossed a lake 100 miles wide, the motor began to sputter. Fortunately, the problem was solved when the pilot switched to the extra gasoline tank, but the experience did nothing to change Helen's attitude toward flying.



Installation of Officers 1975, St Paul Convention. (L to R) Rev. Eugene Kramer, outgoing Counselor; Helen Morris, President; Helen Gienapp, First Vice-President; Edna Eickemeyer, Financial Secretary; Lois Dankenbring, Mission Project Secretary; Rev. Fred Stennfeld, Counselor.

In speaking to women's groups, she emphasized, "When you are asked to serve, the Lord isn't asking about your ability; He's asking about your availability. He never leaves you alone, and He's never more than a prayer away."

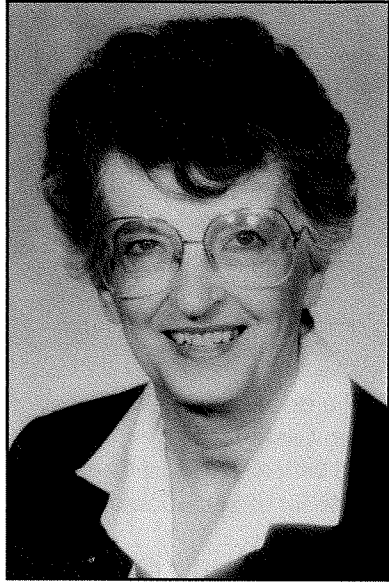
After her presidency, Helen continued her ILWML involvement, coordinating the third series of ILWML family life seminars in 1983–1984. Entitled "Strengthening the Christian Woman to Live in Today's World," they drew 12,000 participants. In addition, Helen served on the LAMP-USA Board of Directors and the LCMS Board for Evangelism. She also directed the Synod's "Forward in Remembrance" fund drive in her district. It went over the top! In recognition of her "outstanding service to the church," Concordia College, Seward, Nebraska, presented Helen with the Crest of Christ award.

During Helen's presidency, ties were strengthened with overseas sisters, Leaguers were encouraged to work for peace in the world, evangelism was emphasized at conventions, convention ingatherings were begun, program planning became more structured, and Helen had the joy of attending and offering the opening prayer at the filming of "The Stableboy's Christmas," a Lutheran TV special funded by the ILWML.

Helen Gienapp, 1979–1983:

A Family Affair

For the Gienapps, ILWML was a family commitment. Often present at League events with Helen were her mother, Mrs. Dorothea Fischer, and her daughter, Karen (Mrs. Donald) Soeken, President of the Chesapeake District LWML. At the 1983 Detroit convention, granddaughter Elizabeth Soeken was a page, making this a four-generation event. Karen also represented ILWML at the 1979 U.S. State Department Conference on the Decade for Women, which began in 1975.



Helen Gienapp

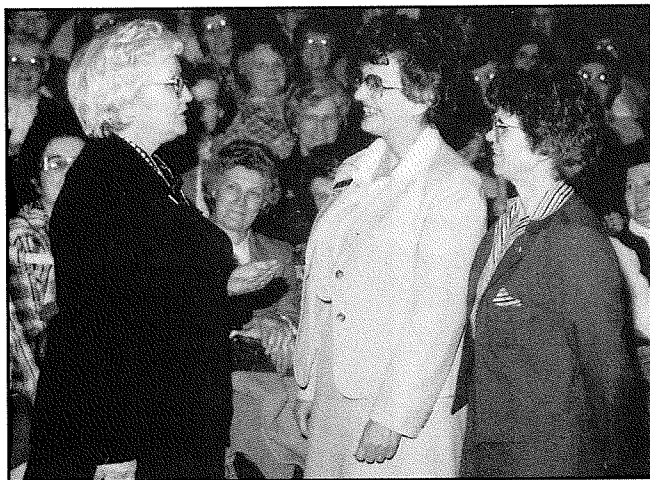
Helen's husband, Rev. Walter Gienapp, strongly supported her ILWML involvement, even seeking out the representative of a Lutheran charity to make a generous gift of thanksgiving when her election was announced.

The first person to hold a full-time job when elected, Helen was the executive assistant to the president of the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce, a position she continued for two years. At that point, she became a part-time legal secretary. She was a member of Professional Secretaries International and the Detroit Women's Economic Club.

Helen brought to her ILWML position not only business knowledge but also experience as the League's first Christian Leadership Training Coordinator. Utilizing her business insights, Helen modernized procedures, encouraged districts and societies to do likewise, and initiated a "Program of Work" booklet, a complete listing of ILWML programs and officers.

She was gratified when Leaguers brought a \$192,933 love offering to the 40th anniversary convention and when accomplishments of ILWML were included in "Catch the Vision," a 1979 NBC television special.

Following her term, Helen was tapped for Synod positions—Concordia College (Ann Arbor, MI) Foundation Board of Directors, English District Board of Directors and its President's Commission on



At the close of the 1983 Detroit convention, President Helen Gienapp (Center) thanks Convention Chairman Pearl Odren (left) and Convention Coordinator Anita Gaede for their dedication to the League.

Women. She served also as the Michigan coordinator for the American Bible Society and was an ABS speaker and Scripture Center volunteer.

Through MOST (Mission Opportunities Short Term) Ministries, Helen went to Ghana, Africa, in 1995 and Jakarta, Indonesia, in 2000 on eye glass distribution mis-

sions. She shared her experiences at the 2001 ILWML convention.

Helen is remembered in the ILWML for her emphasis on the training of leaders, creation of resources for recruiting members, and the improvement of organizational procedures, including the purchase of the first LWML office computer.

Alberta Barnes, 1983–1987:
***Community Activist and
Parliamentary Expert***

One area of training was ongoing during Alberta Barnes' presidency—parliamentary procedure. Not only was Alberta an excellent parliamentarian and a former teacher of parliamentary law, but she also had a deep appreciation of its purpose—fairness and equality for all. Hints on correct procedure were given regularly and practiced throughout board meetings and conventions.

Enlisted as a Sunday school teacher at



Alberta Barnes

age 16, Alberta continued for 32 years, and served as superintendent for the last 10. After graduating from college, she taught mathematics to engineering students for 12 years, and then “retired” to become a full-time homemaker in Cleveland, Ohio.

The “free time” she anticipated was short-lived. Within three months, an institutional chaplain asked her to help with that ministry. Before long, her volunteering expanded into community organizations, providing many new opportunities for witnessing. After serving on the American Cancer Society

Board of Directors and on the Board of Trustees of a workshop for people with developmental disabilities (for whom she organized a client Sunday school), she was elected president of the Federation of Women's Clubs of Greater Cleveland.

That office led to involvement with welfare, crime prevention, health and social agencies serving some 20 communities surrounding Cleveland as well as three counties in Ohio. Despite her busyness, she made sure there was time for her husband Ross, son Paul, daughter-in-law Gretchen, two grandchildren—and the ILWML.

Demonstrating his support for Alberta's ILWML involvement, her husband handcrafted a wooden holder for the convention candle. It was used for the first time at the 1985 Ames, Iowa, convention.

While ILWML president, Alberta was also appointed to the LCMS President's Commission on Women. Her ILWML goal was to prepare Leaguers for modern day service and witnessing. Unflappable at the podium, Alberta had no problem coping with a frog and snake brought on stage at the Ames convention for the joint committee report. Nor was she at a loss for words for the unveiling of a document fumigator funded by the ILWML for Concordia Historical Institute (CHI).

Alberta rejoiced at the Fort Worth convention when she learned that



President Alberta Barnes at the 1985 convention with Becky Brodd, youngest registered member.

two women from Japan had paid their own way to attend. As they were introduced, they presented her with a Sadao Watanabe painting. Not realizing its value, she kept it at home for awhile and then turned it over to Archivist-Historian Gladys Grovender. When Gladys took it to CHI, where the LWML archives are kept, officials were ecstatic. “That’s Naomi and Ruth,” they exclaimed, delighted to be able to display another Christian painting by this renowned Japanese artist, along with a few they already had.

In a tribute to Alberta’s leadership, Counselor Curtis Moermond admitted to wondering what the men were like who served under women like Indira Ghandi and Margaret Thatcher. He then thanked Alberta for teaching him an important lesson: “When God gives those unique talents of leadership, He does not restrict them to one gender.”

Alberta is remembered for her emphasis on orderly meetings, deepening Leaguers’ understanding of other cultures, sponsorship of luncheons for women at Synod convocations and conventions, presiding at the largest convention in ILWML history, and development of programs to link Leaguers through prayer and to increase their awareness of new resources.

Betty Duda, 1987–1991:

A Celebrating Servant

“Celebrate the Jubilee—Glorify His Name!” That 50th anniversary convention theme carried out Betty Duda’s primary goal when she became president.

Although she had ILWML experience as Florida-Georgia District president and International ILWML mission projects director, Betty did not expect to be elected president because she had not held an international position for two years. Her reaction: “When the mantle of the ILWML presidency is placed upon you, you can’t imagine how heavy it is—but with the Lord’s help, all things are possible.”

For that reason, she determined that everything during her term would be



Betty Duda

done for only one reason—to glorify the Lord. Secondly, she wanted the League to become a stronger faith and service organization that would attract and better represent all Lutheran women. “The League had done so much for me spiritually that I wanted every woman to experience it,” Betty said.

Betty brought to the presidency a strong sense of the importance of family and tradition, based on her Czechoslovakian upbringing in Chicago and deep compassion for sorrowing people as a result of the death of four-year-old Ruth, one of her six daughters.

Educated at Concordia College, River Forest, Illinois, Betty met her future husband, John L. Duda, when at age 18, she was assigned to do her student teaching at St. Luke Lutheran School, Oviedo, Florida. She had entered high school at age 12 and college at age 16. John’s family owned extensive acreage in Central Florida on which they raised fruits and vegetables, a business that has since expanded throughout the U.S.

As their children were growing up, Betty joined the ILWML at the encouragement of her mother-in-law, who was very involved in the organization. Grandmother Duda offered to babysit (Betty had four children in five years) whenever Betty went to a meeting that served the Lord.

For the first 15 years of her marriage, Betty concentrated on church and school activities. Then she began participating in numerous community organizations. This led to service on the boards of Reedy Creek Improvement District (Disney World), Winter Park Hospital, Rollins College, Sun Bank of Seminole, University of Florida Foundation, YMCA, and the Christian Service Center. She has also been president of the Junior League of Orlando, Loch Haven Art Center, Civic Theater, Community Coordinated Childcare, and Central Florida Zoo.

Her Disney connections gained greater appreciation for the ILWML as preparations for the Cleveland convention got underway. With Meeting Manager Marie Biesenthal, Betty was touring hotels near the convention center. The sales manager of one hotel apologized that she was unable to show them the presidential suite because Mickey Mouse was staying there in connection with the opening of a new Disney store. Venting her frustrations, the woman complained about how carefully the Disney people protected the identity of Mickey, even requiring the cleaning staff to call before going in the suite. Betty quietly consoled her, “I know. I am on the Board of Directors for Disney!” From then on the hotel rep demon-

strated new respect for Betty and the ILWML!

In Lutheran circles, Betty has served on the boards of Wheat Ridge Foundation, Aid Association for Lutherans, POBLO (People of the Book Lutheran Outreach) and Mill Neck Manor. The first woman elected to the board of a Synod college (Concordia, Bronxville, New York), Betty served as its chairman for five years and was the first woman to hold that position. Subsequently she was on the Concordia, St. Paul, Minnesota, board for nine years, and currently is on the board of Concordia, River Forest, Illinois.

She also chairs the boards of Lutheran World Relief, Baltimore, Maryland, and Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots - US, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In 1998, she became the third woman elected to the LCMS Board of Directors and was re-elected in 2004. Since its inception, she has served on the board of For the Sake of the Church Campaign to raise funds for Synod colleges.

During Betty's tenure, the Synod passed a resolution that the president of the ILWML and the president of the LLL should be members of the LCMS Board for Mission Services. At the conclusion of her first term, she was elected to the Board, serving for 12 years in all.

In appreciation for her dedication to these many causes, Betty has been awarded three honorary doctorates—from Concordia, Bronxville, Concordia, St. Paul, and Rollins Colleges. "This is not why you do it," she explains, "but it's nice when it happens."

Despite these prestigious honors and positions, there's another image of Betty Duda in the memories of those who attended the 1988 Assembly of Leaders in Des Moines, Iowa. With its focus on service, Betty and the other officers humbly set the example by washing the feet of all the attendees. Wearing aprons imprinted with "Servanthood '88," they caused one hotel guest to ask, "Is this a maids' convention?"

Women of the Alaska zone have another memory of Betty, who was the international representative at their Discipling Woman Seminar, held at a resort near Anchorage in February 1990. To give her a real taste of their state, they planned a surprise dogsled ride with a team that had run the famous Iditarod race.

When the seminar's first evening session ended, they dressed Betty in warm bib pants, rabbit mittens and a fur-trimmed parka hood so big her face could hardly be seen. (Betty was already wearing her husband's long Johns, which she had brought along, even though they had a hole in the

knee!) Then, as midnight approached, they took her down to the shoreline where dogs and handlers awaited in the cold, crisp climate (wind chill about -50°) so she could enjoy an unforgettable “fantastic, fun adventure.”

For Betty and the two Washington-Alaska district officers who accompanied her, there were other unforgettable experiences: riding a snowmobile, visiting a home in the “bush” (complete with outdoor plumbing, a wood stove for cooking, and a hand water pump in the kitchen), and seeing numerous moose, a frozen waterfall, breath-taking hoar frost on all the trees, sun dogs (vertical rainbows caused by ice crystals in the sunlight), and snow-covered Mt. McKinley.

Even better was sharing the LWML enthusiasm of the Eskimo and Native American women of all ages (one was a nursing mother) some of whom had traveled eight or nine hours to attend the seminar. Four flew because the distance was so great—and this was a zone event!

A Time of Transition

As ILWML president, Betty began her term by asking, “How can the League best meet the needs of women in the 21st century?” The answers are her legacy to the ILWML: structural changes, an increased planned giving emphasis, a new logo and mission statement, a new look for League materials, development of an ILWML Caring Ministry, and efforts to expand Synod awareness of the ILWML, as well as Leaguers’ understanding of their church body.

Betty was concerned because some LCMS women were perceiving the ILWML as “past our prime, diminishing in size, dull meetings, only for older women, exclusive, living in the past, not meeting the needs of Christian women today and other things not pleasant to hear.” Some societies that started as a young mothers’ group had become a grandmothers’ group. In some churches, new circles were not allowed to form, and young women were not encouraged to join.

Transitioning the League to meet modern needs of women, Betty and Planner Ida Mall guided leaders in targeting the six groups critical to the ILWML’s future expansion—young women, LCMS congregations, women in the workplace, synod leadership, pastors, and all members.

At the same time Betty staunchly promoted the values and accomplishments of the League during its first 50 years. “Is the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League dead or dying?” she asked in her Spring 1990 President’s Column (*Quarterly*, p. 20). “Not when close to 7,000

women travel to Rapid City, South Dakota, for the 1989 international biennial convention. Not when more than double the amount of women needed to fill various interdepartmental committees for the 1989–1991 biennium are willing to serve....Not when a million dollar goal is surpassed for the 1987–1991 biennium. Not when there are thousands of Lutheran women who are dedicated to the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ and are willing to serve Him with Gladness and JOY.”

Appreciation for ILWML Co-workers

All eleven of these presidents would agree that none of the accomplishments of their eras would have been possible without the guidance of the Lord, the encouragement of their families, the prayers of members, and the talents, vision, involvement, and dedicated efforts of all the League leaders and counselors.

An important blessing of serving as an LWML officer, in the words of Helen Gienapp, “is the tremendous bond that is forged between people who work together so closely through joy and sorrow, accomplishment and frustration.” Even when they get together years later without visiting inbetween, “it is just as though we had been meeting regularly. The LWML network is a tight and most comforting one.”

That supportive network has been evident since the Jubilee, too, as new leaders have carried forward the ideals of the ILWML’s pioneer leaders and adapted them to changing times in the church and the world. For the presidential role in succeeding years, the Lord and the League chose Ida Mall, Gloria Edwards, Virginia Von Seggern and Linda Reiser. Their stories follow.

From Separation to Diversity

As the Canadian LWML societies left to form their own sister organization, the U.S. League turned its efforts to reaching the diverse cultures developing in the United States and to finding new ways to support women in overseas mission fields. Always before them was the challenge of change—was it needed? How? When?

Successive presidents and their boards, in league with the Lord, built upon the progress of their predecessors to help members:

- Follow Christ’s “Go ye” directives in their neighborhoods and communities,

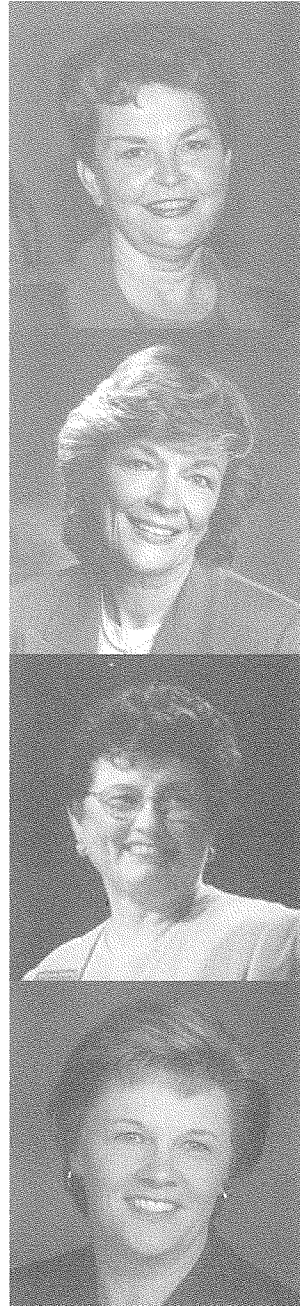
- Seize new opportunities to serve for a short time as missionaries overseas,

- Reach out to international students, a rapidly expanding mission field at their doorstep,

- Develop “Leadership for Tomorrow,” and

- Support LCMS missions prayerfully and financially, at home and abroad.

This section traces the progress of LWML (now also known as Lutheran Women in Mission) under the four presidents who have served since the Jubilee and concludes with inspirational examples of how Leaguers have touched lives for Christ.

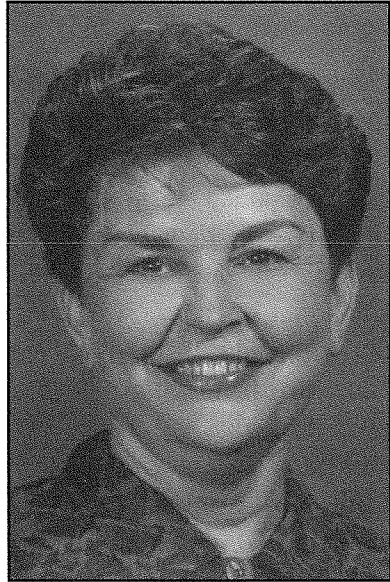


Chapter Six

Opening the 'People' Umbrella (*Ida Mall: 1991–1995*)

Despite the accomplishments of the LWML during its first 50 years, despite the many ways the Lord had blessed the organization and its members, and despite the Jubilee speakers' predictions of an even greater future, the organization was entering an era of challenges.

"How could the League share the Good News of Jesus Christ with more people?" the officers asked themselves. The League's answer: plan, diversify, and multiply. Now North America would have two LWML organizations. Now ethnic and generational diversity would be the criteria for all materials and activities. Now goals would guide planning.



Ida Mall

One Becomes Two

From the time the first Canadian society joined the LWML in 1948, Leaguers in the United States enjoyed a growing hands-across-the-border ministry with their Canadian sisters-in-faith.

Friendship deepened and understanding increased after the 1957 election of the LWML's first Canadian officer, Gertrude (Mrs. Albert) Pollex, second vice-president. At the first LWML convention in Canada (Toronto, 1959), members from the 48 states learned to sing the Canadian national anthem, discovered that life in the "north country" wasn't so different after all, and toured the University of Toronto Chapel and Student



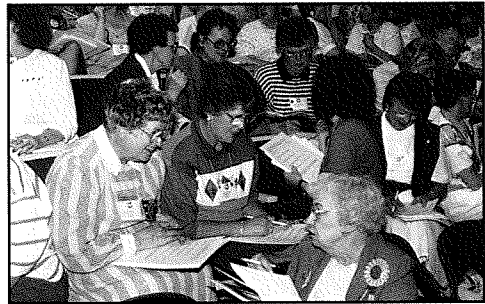
Leaguers attending the Edmonton convention could indicate their home town on this map.

Center funded by the LWML during the 1955–1957 biennium.

At the second LWML convention in Canada (Edmonton, 1993), the atmosphere was a mixture of joy and sadness. Joy—because Canadian Leaguers were stepping out, confident in the Lord's guidance, to form their own League as an auxiliary to the Lutheran Church—Canada, which was founded in 1988. Sadness—because this was the last convention the women of the two countries would enjoy together. Appropriately the theme proclaimed that they would always be "One in Spirit—One in Purpose."



Gathering of "Kits for the Homeless" and presentation of quilts at Edmonton convention.



Small group Bible study at Edmonton—an important part of every convention.



The Cheremosh Canadian Ukrainian Dance Ensemble performs at the Edmonton convention.

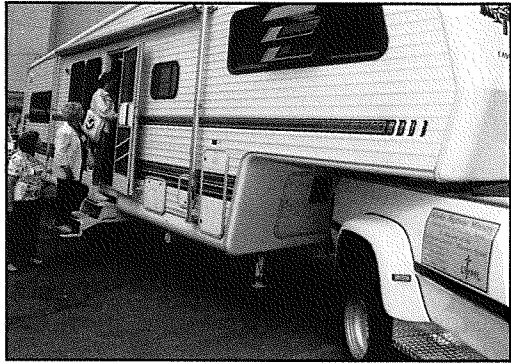
After the joint gathering closed, some 1,000 Canadians and Americans remained Sunday evening, June 20, to launch the Lutheran Women's Missionary League—Canada. The charter was signed, and Past ILWML President Betty Duda spoke words of encouragement. A logo and motto, "Called to Serve," based on Deuteronomy 10:12, had been chosen earlier, and a previously approved protocol document agreed that the two groups would still work in partnership, sharing resources, and cooperating in activities beneficial to their mutual desires.

As the Canadian business sessions continued on Monday, June 21, 1993, delegates chose a mite goal of \$67,650, retained the ILWML mission statement, selected three projects, and elected officers. Eloise (Mrs. Lloyd) Schaan was chosen as the first president.

From its office in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the Canadian LWML initially produced two publications, *Tapestry* for all members and *Get Connected* for leaders. All its program materials (skits and dramas) were made available in a coil-bound book for easy copying. Since 2003, it has held triennial rather than biennial conventions. Further information is available through its website, www.lutheranwomen.ca, along with many downloadable program helps.

Living Her Mission Statement

Presiding at the final combined gathering in 1993 was Ida Mall, the 12th president of the ILWML. When elected in 1991, she accepted with these words:



The Alaska Rural Ministry Camper-Truck, a 1991–1993 mission project, was available for Leaguers to tour at Edmonton.



Eloise Schaan and Ida Mall share a presidential moment. Eloise was the first President of LWML-Canada.

“Knowing that I have the support of my family and that God is faithful to His promises, including the one to be with us always, I will serve Him and you for the next four years....For the past two years as the ILWML Planner, I have been working with mission statements, critical targets, goals, objectives and activities. From this evolved my personal mission statement, which is to actively seek opportunities to share my faith in Jesus Christ. Nothing has priority over this.”

And nothing did! Wherever Ida went, whomever she met, she never hesitated to share her love for Jesus Christ and His love for others. It was simply part of her being to find ways to share her faith, she said. With kindness and consideration for individual needs and situations, she witnessed effectively to hotel maids, taxi drivers, store clerks, airplane passengers...women, men, children...anyone the Lord sent her way.

Often carrying large quantities of work with her on planes, Ida admitted there were times when she was tempted to limit her conversation to a smile and then be about “my work.” Nevertheless, she would always pray that God might make an opportunity available for sharing and that her heart would be receptive to the situation.

The Lord answered regularly. On one flight a young man seated next to Ida had been thinking about returning to church. Ida encouraged him. On another flight, a man asked if she was a real estate agent. Ida’s response opened the door for a faith discussion—she said she was in “heavenly real estate.”

At LWML meetings in hotels, Ida made sure the League worship services were listed on hotel boards—the public was always invited! She left the doors to worship services open so that the message could be heard outside the room and passersby would know they were welcome.

Along with every tip, Ida also left a *Mustard Seed*. When she gave one to a man who drove the hotel van, he looked at it immediately and wanted to know if she had more. Ida then gave him the entire packet. When she returned a week later, the man remembered her and said he had given the *Mustard Seeds* to others. A woman from India was pleased when Ida gave her an ILWML “Love” bookmark with a rose printed on it.

Ida often demonstrated her Christian care in other ways, too. During Helen Beck’s term as Minnesota North District president, Ida was the ILWML rep and keynote speaker for the 1994 district convention in Bemidji. After Ida arrived, Helen took her for a drive to see the area.

Helen recalls, "First, however, I needed gas. When I started to get out of the car at the station, Ida said, 'Helen, you have arthritis in your hands, I will fill the tank for you.' She also washed the windows. What an example of Christian service!"

Planning for Change

In her 1991 convention acceptance speech, Ida also identified membership expansion as a major focus of her presidency: "My great hope is that we can open 'the people umbrella' so that more women...can get under the umbrella cover to be affirmed in their relationship with the Triune God so that they can be in ministry to the people of the world." Under the umbrella, Ida wanted to see women of all ages, educational backgrounds and ethnic groups. She set the example by appointing women with diverse gifts and backgrounds to international committees.

In her first President's Column (Fall 1991 *Quarterly*, p. 28), Ida also made a plea: "Will you please pray with me that nothing during these next four years will adversely affect my spiritual life?" When people expressed concerns during meetings, Ida would often advise, "If it doesn't affect my/your (or someone else's) salvation, don't worry about it." People-oriented, she also decreed, "No one sits alone."

For Ida, the year leading to the presidency was a time of "breaking the mold." She had turned 50, and her mother and stepfather had died. She personally joined the age of computers, copiers, and voice mail—and this "you all" Southerner moved from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to Midland, Michigan.

At the same time, she was traveling the country to present the League's Effective Society Planning seminars. As she discussed "Planning for Change," her message was that breaking the mold can be difficult, but societies may need to change the time or place of a meeting, plan different types of Bible studies or activities to meet the needs of various women—or even have a meeting without dessert! But, Ida always reminded her audiences, "The one thing needful to cope with differences is faith in Jesus Christ. He is God, and He does not change!"

She continued this thrust in a 1994 President's Column, describing "Church A" where the LWML had authority to oversee the congregation's kitchen. When a newly-formed group of young women decided to serve coffee at their evening meeting, it was prohibited because no LWML member was able to be there to make coffee and clean up. She urged readers to "not think of the church kitchen and the LWML as interchangeable terms."

Rather, she suggested, think of the kitchen as a place to mentor young people and the LWML as “a place of warmth, a place to gather, a place to share your faith, a place to serve.”

Ida also wanted LWML to be fun, and the Executive Committee agreed, often playing friendly jokes on one another. For a change of pace, Ida, an auctioneer at heart, conducted an auction at one board meeting.

Because Someone Asked

Ida was grateful for the friend who originally gave her “the gift of LWML” by inviting and taking her to an LWML meeting. The friend also invited Ida to help with decorations for a district convention. “Crafts were not my thing,” Ida said, but she did it anyway, because “someone cared and had asked me to help.”

The friend soon recognized Ida’s true talents and encouraged her to accept leadership opportunities. Before long, Ida was society president, then zone president, and in 1972 at age 31 was elected president of the Louisiana District.



All were attired in red and white, the colors of the Canadian flag and the stripes of the U.S. flag, for this last Executive Committee meeting in Canada prior to the Edmonton convention. Front row (l to r): Karen Curry, Marie Biesenthal, Karol Selle, Norma Kramin. Second row: Pat Beach Schutte, Ida Mall and Counselor Darold Reiner. Back: Barbara Going, Shirley Meckfessel, LaVada Traskowsky, Dottie Hildebrandt, Marilyn Eglund, Sandy Thompson, Gloria Edwards and Counselor Mark Behring.

Raised in a non-denominational church, Ida joined a Baptist church in college and became a Lutheran at the time of her marriage. In telling her story, Ida often commented, "I did not join the Lutheran church for the right reasons, but God eventually matched my reasons and my beliefs."

Because Ida did not have a Lutheran background, she viewed LWML as her "entry point or home" in the church. As international president, her "burning desire" was to make LWML a present for "every woman in the pew."

From the beginning of her LWML participation, Ida's family was involved with her. This included husband Ken and their two small children. When the entire family went to meetings with her, Ken would babysit. As the children grew and married, their involvement with LWML continued. Ida's daughter and daughter-in-law served as the president's pages for the Edmonton convention. The Mall's first grandchild celebrated his first birthday at the Kansas City convention, with the entire family in attendance.

Ida's daughter, Michelle Mall Zollinger, has been very active in LWML. She attended the Edmonton convention as a single person, the Kansas City convention as a married person, the 1997 Charlotte convention with one son, the 1999 Minneapolis convention with her husband and two sons, and the 2001 San Jose convention with three sons. In 2005 she was elected president of Trinity LWML, Monroe, Louisiana.

Her greatest blessings as president, Ida said, were working with the Executive Committee, meeting new people, seeing them dream dreams, and then watching the dreams come to fruition. In recognition of her work, she was invited to give the 1996 commencement address at Concordia College, Ann Arbor, Michigan, and was given its Christus Primus award.

Since 1996, Ida has served on the Board of Lutheran Braille Workers. She was on the Steering Committee for the 2004 LCMS Youth Gathering and the Board for District and Congregational Services, 2001–2007. She has continued to lead retreats and Bible studies and was one of the authors of *Best Loved Passages of the Bible* (CPH, 1997).

Ida's term, however, was not without challenges. Whenever officers and committees are encouraged to develop new ideas, as Ida did constantly, there is always the challenge of evaluating their practicality and affordability without stifling the proponents' creativity and enthusiasm.

The new ideas covered everything from convention programming and

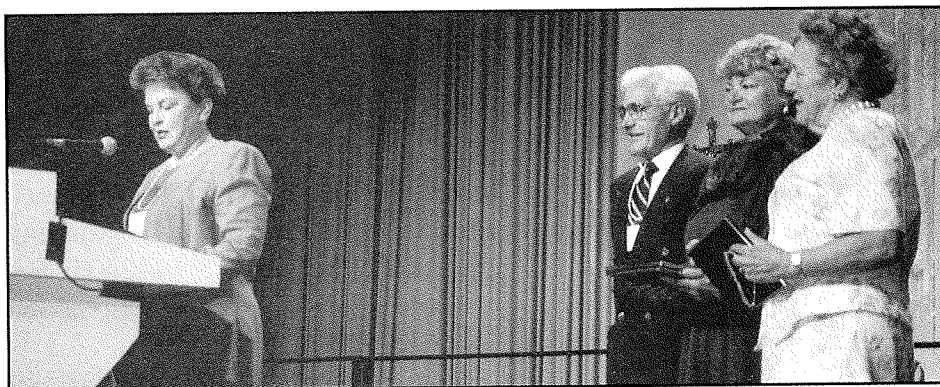
a name change for the *Quarterly* to additional committee forms and ethnically inclusive resources.

New Primary Targets

Led by Planner Sandy Thompson, an ILWML committee reviewed the hopes and dreams of the LWML founders along with those of current leaders. After evaluating progress and needs, the Board of Directors adopted new primary targets: personal spirituality, diversity of women, people-centered Gospel living, structural variety, empowered leaders, and life-enhancing experiences.

As a follow-up, Ida's 1993 convention message urged members to consider an ILWML future mission vision where:

- Each LWML group understands and states its purpose;
- Each LWML group is championing Bible study and developing and/or prodding appropriate people to develop personalized settings/formats that are adaptable to the individual and/or group needs;
- Women of diversity, including age, ethnicity, educational background, etc., are at home in the LWML;
- Each LWML group is willing to adapt the organizational structure to the spiritual needs of each woman in that church;
- Each LWML group recognizes the importance of human relationships and is receptive to offering opportunities for people to acquire people skills; and



The LCMS, in convention 1991, acknowledged the LWML for its support of the *LifeLight* in depth Bible study program. At the podium President Ida Mall responds; Rev. Dr. Erwin Kolb also made presentations to former Presidents Betty Duda, under whose term the project was developed, and Alberta Barnes, who was President when the grant was given, from the Bequest Fund, to produce *LifeLight*.

—The LWML is recognized as the organization that is willing to dream, visualize, and take the risks necessary to implement its Mission Statement.

Better Organization = New Forms

Printed forms were developed to assist committees in their planning and tracking of activities. The Executive Committee joked that Ida's term could be called "The Form Years."

Good organization was a priority, as exemplified by the president. Ida always liked to have her papers in order, and on one occasion, she recessed the Executive Committee meeting to allow her to reorganize her stack of notes and reports.

Although Ida appreciated and used parliamentary procedure, people were more important to her than rules. She recalled one occasion where a board member was having difficulty formulating a motion. Going against parliamentary rules, the officers graciously assisted with the wording and content.

Change the Magazine Name?

A suggestion that the *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly* be renamed brought much discussion and strong opinions. Among the names suggested were *Joy!*, *Celebration*, *Spirit Life* and *CrossLight*. As the board discussed the matter, it was obvious that a committee was needed to study the question—but appointment of the committee could lead to deep divisions.

"At this point in the meeting, it was like God was telling me what to do," Ida recalled. She asked the Board members to write their name on a piece of paper. Then she collected the names in a wastebasket and drew three. "The three represented all sides of the debate, and the one drawn as chairman was able to chair the committee effectively. Many board members told me it was an ideal committee." Ultimately the *Quarterly* name was left unchanged.

Convention Programming

—Utilizing what they had learned in ESP, the convention planning committee adopted a goal statement: "To have joy in being 'One in Spirit—One in Purpose' so that I know I am 'God's resource' in my personal life setting."

—The communion service was on the opening evening instead of the last day.

—A Resource Fair featured ILWML committee materials in a room separate from the usual exhibits. Interactive events allowed visitors to do origami, sign a quilt block representing their district, mark their hometown on a huge map, or enjoy other festivities.

—*Yes, No or Later*, the fourth in the League's Caring Ministry video series, premiered at the convention. Following the three previous videos on alcoholism, hidden suffering (addictions/AIDS), and spousal abuse, this one focused on life support issues.

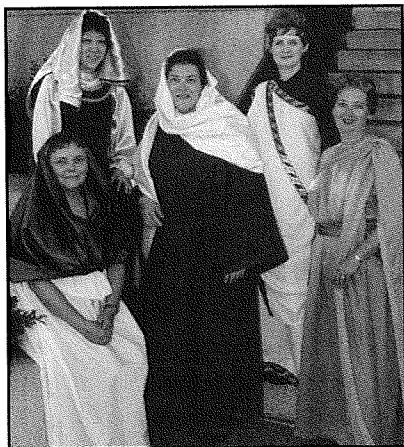
—In a new approach to convention programming, the three speakers coordinated their four "Spirit-Purpose" presentations. Led by the Rev. Dean Nadasdy of Edina, Minnesota, Marilyn Bader, St. Louis, Missouri, and the Rev. Tom Rogers, El Toro, California, each session began with a drama during which a Biblical woman told her story.

Based on the lives of these women, Pastor Nadasdy in his Bible studies shared insights for women today, as reported in the Fall 1993 *Quarterly* (p. 16):

"Sarah's message—Great blessings are worth the wait, and the most significant time for each of us may still be ahead.

"Esther's encouragement—One person who follows God's guidance can make an extraordinary difference in the world.

"Dorcas's proclamation—A life purpose, with an appropriate task, makes for a fulfilled Christian.



Bible study themes at the Edmonton convention were dramatized by Leaguers portraying Biblical women.

"Naomi and Ruth's counsel—Committed, Christ-centered relationships are tested and confirmed in hard times, and they are blessed!"

Through personal reflection and small group sharing led by Bader, the women identified their gifts and talents and then developed their personal mission statement. A first for many women, writing the statement required a lot of soul searching.

"Don't laugh at God" and "Don't limit God. What He did then He can do now," Pastor Rogers advised in his commentaries on the Biblical women.

"Instead," he suggested, "we should laugh at ourselves—at our worries, because our Heavenly Father knows our needs; at sin, for it has been defeated; at Satan, for Jesus is victor!"

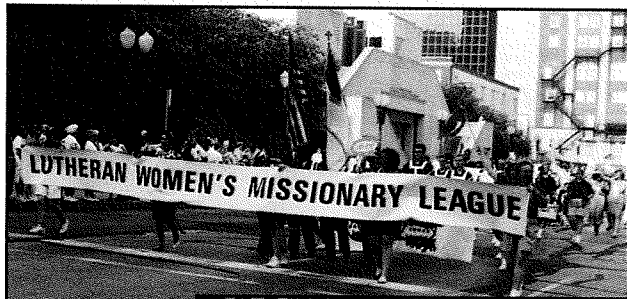
Asked to describe an LWML convention in three words, he responded, "Mom, cloud nine." When he was a child, he spotted his mother's bulging Mite Box and decided "that's candy money." Greedily he dipped into his mother's mites.

Her reproof taught him a powerful lesson: "The Gospel made me cry! And, someone could love me even when I'd done wrong. My mother assured me she did forgive me and that God had great plans for my life. I learned Jesus became a 'thief' for me so I could be the good boy of my Father in heaven." He also learned that the mission of LWML was to introduce "all the thieving children of the world to Jesus who will use them to share His love."

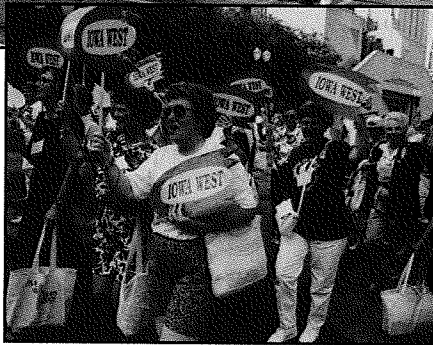
To help Leaguers witness in Edmonton, a handout entitled "Who Are These Women?" was placed in their convention packets. It was printed in English on the front and Chinese on the back because the second language in Edmonton is Chinese.

More new ideas were unveiled at the Kansas City convention in 1995:

—Public streets in downtown Kansas City were closed to traffic as delegates marched to the convention center in the first-ever LWML parade. Each district could be identified by a unique accessory. For example: Carolinas, crowns; Mid-South, Minnie Pearl hats; Southern Illinois, deer antlers; Gulf States, sand pails and beach hats, and New Jersey, butterflies.



The League held its first convention parade in Kansas City.



The Iowa West delegation marched joyfully to the Kansas City Convention Center.

—The Friday inspirational segment, entitled “On Trial...By God’s Design,” included a courtroom drama, “Excess Baggage,” which was later made available as a video with a Bible study.

—Leaguers were urged to invite a Spanish-speaking friend because all business sessions offered simultaneous Spanish translation.

—For the first time, childcare was offered by professionals and volunteers during the convention sessions. Under their supervision, youngsters met a former circus clown and enjoyed an interactive storyteller.

—Virtually a multi-cultural school, the Experiential Mall offered 40 hands-on activities, such as making bookmarks, weaving a six-foot tapestry, sorting thousands of food items brought for Kansas City needy, tasting ethnic foods, writing Braille, and marking Bibles for prisoners.

—The first-ever Servant Events at an international LWML convention included a variety of opportunities to fix up, paint up, clean up, or participate in social ministry agency workdays. Many participants said afterwards that this was a life-changing experience.



Servant Event participants at Kansas City prepare for "Kamp Kids," a VBS program for neighborhood children.

Ken Mall developed poison ivy from clearing a weedy lot for an inner city church, but he said he would do it all over again.

—A wide choice of Insight Sessions provided help in meeting modern challenges of living. For example, Lauren Beale (then South Wisconsin District LWML President) and Dr. Steve Carter (President of Concordia Publishing House) shared personal stories of how trusting God’s design helped them through major storms in their lives. Lauren had fallen out of a moving car as a child, coped with her father’s death as a freshman in college, seen God heal her infant son who had apnea and a tumor shortly after birth, and encouraged her husband when he developed hairy cell leukemia. Dr. Carter had to deal with the death of his 23-year-old daughter after her courageous battle with aplastic anemia.

Instead of celebrity entertainment, the Saturday evening program, "Celebrating... God's Design," featured the talents of members. Performers were chosen from applicants with gifts of singing, instrumental music, art, chalk talks, drama, oratory, weaving/spinning, clowning, puppetry, dancing, and other ministry forms.

Use of Thankoffering

Including gifts received after the 1991 convention, the grand total of the 50th Anniversary Thankoffering reached \$527,263.59. Delegates voted to use the money for:

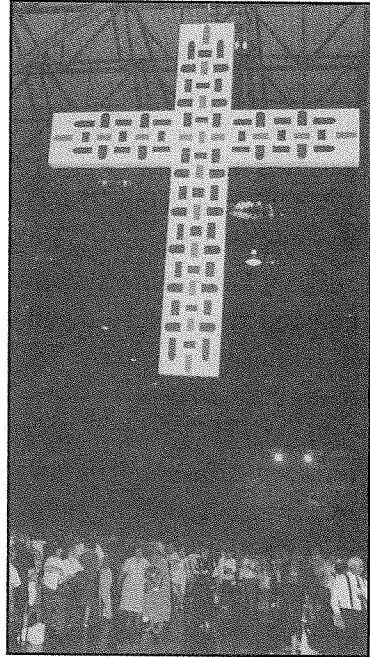
1) Distribution of Bibles in the Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe—\$50,000. Almost immediately funds were sent for 1,500 Russian-language Bibles for Riga, Latvia. Bibles were also purchased for 500 house churches to distribute in Kazakhstan.

2) Assisting the Homeless through LCMS World Relief—\$100,000. The funds helped some of the three million homeless in the United States (the world's wealthiest nation).

3) LWML Support and Encouragement to Missionary Wives—\$20,000. Patterned after the Barnabas Project developed by the Board for Mission Services, the goal was to send four teams of two women each to four different world areas where LCMS was in mission. Each team would spend quality time with missionary wives and lead a retreat centered in Bible study and fellowship.

Women in the mission field were eager for the visits. They chose the dates and the retreat theme, and they issued the invitation to "come, experience how we live and serve in our country and then return to encourage others to become a part of the mission."

The first team, sent to Panama, consisted of Phyllis Johnstone, Garden Grove, California, and Eloise Schaan, Ontario, Canada. Phyllis spoke fluent Spanish because she and her pastor-husband had spent 18 years in



As the Kansas City convention closed, delegates went "out into the world led by the cross of my Lord Jesus!"

Venezuela. Eloise was gifted in music. The second team, consisting of Bonnie Beversdorf, Medora, Indiana, and Cynthia Behrens, Portland, Oregon, were sent to Ghana and Togo; while the third team, Bernice Bunkowske, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, and Judy Knebel, Seattle, Washington, went to Thailand.

Another offering of \$21,817.26 at the 1995 convention extended this program to more women.

4) An Endowment Fund to Assist Married Seminary Students with Housing Expenses—\$300,000. Living in apartments off-campus created an additional expense for married seminarians, whose numbers had steadily increased.

5) Wind River Indian Reservation in Central Wyoming—all remaining funds. The money secured housing for a second missionary and aided site development on this reservation where LCMS work began in 1977.

Encouraging Diversity

Careful monitoring of League products was instituted to be sure they reflected diversity. The *ILWML Catalog*, produced in a new attractive format, listed several resources translated into Spanish. The Summer 1991 *Quarterly* also carried a topic, “‘Go Ye’ Means Me?” translated into Spanish and Vietnamese. “Jesus Loves Me” was included in the 1995 convention manual in seven languages—English, German, Spanish, Chinese, Czech, Japanese, and Korean.

Beginning in Spring 1992, the *Quarterly* also carried a new section, “The League Link,” to keep members aware of new resources. By then the Caring Ministry videos and the 50th anniversary convention video were produced with open captioning for the benefit of people with hearing impairments. The ILWML office also had a TDD (telecommunications device for the deaf), enabling speech- and hearing-impaired persons to communicate over telephone lines.



Iri Skinner, Vice
President for Mission
Inspiration

Demonstrating their inclusion of African-American sisters in the faith, delegates at the 1993 convention elected the first black woman to an international office—Iri Skinner, New Orleans, Louisiana, Vice President for Mission

Inspiration.

A weeklong multicultural Servant Event in El Paso, Texas, in March 1995 provided encouragement for Hispanic Christians involved in Ysleta Lutheran Mission.

Representatives of the Japan Lutheran Church LWML presented a gift of 200,000 yen (about \$2,400) at the 1995 convention as a token of Christian unity in mission.

To demonstrate the value of "Real-Time Captioning," Silent Word Media Resources provided this service free for the 1995 convention—a benefit for attendees with hearing impairments. By the time speakers' voices were heard at the far end of the hall, the audience could see their words in print on the large video screen. Positive feedback led the League to include that service in its budget for subsequent conventions.

New Resources

To prepare members for Spirit-led service to people in their communities, or as Ephesians 4:12 says, "...so that the body of Christ may be built up," the ILWML created three *Prepare to Serve!* instructional videos entitled *Prepare to Lead*, *Prepare to Care*, and *Prepare to Comfort*. Each video contained five sessions, and utilized individual workbooks, small group Bible study, and conversational sharing.

Using "Extraordinary Ordinary Moses," "Exhausted Elijah," "Amazing Abigail," and "Priscilla and Aquila—an Effective Team" as examples, the leadership portion suggested ways to "dragon-proof" one's family, work or church. As viewers learned how to bring God's healing to others in times of loss, they built their "people" skills, identified their special strengths, and learned to listen, set boundaries, encourage, comfort, and prevent and manage conflict.

Premiered at the 1995 convention, the videos featured their author, Ruth Koch, MA, NCC, a gifted teacher and social worker. As she taught, she utilized a variety of hats to illustrate her points—and amazingly as she removed each hat, every hair on her head remained perfectly in place!

To help women use their personal time wisely, a purse-size personal planner, "Live by God's Design," was also developed. Its purpose: to help women set goals consistent with God's design for their lives, create plans for fulfilling those goals, and practice disciplined use of time.

For women in the workplace, a new product, *Noontime Nibbles*, offered spiritual refreshment packaged in a brown paper bag. Topics dealt

with ethics, tongue control, honesty, who's the boss, co-worker support, sexual harassment and other work-related issues.

Written by a woman who experienced the nightmare of being a child abuser, a brochure entitled "Out of the Depths" was published as the first in a series of "Resources for Women." Sharing a story of struggle and triumph, it was intended to bring comfort to those in a similar situation.

Because of the success of Alma Kern's two previous ILWML-published books, *You Are Special* (1985) and *You Are Loved* (1991), she was commissioned to do a third—*You Are Precious* (1995). This one focused on the uniqueness and individuality of God's people.

Offering encouragement to women involved in personal struggles (such as divorce, rebellion of teenage children, problems of employed mothers, and birth trauma), the ILWML published two books edited by Donna Streufert: *A Place to Rest Your Heart* and *In the Mirror of Your Heart*. Each featured the stories of four women, followed by insights from professional counselors and questions for small group discussions.

A new "Tot Tote" included a coloring/sticker book depicting countries where the ILWML currently had a project, a children's mite box, and a small box of crayons.

Promoting improved "earth stewardship," a packet of materials about conservation also made its debut in 1995 to challenge Leaguers to think seriously about how their lifestyles and attitudes affect the ecology of the earth and the health of the world community.

Women also grew in service through the understanding they gained about Lutheran World Relief (LWR) at 13 seminars (10 in the United States and three in Canada) sponsored by the Lutheran Women's Cooperating Committee. "Enabling Women through Development," an LWR video shown at the gatherings, demonstrated ways that assistance to women in underdeveloped countries could break the cycle of starvation, neglect, and abuse. Many LWML societies continued to make quilts for LWR distribution overseas with annual totals reaching into the thousands.

When a delegation from Lutheran World Relief had an opportunity to visit Mother Theresa, founder of Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, India, she told them that she "dries the tears" of the poor throughout India with those quilts. Two women in the delegation presented Mother Theresa with a copy of the ILWML's *Golden Nuggets*, a booklet of 50 devotions.

Effective Society Planning (ESP)

After more than two years of planning, development, and testing under the leadership of Project Director Marilyn Egland, the ILWML took its new ESP training program to zones and societies to equip them to become more effective through better program planning and evaluation of activities. Each zone was asked to send a representative to one of 31 area ESP events. Beginning in November 1991, these three-day events were scheduled throughout 1992.

Every zone facilitator then conducted a training session for societies by December 1993. Each society was expected to send three members to this two-day training. Society implementation was completed in April 1995.

Participants learned their lessons well as a story by a Las Vegas zone president demonstrated in the Winter 1992 *Quarterly* (p. 42). At the close of an intense weekend, "we were just beginning the last portion of the training," Carol Shanks writes, "and it was very serious business. All of a sudden, without any warning, all heads dropped to the tables as if in sleep. I was speechless! We had talked a lot about intentional planning, and here it was in action!" By carefully planning this effective reminder of their need for a short break, the attendees not only experienced a great example of what Carol had been teaching, but also "five minutes of much-needed laughter!"

Societies Break the Mold

Encouraged by League leaders and ESP lessons, societies sought ways to break the mold and entice new members. One group decided to keep business to a minimum and work on a nursing home project each month. Another involved all members in planning programs, assigning a different committee of five or six for each month. They also began a monthly Bible study luncheon at a local restaurant. Women employed outside the home were encouraged to bring co-workers with them.

Some changed the time of meetings. One gave each member the names of three prospective members each month, to whom they sent an invitation and a recipe. To find out who the recipe came from, the recipients had to come to the LWML meeting.

Another society collected 150 non-perishable food items for the local food shelf in a couple of hours. What made it different was their "game plan." They did it with a scavenger hunt. The women went door-to-door in teams of two and were pleasantly surprised by the friendliness and generosity of their friends and neighbors.

Seeing Is Believing

Conversely, it took Californian Peggy Mayes 25 years to decide she didn't want to break the mold. In her story in the Winter 1991 *Quarterly* (p. 37), she recalled finding her first LWML meeting boring. "I decided LWML was not for me, and since I was still young, I found other areas in which to serve: Sunday school, the church office, the youth group—all the "fun" things that didn't involve the "little old ladies" from LWML.

"Then, 23 years later, I again found myself in a new community. Now retired, I decided to try the LWML at my new church, even though I still had the 'it's outlived its usefulness, let's break the mold' opinion in the back of my mind.

"I again found the 'little old ladies,' only now I was one of them! They still complained of poor attendance, still had their little boxes of coins. Then, quite without knowing how, I became president of the society! I found myself forming inside the mold, but still I didn't quite fit...until May, when I became a delegate to our district convention in San Francisco.

"Delegates were invited to Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, a Chinese congregation in Chinatown. Since I had visited this church in the '60s when it was a mission, I thought it would be fun to go back. What I found was a new building, a Sunday worship attendance of 250–300 Chinese Lutherans, a pastor who radiated enthusiasm and love, and a large, happy group of Christian Chinese youth who were busy silk-screening shirts with the American flag on them. The church was aptly named, for the Holy Spirit was evident in the faces of everyone I saw.

"We were told that funds for their building had been given 25 years ago...from those boxes the 'little old ladies' had filled during all those LWML meetings I wouldn't attend! And when 70 young people, wearing their shirts with the American flag on the front, sang for the convention gathering, I wondered: Which of them might be standing on a corner in Chinatown today peddling drugs were it not for the coins from those little boxes? Would it be one of the two heading for the seminary? Might that beautiful girl playing the violin be walking the streets of San Francisco, trying to earn enough money for drugs? Where would they be if Holy Spirit Lutheran Church had never been?

"With tears streaming down my face, I prayed, 'Oh, God, thank You for those beautiful 'little old ladies' at the LWML meeting 25 years ago

who wouldn't let me break their mold! Thank you for breaking my cynicism and criticism into little pieces to fit into that mold. Thank You for letting me see those 70 young people who are the fruit of all those coins the LWML women gave so sacrificially. Father, help me to be like all the women of the LWML who have fit into Your mold for these 50 years!"

Into the Mission Field

As the 1991–1995 era ended, the essence of that period was well summarized in a prayer by Dr. David Buegler, who served as program facilitator for the 1995 convention's "Live by God's Design" theme. At the close of one presentation, he prayed:

"Disturb us, O Lord, when we are too well pleased with ourselves...when our dreams have come true because we dreamed too little...when we have arrived in safety because we've sailed too close to the shore...when having fallen in love with time, we have ceased to dream of eternity, and in our efforts to build a new earth have allowed our vision of the new heaven to grow dim.

"Stir us, O Lord, this day, to dare more boldly...to venture on wider seas, where storms shall show us Your mastery...where losing sight of the land we shall find the stars.

"We pray in the Name of Him who pushed back the horizons of our hopes and invited the brave to follow Him. Amen."

And follow is what the women did as the convention closed. From the podium, Pastor Buegler told them, "You are sent to 'Live by God's Design.' Return now to the mission field 'to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God' led by the cross of Christ." Then to everyone's amazement, as the music of "Lift High the Cross" filled the auditorium, the huge mosaic cross that hung above the stage throughout the convention began to move...on a previously unnoticed track above the center aisle. With the cross leading the way, the women filed out into the mission field, commissioned and confident that Jesus was going before them on the journey.

MISSION PROJECTS

1991-1993: Alaska Rural Ministry, \$100,000; Scholarships, Concordia College, Selma, Alabama, \$75,000; Uplifting Pastors' Families, \$93,000; Nurse/Professor, India, \$40,000; ILLI China Project—Cassette Ministry, \$75,000; Scholarships, Luther Seminary, Korea, \$100,000; English Teachers in China, \$72,000; KFUO Satellite Ministry, \$105,000; West Africa Evangelist Training, \$100,000; Assistance for Panama Ministries, \$65,000; Renovation of Seminary Buildings, Nigeria, \$72,000; Training of Parish Evangelists, \$21,481.59. Total of \$1,111,000 includes \$866,580 for Mission Outreach and \$244,420 for the League's Work Program. Adding an overage of \$50,901.59 from the 1989-1991 biennium brought the Mission Outreach total to \$918,481.59.

1993-1995: Circle of Life Lutheran Church, Cheyenne Reservation, MONTANA, \$100,000; Lutheran School, Haiti, \$26,000; English as a Second Language Coordinator, Russia, \$100,000; Scholarships at Concordia College, Selma, AL, \$72,000; "Friends in Christ" Mission, Idaho, \$40,000; "The Deaf Bible Study" Series, \$45,000; Support for Deaconess Carol Halter in Hong Kong, \$100,000; New Mission Work, Cote d'Ivoire, \$100,000; Winnebago Youth Mission Project, Nebraska, \$90,000; New Mission Field, Battery Park, Manhattan, NEW YORK, \$105,000; Lutheran Day Care Church Planting Initiative, \$100,000, and Apple of His Eye Ministry, Los Angeles, CA, \$22,788.92. Total goal of \$1,140,000 included \$900,400 for Mission Outreach and \$239,600 for support of the League's work program. Adding the overage of \$10,388.92 from the 1991-1993 biennium increased the Mission Outreach total to \$910,788.92.

Chapter Seven

Less Meeting, More Meaning

(Gloria Edwards, 1995–1999)

When the ILWML's new president, Gloria Edwards, took office in 1995, the LCMS President's Committee on Women was studying opportunities for women's service in the church. Concordia Publishing House was testing a new magazine for women, and two pastors' wives, Jackie Oesch and Elise Arndt, were conducting seminars across the country to promote women's ministries. While everyone involved in those efforts recognized that the LWML was the Synod's official women's auxiliary, most believed that women of the 90s needed more!

In her acceptance speech, Gloria quoted Matthew 20:26, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your



Gloria Edwards

servant," and she set that as her goal—to be a servant leader. She believed that the League should make a difference in the lives of the women of the church by expanding their vision for possibilities. In doing this, she wanted to build on the legacy of her predecessors while using the Mission Statement as a springboard and guide, especially these three parts:

- "Every woman of the LCMS,"
 - "Her relationship with the Triune God," and
 - "Using her gifts in service," both as individuals and as groups.
- And, Gloria wanted the members to have fun doing it. "It is good to



Gloria presiding at the convention.

laugh together,” she said. “After all, we are saved children of God!”

The question, of course, was how to accomplish these goals. Throughout her four years, Gloria urged Leaguers to “look at who we are, keep what is relevant and good, and then change the rest so that we can reach out to more women, grow in our walk with God, and use our gifts in service to the world.” Many told her she shouldn’t be so interested in change.

That’s why it meant so much to Gloria when a woman whom she did not know approached the stage after the final gavel sounded at the 1999 Minneapolis Convention.

Literally quoting back to Gloria what she had been promoting for four years, the woman asked, “Is this what you have been saying?” To Gloria’s “yes,” the woman concluded, “I hadn’t understood it until now, but I’ve finally gotten it!”

“It was an amazing moment,” says Gloria, “a gift from God!”

During her term, Gloria often quoted a statement by the internationally known organizational consultant, Peter Drucker: “An organization begins to die the day it focuses on the inside rather than the outside.” She saw that as one of the LWML’s biggest challenges. Despite the success of the Discipling Woman to Woman program, the leadership training endeavors, Effective Society Planning, and the seminars on “Strengthening the Christian Woman to Live in Today’s World,” younger women and those employed outside the home were still struggling to find their place in the LWML.

Gloria cited the example of a Young Woman Rep (YWR), “a lovely young woman who spoke to me with tears streaming down her cheeks. She was seeking advice. She so wanted to be an accepted part of her group at home. She lived in a small town with no choice for a different

congregation or other groups to which she could belong.” She told Gloria that in her church she felt judged, misunderstood or put down if she suggested a new or different way to do something and was accepted only if she did things exactly as they had always been done.

While recognizing that there is nothing wrong with the traditional roles that women have enjoyed, Gloria believed that many more areas of service and opportunities for use of their gifts should be available for women of the LCMS. The challenge, she realized, was to find “a balance between the good of our history and the change in the world around us.” She called it “honoring the past and imagining the future.”

This was exemplified at the 1999 Minneapolis Convention, where each day opened with a processional. The Saturday morning processional featured National Church Women visitors and the past International presidents. “When the presidents came in, applause began and soon the entire audience was standing, applauding and honoring these past leaders who gave so much to all of us. It was a beautiful moment,” Gloria recalls.

Wherever she spoke, Gloria encouraged members to “have less meeting—more meaning.” Take time for spiritual growth and for reaching out into the community to make a difference, she urged. Some women responded that it was a good idea but they were already so busy with serving at funerals and coffee hours and setting up Communion that they had no time or energy left.

On one occasion, an excited group of ladies shared their solution. They had announced to their congregation that they would no longer take sole responsibility for all the work of the church because they wanted more time for Bible study, fellowship, fun and outreach. The solution: their congregation agreed to share the responsibilities, dividing themselves into groups that included men, women and children who took turns with the duties. “It was one of those ‘Aha’ moments for the women in that room,” said Gloria. “A group had creatively solved their problem and in turn had given their entire congregation the opportunity for service.”

Dream Team Recommendations

To analyze future needs, a “Dream Team” of 12 women was invited to attend the Assembly of Leaders (AOL) in Milwaukee in November 1996. Six were LWML members; six were not. The first questions they tackled were: “Do we really need a women’s organization? Is it relevant today?” Their answer, based on interviews with 100 AOL participants was a very

positive “Yes!” Their findings affirmed the need for women’s groups that are “sensitive, inclusive, relevant, attuned and appealing to all women.”

The team went on to recommend eight possible models of structural diversity for women to consider in congregations where the traditional model was not working as well as desired:



1) **Umbrella**—Planning is done by an executive board and subgroups are devoted to spiritual growth, mentoring, missions, outreach, projects and special events,

At a National Youth Gathering, Gloria presents an LWML gift to one of the daily winners of a drawing.

2) **Team**—Permanent or task-oriented core groups are united through a coordinating team. Each group chooses its own tasks and responsibilities.

3) **Women’s Ministry**—A director oversees public relations and ministry areas, assisted by a secretary/treasurer, involvement coordinator and an assistant director. Ministry areas could include spiritual growth, missions, fellowship and outreach.

4) **Cyber Model**—Electronic discussion groups utilize online resources. (This became a reality in January 1997 when students at Concordia, Ann Arbor, and Concordia, St. Paul, held a joint LWML meeting using the distance learning equipment of the Concordia University System.)

5) **Sisters in Missions Model**—Several churches in one zone or area share guest speakers and special events while providing local opportunities for Bible study, prayer, mite gathering, fellowship and unique interest groups.

6) **Relational Model**—A Resource Coordinator works with facilitators of spiritual growth (home and church Bible study), mentoring (talent assessment, leadership training), connections (special events, education) and outreach (community, multi-cultural and missions).

7) **Relational Model for Small Churches**—Resource Coordinator works with a committee of three to meet needs of women in the congregation. Each of the three has responsibility for a specific area: spiritual growth, connections (mentoring) and outreach.

8) **Non-Geographic Society Model**—Defines “society” as the work-

place, college/school, or neighborhood where participants come together for Bible study, discussion and service projects. Participants could be from one area or many places.

Leaders noted that the models “gave permission to local groups to break out of traditional structures and formulate a system that meets the needs of the woman of today.” The phrase “give permission to societies” was often voiced by Gloria. She believed that many women were afraid to change a long-standing tradition and needed “permission” to proceed.

To help societies utilize the suggestions of the Dream Team, the LWML published *We’re Not Just Purple*, and later incorporated this material into a planning manual entitled *Designed for You*. It included a Bible study and sections on assessments/surveys, visioning, models, implementation ideas, bylaws, and evaluation.

Two Names

To describe what the LWML was and did, leaders often used the phrase, “Lutheran Women in Mission.” During her address to the 1997 Charlotte convention, Gloria mentioned that perhaps it was time to consider a new name “more appealing to those not already involved.” The idea caused considerable reaction on both sides of the question. “That’s just what I wanted,” says Gloria, “I wanted us to talk about it—pro and con.”

It soon became clear that it would make more sense to adopt an additional name. This could be done easily for just \$10 under the laws of the State of Missouri, where the LWML is incorporated. This approach is called a “d.b.a.” or “doing business as” name.

Unexpectedly, during the next board meeting, a district president moved that “Lutheran Women in Mission” become the League’s “d.b.a.” After prayer and using a paper ballot, the motion passed easily. This caused an even greater stir when announced to the membership. Some groups sent petitions signed by their members. Many letters were received—on both sides. Some said it should have been a convention decision, but the action was legal because it did not affect the bylaws. Soon LWML groups were adopting Lutheran Women in Mission as their name. A few others chose WINGS, based on the title of the 50th anniversary history.

Devoted to words and names, the Winter 1998 *Quarterly* helped members discuss the importance and meaning of names. On her *President’s*

Page, Gloria asked, “What’s in that name? It says who we are and what we do. We are Lutheran. We are Women. We are actively involved—we’re in Mission. It indicates that each one of us is committed to using our God-given gifts in service to the people of the world.

“Remember, we’ve added this name so that those on the outside can understand who we are and what we do. And, perhaps, choose to participate with us.

“Yet the name should not be as important as what is on the inside. Is your local group—no matter what its name—a warm and welcoming place? Is your group an inviting entry point for women in your community who need to know Jesus? If not, take action to make it that way. What better way to be in mission, to be a missionary!”

Bylaws Restructuring

Board members often spent time at their meetings envisioning the future of the LWML. It soon became apparent that the bylaws needed restructuring, so a committee was appointed. Although the new structure consisted primarily of a rearrangement and the addition of a new depart-



An Executive Committee meeting near the Edward’s home in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. (Back Row L to R) Shirley Meckfessel, Office Manager; Bev Erdmann, Treasurer; Naomi Schilling, VP for Mission Projects; Marilyn Egland, Planner; Karol Selle, Public Relations Director; (Middle) Pat Beach Schutte, *Quarterly* Editor-in Chief; Karen Curry, Financial Director; Dorothea Otte, Recording Secretary; Ruth Ann Johnson, Meeting Manager; Gloria Edwards, President; Jane Turner, VP for Mission Service; Virginia Von Seggern, VP for Mission Education; Iri Skinner, VP for Mission Inspiration; (Front) Rev. Vernon Schindler and Rev. Gregory Cynova, Counselors.

ment to oversee marketing, publications and media relations, it was decided to change the names of all committees and departments to more accurately reflect what they do and to better relate to their LCMS counterparts.

Instead of Vice Presidents for Mission Education, Mission Inspiration, Mission Service, and Mission Projects, the League would have Vice Presidents of Christian Life, Gospel Outreach, Human Care, Servant Resources, and Communication.

After the board reviewed, debated and made some minor adaptations to the new document, it needed convention approval. To prepare delegates, an orientation session was held for the first time on the afternoon before the convention opened. During the convention, a motion to send the new bylaws back for further study was defeated and the document was adopted, much to the relief of the committees that had worked so long and so hard.

Taking a Spiritual Snapshot

Are LWML Bible studies and resources really meeting the members' spiritual needs? How mature is their faith? To answer those questions, a Spiritual Assessment Committee chaired by Planner Marilyn Egland considered doing a survey of the membership.

The LWML had done a large survey in 1961 and a smaller sampling in 1983. The latter showed that the majority of members said they did not spend enough time studying God's Word, they found it difficult to share their faith with others, and they were not contributing enough to society. During 1984–1986, the LCMS President's Commission on Women did a study on attitudes regarding male/female roles in church and family, but it did not assess spirituality.

However, Search Institute of Minneapolis, Minnesota, had conducted a study of LCMS youth and adults in 1994. Therefore, rather than doing its own survey, the League asked a Christian sociologist and religious researcher, Dr. David O. Moberg, to analyze the responses of women in that study. His report, published in 1998 as *Woman of God—A Spiritual Snapshot*, covered maturity of faith, devotional life, Biblical knowledge, beliefs, church participation, evangelism, and Christian service.

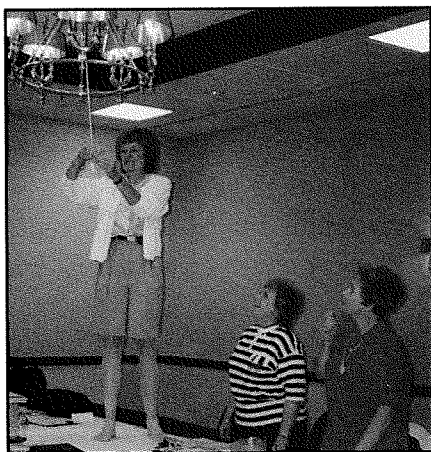
Among the facts the survey discovered were: Half of the seniors (ages 65+) said their faith is the most important influence in their lives, but only 26% of women ages 18–34 felt that way. A majority said they prayed

once a day, but only 14% did daily Bible study. Most respondents rarely involved themselves in “efforts to promote social justice,” and two-thirds had done nothing within the last 30 days to help non-family members who were poor, hungry, sick or unable to care for themselves. To help societies use this information in planning spiritual growth programs, a study guide entitled *Woman of God—Developing a Mature Faith*, was written by Marlys Taege Moberg.

Mission-Ministry Vision Consultants

Recognizing that some societies were struggling and declining in membership, the LWML instituted Mission-Ministry Vision (MMV) consultants in 1999 to help local leaders strengthen their units. An initial group of 22 women went through an intensive course led by professional consultant Les Stroh to equip them to offer on-site assistance in brainstorming, assessing needs, decision-making, exploring options, setting goals, and implementing plans. As more were trained in subsequent years, many districts were blessed to have several MMV consultants within their boundaries.

Office and Procedural Changes



Even if it meant standing on a table, Gloria was there when help was needed. Quarterly Editor-in-Chief Pat Beach Schutte and Office Manager Shirley Meckfessel watch as Gloria hangs a prop for a planning meeting.

Communication became faster and easier when the League launched its own home page on the World Wide Web in Summer 1997. Besides providing information about the organization, it allowed people to order from the LWML Catalog through the Web site with the convenience of a credit card. The capability of using a credit card for mail, fax or phone orders became available to purchasers in Summer 1996. With the advent of the Internet, viewers could also send an e-mail message to the office. Bylaw changes approved in 1997 allowed the Executive Committee to conduct emergency business between meetings via electronic messaging.

Following the 1997 retirement of Shirley Meckfessel after 22 years as office manager, the League hired Norine Stumpf as her replacement in 1998. Her title was later changed to Business Administrator. Norine had a Master's of Business Administration degree and had managed the editorial department of Concordia Publishing House. She was the mother of three children, ages 6, 9 and 12. As she prepared to attend the LWML Interdepartmental meeting, her third-grade son explained her absence to his friends: "Mommy is going to a meeting about women's problems. She'll be gone a week. They have a lot of problems!"

"A lot of changes" would have been a more accurate description. Upon her retirement at the end of 1997 after 10 years as *Quarterly* Editor-in-Chief, Pat Beach Schutte cited original definitions of some words that developed new meanings in communications technology during her tenure:

"*Interface*—insert some net-like material into parts of a garment you were sewing to help it keep its shape.

"*RAM*—the body style of a popular pickup truck.

"*Disk*—a phonograph record; hard disk—a Frisbee.

"*Floppy disk*—a piecrust.

"*Bytes*—something your mother taught you that when eating to take small ones.

"*The web*—things spiders made to ruin a perfectly clean house.

"*Distance learning*—going to college in the next state.

"Today," Pat continued, "standard equipment for the *Quarterly* staff includes a computer, printer, and fax machine. Stories zip along the Internet by e-mail, and copy is proofed via fax.

"The paradox: we use all this sophisticated up-to-date equipment to enhance and enlighten our readers' lives with the oldest message in the world—eternal salvation through Jesus" (Winter 1997 *Quarterly*, p. 20).

Pat was succeeded by Donna Streufert. Beginning with the 1998 Summer issue, the *Quarterly* was printed in four colors for the first time.

To ease the task of filling all the national committee appointments quickly each biennium, Gloria began collecting names months ahead and sending letters requesting biographical information and an indication of willingness to serve. From this pool, appointments were easily made.

New Resources

Through the creativity of the LWML committees, many new products

became available during this period. They included:

—*Freely Received, Freely Give*, a video-based Bible study to assist women in cross-cultural ministry.

—*Prepare to Serve*. Three new units were added to this video course: Prepare to Change, Prepare to Encourage, and Prepare to Reconcile.

—*Lead Me, Lord...Through Motherhood*, a devotional booklet for new mothers, written by Annetta Dellinger, known in LWML as “The Joy Lady.”

—*Ready, Set, Change*, a Bible study for intergenerational use by former LWML Counselor Darold Reiner. It offered insights “into our never-changing God’s teaching about change.”

—*Rekindling Kit*, a manual to help societies add spark to meetings. Among its suggested program ideas: “Stone Soup” meeting, Hi-Tech Bible study, Walk for Life, Ethnic Appreciation Day, and Winter Break-away.

—A series of three books featuring true stories of LCMS women missionaries—*A Rainbow of Saris*, India, 1996; *One Cup of Water*, China, 1997, and *Dreams Dawn in Africa*, 1999. Coordinated and primarily written by Louise Mueller, they were edited by Janice Kerper Brauer, who also served as Bible Study Editor and since 1998 as Associate Editor of the *Quarterly*. The first book celebrated the 100th anniversary of LCMS foreign mission work.

—*The King’s Kards*, sets of Bible character trading cards for children. The first set included Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Esther, Mary Magdalene and Dorcas.

—A classic carryall. This professional briefcase had a shoulder strap, numerous pockets and LWML imprinted in gold on the black canvas.

Like Mother and Grandmother

Gloria’s earliest memories of LWML—“quilting, mite boxes and the *Quarterly*”—go back to her childhood in Indiana, where her mother and grandmother were both involved. Born in Fort Wayne and raised on a farm surrounded by a large extended family, Gloria attended Lutheran grade school and Concordia High School.

Her college choice broke the mold—she was the first Concordia graduate to attend Purdue University. There she met a young man, Ross Edwards, who joined University Lutheran Chapel and spoke of moving west. When they married, Gloria left the safe haven of her youth and

moved to California. There two sons were born and a daughter arrived from Korea. The daughter, Tami, was adopted at age 3 through Holt International Children's Services.

Ross continues to serve on the Holt Board, and Tami was Gloria's page at both ILWML conventions during Gloria's presidency. Leading the League can be time-consuming, but her family was understanding. Son John and his fiancée, Mesha, even scheduled their 1998 wedding on a Thursday so Gloria could attend.

Besides the LWML, Gloria has served the church as a board member of Wheat Ridge Ministries, Board of Regents of Concordia University Portland, and the Board of the University's Foundation. Concordia awarded her an honorary doctorate in 1996 when she gave the commencement address there.

Since her LWML presidency, Gloria has also served on the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service Executive Committee and traveled to Geneva, Switzerland, shortly after the September 11, 2001, bombing in New York, for a United Nations Committee meeting on refugees. For one term, she was a trustee on the LCMS Foundation as a representative of Synod President Gerald Kieschnick. Since its inception in 1998, she has served on the national cabinet of "For the Sake of the Church," a 12-year endeavor to double the number of LCMS students on Concordia College/University campuses and develop a \$400 million endowment to support their education.

For relaxation, Gloria enjoys reading, spending time with her grandchildren, and traveling. Participation in a 1996 women's conference took her to Riga, Latvia. With Ross, Gloria has visited many countries, including Vietnam, Romania, India, Korea, and China.

She also enjoys outdoor activities of all kinds—skiing, hiking, golf and tennis. An avid runner, Gloria has completed the New York Marathon and introduced the LWML's first "Run for the Son" at the 1997 Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina.



After her term, Gloria continued to serve in various capacities—including playing in the handbell choir at the 2001 convention.

Leaguers ‘Hold Up the Light’

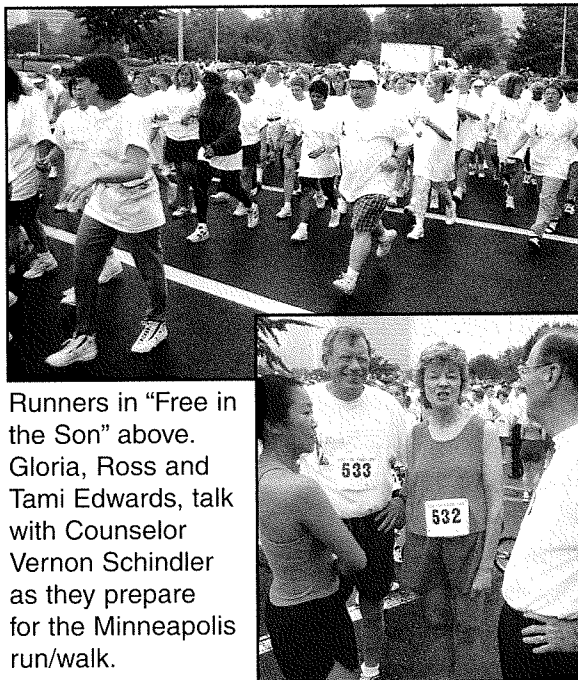
That first LWML 5K Run/Walk began Saturday at 6:30 a.m. as runners, walkers and encouragers gathered at the starting point for a brief devotion. The \$15 fee entitled them to a T-shirt with a “Run for the Son” logo. Awards were given by age categories. As an alternative, “Stretch for the Son,” an hour of aerobic exercise, was offered at the convention center.

In cooperation with Charlotte area social ministries, the convention again offered Servant Events. People could work on a Habitat for Humanity house, clean up parks and grounds of community agencies, work at a social ministry agency (interact with pre-school and handicapped children, assist with meals for the elderly, catalog library books, etc.) or help at a VBS Kids’ Camp.

Gloria made sure the planners benefited from the lessons learned at the first Servant Events in Kansas City. Perhaps the most important, she says, “was that just supplying willing hands was not enough. For many we needed to supply paint for painting and flowers for planting. We had not walked in the shoes of those we wanted to help enough to know that they could not fund these kinds of things and it was too hard for them to tell us that.” (The Christian Outreach Committee followed up in print with *A Guided Tour to Hosting a Servant Event* to help districts and zones discover appropriate sites and do their own event.)

Based on 2 Timothy 1, which directs believers to “fan into flame the gift of God within you,” the Charlotte convention theme was “Hold Up the Light.” Besides the run/walk, there were other innovations:

—A concert by a Dove and Grammy award winning Gospel singer,



Runners in “Free in the Son” above. Gloria, Ross and Tami Edwards, talk with Counselor Vernon Schindler as they prepare for the Minneapolis run/walk.

CeCe Winans, who said her goal was “to encourage others to fall in love with Christ.” A young woman representative attending the convention was accompanied by her mother, an unbeliever, who refused to attend anything except the Winans concert. After that, the mother no longer teased her daughter about her faith and expressed her admiration for the women at the convention and the excitement of the event. Four years later when the mother died unexpectedly, the daughter in gratitude for her mother’s change of attitude gave part of her inheritance to the LWML.



Liturgical dancers at Charlotte convention.

—A “FanFair Mission Extravaganza” to give Leaguers an opportunity to personally hear and meet five missionaries and enjoy music by “Jubilation,” a 10-member contemporary music group from Idaho Falls, Idaho. One of the speakers, Karol Selle, who works with international students in the United States, told of a Chinese woman physician who became a Christian while studying in America. Consequently, she chose not to abort her second child, even though her violation of China’s one-child law meant she would lose her license to practice medicine when she returned to China.

—EnLight Sessions featuring four women—Elaine Bickel, a teacher, author and humorist; Dr. Marva Dawn, theologian and author; Ruth Koch, mental health educator and counselor; and Dr. Mary Manz Simon, author and parenting consultant. As soon as the names were announced, Gloria received letters concerned that at least one of them might promote ordination for women. Question them, the writers urged, and if this is their personal belief, rescind the invitation. Gloria did not do that, explaining that the women were asked to speak in relation to the convention goals, not on the ordination issue. All kept to their subject, sharing how God has changed them as they followed His direction for their lives. All were well received.

—The 70 Young Women Reps attending the convention each received a new YWR pin. Containing the initials LWML and YWR, the double links of the pin “remind us that since the inception of the LWML, women of all ages have been joyfully united in spirit and purpose. As Lutheran

women in mission, each of us is different, but in Christ we are linked to each other, complementing one another's gifts, talents and strengths" (Fall 1997 *Quarterly*, p. 46).

—When the opening celebration service concluded, thousands of Leaguers and their families marched in a Parade of Lights led by President Gloria and the Executive Committee. As they walked the five-block route from the convention center past the convention hotel, they sang Christian songs and waved penlights.

—Adding fun to the agenda was Sparky, an "unexpected guest" who periodically ran on stage to humorously remind everyone to "let our little light shine." In real life, Sparky was Linda Reiser, who six years later would be elected LWML president.

As Gloria gave her president's report to the convention, she was wearing the Christus Vivit award received in May from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, "on behalf of the women in the church—especially the LWML." She was the first woman to receive this award since Evelyn Hartman in 1971.

Gloria encouraged listeners to "give up being ruled by tradition. We must give up meeting for the sake of meeting. We must give up saying no to change before giving change a chance. We must give up expecting others to always do it our way." She urged the women instead to "seize the moment to use your gifts for God and the people of the world."

Choosing to Change

The *Quarterly* followed up with a focus on "Changes and Choices" in its Spring 1998 issue. Stories told of how Leaguers had dealt positively with change. For example:

—Carol Alberts of Ocala, Florida, began praying on line with "pen pals" she found in a "chat room." Soon she was listening to the Lutheran Hour sermon over the Internet and reading the *Quarterly* online before it arrived in the mail.

—After caring for her husband who had Alzheimer's Disease, June Westaver of St. Peters, Missouri, discovered when he died that her experience made her a valuable volunteer with the Alzheimer's Association.

—When Reye Goedeken of Oskaloosa, Iowa, retired and bought a computer, her pastor asked to install Ministry Information System software on her equipment so she could handle the church information program. After teaching herself the program intricacies, she wrote, "How marvelous are His ways! First He provided the time, then supplied the

tools, prodded His servant into mastering the skills to use them, and ultimately sent His priest to direct the use of all these to His glory!”

—Following the death of her husband, Paulo, and her own bout with cancer, Martha Heine, accompanied by her granddaughter, traveled from Chicago to Brazil to sell the family home the couple owned in Porto Alegre. Since she had last been there, a favela (shantytown) had sprung up across the street. That plus the economy made a sale impossible.

“Where are the Christians? Why don’t they help those people?” asked her granddaughter. “We’re Christians and we’re here. What can we do?” Martha wondered.

Returning to Chicago, she told the story of the ramshackle shelters made of cardboard, scrap metal and old wood and of the 300 impoverished and illiterate men, women and children who lived in them. With the aid of 29 friends, supplies were collected and fundraisers organized. Martha spent all the money they could raise, including her own Social Security and her husband’s pension, to buy clothing and household items at garage sales. Then she left her Illinois home of 35 years and went back to Brazil to answer God’s call to serve others.

Today AMIGAS Ministries in Porto Alegre provides meals, clothing and school supplies to children in the favelas of Porto Alegre in an effort to break the cycle of illiteracy, joblessness and poverty. Besides operating five daycare centers and a home for the elderly, AMIGAS shares the Gospel with children through Bible stories, music and a Christmas pageant. The children in turn witness to their parents and grandparents, and many now believe. Continuing their support, the 29 friends, plus others, have founded Friends of AMIGAS, a not-for-profit organization.

Bridging Cultures

To make the LWML more relevant for Lutheran women of varying ethnic backgrounds, a “Bridging Cultures” effort was undertaken. Gloria became aware of this need when she attended the Florida-Georgia LWML Convention and several Hispanic women asked to meet with her. “We had a wonderful time talking—some through an interpreter and some through basic English,” Gloria recalls.

“What are your needs?” she asked. “What can we do together as an organization and what can the organization do for you? They requested a Bible study written in their language—not a translation. This was done and published.

They also requested permission to meet in another room during the convention Bible study and have their own study in Spanish. The discussion made Gloria realize that “we need to talk and ask questions of those we are trying to reach and involve. And, we need to be ready to accept the answer—even if we don’t think it’s the right or preferred answer.” The first “talk session” of Hispanic women with LWML representatives took place in 2000.

Partnering to Understand

Building on the Encouragement to Missionary Wives program, a new cross-national, cross-cultural program entitled “Sister to Sister” was launched in 1998. Once again, participating missionary women could invite an LWML member to visit them overseas. Throughout this entire program, 22 women made overseas visits. The last 10 were commissioned at the 1999 convention. Returning home after learning about the life and work of the missionaries, the visitors participated in 140 celebration events to connect the lives of Leaguers with Lutheran women in mission around the world.

A second cross-cultural experience, piloted in four districts, linked 10 societies from each district with their own partner society in another district. Over 18 months, the paired groups got acquainted via phone, e-mail and letters and then worked together on specific projects outside their communities. The goal was to expand their horizons through linkage with women of another culture. After completing their joint project, some partners had the joy of meeting face to face at the 1999 Minneapolis convention.

Let Freedom Ring

St. Paul, Minnesota, was chosen as the site for the 1999 convention. Contracts were negotiated years ahead. The committee had begun planning. Then the city informed the League that the convention center was being demolished to build a hockey arena. Meeting Manager Ruth Ann Johnson learned about that while reading a newspaper the day after the Charlotte convention. In shock, she called Gloria. They tried all options from the Twin Cities to Duluth.

If the date could be changed from June to July 1–4, and if the LWML could co-exist with the Royal Order of Moose, the newer, nicer and larger Minneapolis Convention Center would be available for a reasonable

fee. Exercising the flexibility that Gloria had been encouraging, the Executive Committee accepted the offer. Rather than viewing the dates as a detriment, the officers determined to take advantage of the holiday timing and encourage Leaguers to attend as a family vacation.

Using the theme “Let Freedom Ring,” the gathering celebrated Christian freedom in Christ. In preparation, the 1999 Prayer Service followed the same theme, based on John 8:32 and 36—“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

Bible study leader for the convention was Donna Streufert, teacher, author and *Quarterly* Editor-in-Chief. Focusing on John 8:1–11, Donna noted that Jesus saw the woman caught in adultery as a precious individual, and did not see only her sin. “In Him, we too are free!” she emphasized.

The convention featured the largest number of women speakers in the history of LWML. They proved that Lutheran Women in Mission is more than a name. For example, Sandi Schauer told about children’s ministry in Alaska that reaches hundreds with the Gospel, Carol Lee Halter demonstrated how she explains the plan of salvation to children in Hong Kong, and Vivian Hauser and Tina Browning talked about their work with Family Connection, Stephen Ministry, and the homeless. After Rev. John Nunes discussed his work in urban ministry, his wife, Monique, shared her heart for children through song.

Special guests of the League were Lutheran women from Ghana, Latvia, Guatemala, India, Japan, Paraguay, Russia, and the Philippines. Wearing traditional clothing from their homelands, they brought greetings from Christians in their countries. The Ghanaians had uniforms with headdresses that they always wore to their auxiliary meetings. After the convention, the *LWML Networker* noted, “Everyone laughs in the same language.”

A celebration from start to finish, the convention had unique festive touches—from the music, drama, and costumed exhibitors in “Freedom Cities” to the bells. The sound of bells was everywhere—even on the windchime banners used in the worship processions.

The Freedom Celebration Saturday evening began with a bang as participants popped paper bags to simulate fireworks. It ended with a downpour of balloons and the singing of patriotic songs and the convention

theme song, "Let Freedom Ring," composed by the Rev. Gerald Coleman, the convention song leader.

A variety of speakers from many cultures shared what freedom in Jesus Christ meant in their lives:

—Dr. Emily Moore, a Concordia University (St. Paul) dean and nationally recognized woman achiever who is African-American. She encouraged listeners to be spiritually ready for the testing of their faith.

—Dr. Edna Aguirre Rehbein, Texas Lutheran University vice president and former Concordia University (Austin) vice president, who also had worked with the Hispanic Institute of Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

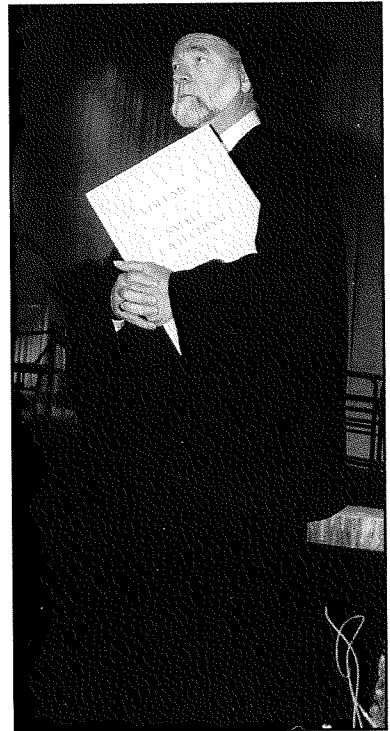
—Colonel Carol Reineck, Chief Nurse of the United States Army Medical Command, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. When she was Personnel Management Officer at the U.S. Army Military Personnel Center, she directed the assignments of 1,600 Army nurses.

—Dr. Yi-Li Lin, formerly of Taiwan, who demonstrated her skill as a pianist. Holding a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance, she came to know Jesus in 1991 through the LCMS International Student Ministry program.

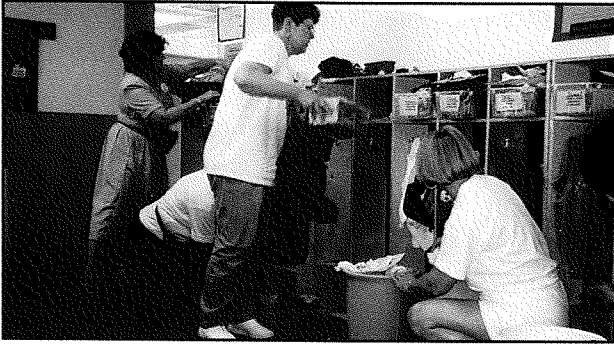
—Marilu Johnsen, a member of the Minnesota Chippewa tribe. She appeared with the Rev. Richard Latterner, Director of the American Indian Ministry Program at Concordia University (St. Paul). Both have served as missionaries on Indian reservations, where 95% do not know Jesus.



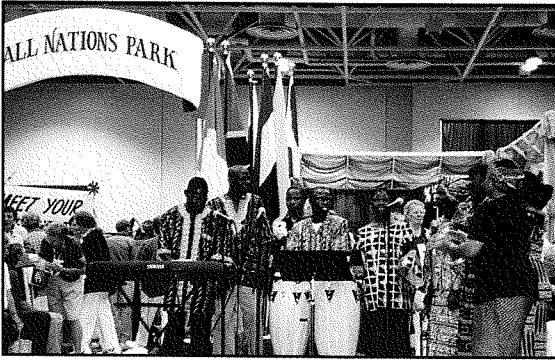
Katie Luther's
"cousin Marta,"
(alias Jan Struck,
a humorous inter-
rupter)



Portraying a classmate of
Martin Luther, the Rev. Les
Stahlke used his unique story-
telling talents to highlight
aspects of Luther's life and
works at the 1999 convention.



Minneapolis Servant event.



All Nations Park at the Minneapolis convention featured a variety of Christian musicians, dramatists and craft people.

—General John Vessey, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States Armed Forces. He reminded the audience that “There are no unimportant people. We all have servant work to do.”

—Dr. Glenn O’Sho-
ney, Executive Director of the Board for Mission Services, not only shared highlights of the LCMS mission program but also, at Gloria’s request, gave a moving description of how God found him when he was lost and changed his life. At one of the Expect Victory! luncheons, he introduced two women from the mission field who shared their stories.

One, a former Muslim, was exiled by her family and child and lived in mortal danger after coming to faith in Jesus as Savior. The other described working in remote regions of Siberia with her missionary husband.

Also appearing “live on stage” was “Lester Methusaleh Gutenberg,” Martin Luther’s “last surviving classmate,” portrayed by the Rev. Lester Stahlke, humorist and founder of Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots. More humor was added during the daytime sessions by the convention “interrupter,” Katie Luther’s “Cousin Marta,” (alias Jan Struck of Wisconsin). Always looking for her cousin, Marta shared glimpses into Katie’s life.

A Family Festival and Street Fair, a poetry contest, Servant Events, a “Free in the Son” 5/K Run/Walk, election of officers and adoption of a \$1,430,000 mite goal rounded out the weekend. The goal included \$1,001,000

for 14 mission grants and \$429,000 for inreach and leadership expenses.

Among the 69 Young Women Representatives was a fourth generation LWML member from Indiana and a Minnesotan who did not know Christ five years ago. She was grateful for the neighbor who had invited her to an LWML function.

When members saw the new YWR pin at the 1997 Convention, they said, "Make us a new pin too." Designed to express multiple meanings, the new pin was a popular item in 1999. Three symbols—two intertwined circles and a triangle—represent the past, present and future. Each is different, evolving. They also demonstrate the interdependence of the generations and a linkage with the Holy Trinity. In addition, the differing textures demonstrate the desired and growing diversity of women in the organization.

Several LWML promotional products also made their debut at the convention—a purple convention bear, denim caps, chambray shirts, a gift bag, and a wrist watch, all with the LWML logo.

As Gloria turned the gavel over to her successor, Virginia Von Seggern, she was grateful that she had said yes many years ago when an older woman in her zone asked to meet with her personally. When they talked in the patio of Gloria's church, Louise Hartner asked Gloria to accept the zone presidency. "It was the furthest thing from my mind at the time," Gloria says, "but how could I say no to this woman who had traveled over an hour to see me and who told me I would be good at the job!"

In years to come others would talk with Gloria about becoming district president and then an international officer. Today Gloria says, "I think it is important for us to recognize and encourage one another to use our gifts. God can and does use each of us. Say it soon, loud and clear, to someone you see!"



Gloria presents Sally Aschinger, LCMS Mission Board's liaison to the LWML, with a check for a mission project.

MISSION PROJECTS

1995-1997: Faith Alive Curriculum for Lutheran Schools in Need, \$70,000; Daily Devotions in the Language of the Deaf, \$65,000; "Woman to Woman" Radio Program, \$103,120; Ministry House in Lodge Grass, Montana; Crow Lutheran Mission, \$20,437.50; Sending National Missionaries, \$125,000; CLAIMing Growth of American Indian Ministries, \$70,000; International Friendship Center, East Lansing, Michigan, \$125,000; People of the Book Lutheran Outreach—Muslim Education, \$95,000; Swahili Large Print Biblical Books, \$100,000; Gaining NGO (Non-governmental Organization) Status in Vietnam, \$50,000; and English Teachers in China and Mongolia, \$70,202.50. The mission goal of \$1,140,000 included \$893,760 for mission projects and \$246,240 for mission inreach.

1997-1999: Adult Braille Christian Literacy Project, \$125,000; Missionary Transportation in Alaska, \$100,000; Bible Class Videos for Deaf Children in Sign Language, \$55,000; Lutheran Bible Translators Training Scholarships, \$95,220; Family Connection, \$95,000; Women-to-Women Building a Future, \$75,000; Latvia Seminary Equipment and Repairs, \$25,000; Lutheran Church—Hong Kong Synod Seminary and Lay Training, \$75,000; LCMS Missionary Training Program, \$100,000; Clergy Training in Ghana, \$75,000; Christian Outreach on the Omaha Reservation, \$62,500; Support for a Native American Lay Worker, \$40,000; and Care for Returning Missionary Children, \$392.32. The mission goal of \$1,150,000 included \$901,600 for mission projects and \$248,400 for inreach and leadership expenses. An overage of \$21,512.32 from the 1995-1997 bien-nium was added to the new projects.

Chapter Eight

Mission, Mites and Mentoring

(Virginia Von Seggern, 1999–2003)

“I’ll never forget that overwhelming feeling in Minneapolis when I realized that the president was NOT calling for another vote,” says Virginia Von Seggern. “The convention had an election!” Most people expected that a second ballot would be needed because a third candidate had been nominated from the floor.

“When Gloria announced the results, my whole life passed in front of me, I think—at least my whole LWML life. It was unreal,” Virginia recalls.

In the days ahead there would be other challenges that seemed almost unreal, too, or at least were unexpected. Due to a deficit from the Minneapolis Convention, as well as a decreasing LCMS membership, and a declining economy, there were financial concerns to be faced immediately.

In addition, delegates had approved a brand new structure for the League. Getting used to the new department names and responsibilities was quite a challenge for most Leaguers—and that included the new president. Sitting at her computer on July 6, trying to prepare for the August Executive Committee meeting, she found herself wondering repeatedly, “Just WHAT were those new names?” Yet she knew them as well as anyone because she had participated for months in meetings where they were proposed.



Virginia Von Seggern

Implementing the new structure required hours of effort. Even though delegates had approved the plan, it still had to be “sold” to the districts, and Virginia found herself answering questions “like crazy.” Some questions dealt with the proper way to refer to the national organization. Because Canadian societies had not been involved for six years, the new bylaws removed the word “International” from the League name. Henceforth the national LWML would simply be “LWML”—not National LWML.

Creating a Vision

At the first meeting of the Board of Directors in 2000, Virginia introduced her vision for the succeeding four years—a focus on Mission, Mites and Mentoring. Because leaders must have “a passion for creating a legacy of learners,” mentoring is crucial, she believed.

“Mites and Missions go together,” she told the board. “Sixty years ago, in 1942, the founding mothers of our organization built it on the premise that we would support missions. Let’s get our focus back on the roots of LWML, to the MISSION HEART.”



1999–2001 Executive Committee meeting at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. (Front L to R) Carol Zemke, PR Director; Jan Rueter, VP Gospel Outreach; Ida Luebke, VP Christian Life; Virginia Von Seggern, President; Ruth Ann Johnson, Meeting Manager; Linda Reiser, VP Servant Resources; (Back L to R) Rev. David Bernthal, Pastoral Counselor; Norine Stumpf, Business Administrator; Betty Knapp, Planner; Janet Miller, Treasurer; Karol Selle, VP Communications; Helen Brice, VP Human Care; Barbara Volk, Recording Secretary; Rev. David Buuck, Senior Pastoral Counselor.

She encouraged the leaders to “step back, take a deep breath, and get used to all the changes (name, structure, financial practices) we have instituted. Let the roots go down deep, and GROW.” That didn’t mean, she explained, that the League should never change again. “We just need to get used to who we are—what our mission is—and do it well.”

To Virginia, that meant being “entirely OUTWARD focused for now. With a one million dollar mite goal, we can only be that!...Mission is what built the LWML and it’s where we need to focus our attention.”

The outward-based effort must be focused on all ages, Virginia said, “not just the young members of our congregations, but also the retired and the grandmas. Let’s never forget our history. Let’s remember the women who attend our conventions.”

Who Is a Member?

In her address, Virginia took the board mentally on a helicopter ride across America to zoom in on the individual women who, at least in her vision, made up the LWML. “Who is she?” Virginia asked. “She is young, old, and in-between. She is employed (probably), and chances are both she and her husband work to support a family. But, she could be a single mom, a college student—or both!

“She could be black, white, Asian, African-immigrant, Hispanic.

“She is from big cities, urban areas, college campuses, small towns and rural areas.

“She is single, married, divorced, and single again.

“She is a professional, a household engineer, teacher, nurse, or a myriad of 1,000 other occupations that women hold today.

“She probably carries a cell phone, has a planner in her briefcase, and carries a dozen credit cards in her billfold.

“She has no time for frivolous meetings, or anything that isn’t worth her time. It had better be ‘quality’ in presentation, colorful, finished—or she won’t participate.

“She wants Bible study from her church, and perhaps looks to the LWML for resourcing that need.

“She gets the *Quarterly* in her mailbox at church. Does she read it? I think so—but quickly.

“She values family time as quality time, and will probably put family time ahead of participation in a meeting.

“She is a soccer mom who juggles all her family’s activities, including

who has to get where and in what order, as she holds down a demanding full-time job.

“She may have faxed or e-mailed an order to the LWML Office (5% of all LWML Sunday orders were e-mailed; 10% were faxed).

“She has gone to the Website, but due to its lack of available perks, probably hasn’t listed it on her ‘Favorite Sites.’

“She asks lots of questions, and wants an immediate answer. She lives in an instant society, and wants instant everything—answers, meals, problem-solving, etc.

“The big picture, as I see the LWML, includes women of all ages, multicultural and multitalented!”

At this point, Virginia went on to clarify, “But what do I see mostly? Who is the average Lutheran woman in mission? Who is the average LWMLer?”

And her answer: “Age 50–70, retired or working part time, conservative, member of a local group, just an ordinary person, having limited or no computer skills, and she loves the LWML to death! She would ‘die’ for it!”

So, if the women with high responsibility jobs outside the home lack the time and energy to volunteer as LWML leaders, the answer, Virginia stressed, lies in “Mission, Mites and Mentoring.” She believed that mentoring had to be implemented immediately if the LWML was going to survive, and she challenged the national committees to develop materials that would teach and encourage members to be good mentors.

Cutting Costs

To assure a financially sound operation, the Executive Committee (EC) set about finding ways to save money without reducing services to members. By example, Virginia encouraged the use of e-mail, thereby cutting postal costs and creating a family closeness among the leaders through frequent messages, updates and prayer requests. Canceling a Mission-Ministry Vision Training Seminar saved transportation and lodging costs. Lodging expenses were also reduced through shortened meetings and staying at less expensive venues. An offer of office space at the new LLL offices in St. Louis was rejected because of the higher rent and because the existing location at Concordia Publishing House was convenient for mailing and shipping LWML products.

A detailed budget was established, and everyone adhered to it. A mora-

torium was placed on new programs and events for the remainder of the 1999–2001 biennium. Other money-saving measures included less costly paper for some products, printing materials at meeting sites to eliminate shipping expenses, meeting in St. Louis at the Seminary instead of a hotel, and soliciting sponsorships for meals and events.

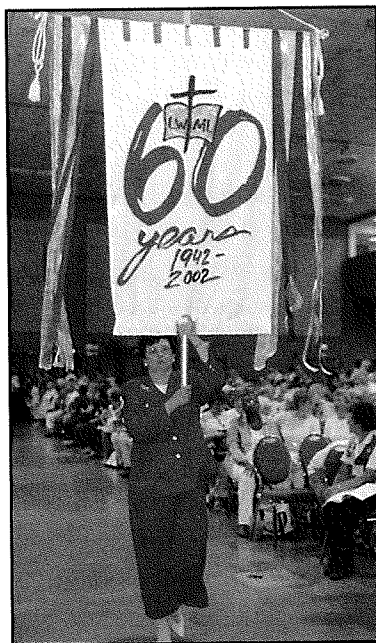
Reducing the inventory of LWML products also saved money because the storage costs were expensive for skids and skids of materials, purchased in quantity to save printing costs. However, some of the unsold items were becoming outdated. Reduction was accomplished bit by bit, case by case, sale by sale. Some sales went so well that the office staff was overwhelmed with fax and e-mail orders. Besides establishing a no-stockpiling policy, officers worked to make the shorter resources available for downloading on the Web.

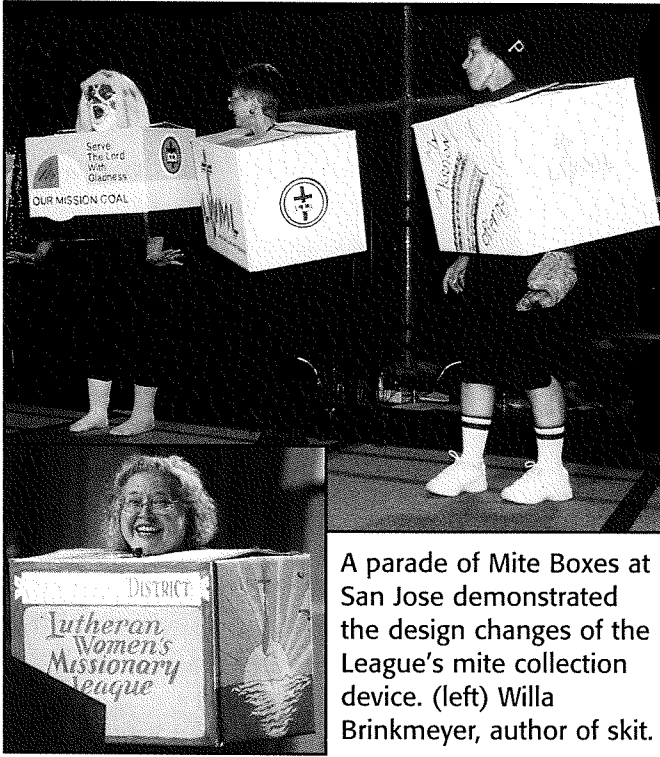
During Gloria Edwards' term, the League had already hired a financial consultant, Harold Bohlmann. Because of the steadily increasing mite goals (over one million dollars for grants alone) and the growing sales of LWML products, he emphasized that the League had become "big business." That fact required different accounting procedures to meet new federal standards for not-for-profit groups. Likewise, the company that insured the League insisted that mail be opened in a secure room by two people. The League complied.

Encouraging Greater Giving

To help ensure future financial stability and provide a "savings account" for financial emergencies, the board in February 2001 established an LWML Endowment Fund, utilizing 60th Anniversary Thank-offering gifts. Fund proceeds would be used for LWML ministries, leadership training and programming—or, as Virginia explained, "to help LWML function as the organization we want it to be." All gifts given in April and May 2001 were desig-

President Von Seggern carries the 60th anniversary banner during a morning processional at the San Jose convention. A parade of different banners began each day.





A parade of Mite Boxes at San Jose demonstrated the design changes of the League's mite collection device. (left) Willa Brinkmeyer, author of skit.

nated as a memorial to Dr. A.L. Barry, LCMS president who died that March. Gifts were collected at district conventions in 2002. By March 2003, the total, including interest, reached \$470,477.

To encourage greater mite giving, Virginia also directed that a remittance envelope be inserted in every *Quarterly*. Another change in giving occurred as some members began

sending designated restricted contributions for specific mission grants. Virginia could also foresee the day when members would donate via credit card and automatic withdrawals from their checking accounts.

She was concerned, though, that some members still believed that "if it doesn't 'jingle,' it's not mite giving." There were also pastors who advised that "only coins can go into mite boxes." In response, Virginia emphasized that however one did it, whatever one gave (check, bills or automatic withdrawal), it was mite giving "if a prayer was sent heavenward with the gift."

Recognizing that most of the LWML national leaders held jobs in the business world, she also worked to streamline the organization. Meeting dates, times and expectations were carefully examined. To begin with, the first board meeting was one day shorter. Virginia too was employed, and she said, "I know what it's like to fly home and go to work the next day....We need to be careful stewards of our time, talents and resources."

Leaders Assemble

"In League with Our Lord," the theme of the 2000 Assembly of

Leaders in Grapevine, Texas, was also the name of a new League song written by the event's Theme Weaver, Jeff Burkart. Commissioned during Gloria Edwards' term, the song was approved by the Executive Committee after Burkart sang it to them over the phone during their April 1999 meeting. Leaders had said they wanted something "energizing, uplifting with a memorable chorus, piano accompaniment for multiple use, contemporary yet traditional for retreats, convocations and other uses." A tall order? Yes, but it debuted with accolades!

To be "In League," Virginia told the assembly, means to be deeply involved. "We all are different, but we all are in this League together." She urged them to be committed and inspired, to have "a purple passion" for Christ and for the organization.

"Don't be afraid to be the leader," Virginia also advised the committee chairmen, exemplifying the mentoring process she had promoted. "Learn from the very beginning to DELEGATE. Delegate big time—and set responsible deadlines that MUST be met. Now that's the tricky part—getting a volunteer to meet those deadlines. You've got to inspire them! Then follow-up in the months ahead so no one is left floundering by herself."

An Experienced Leader

Virginia spoke from years of personal experience. She had held nearly every LWML office on the local and zone level. In her district, she had been president, vice president, corresponding secretary, parliamentarian,



Virginia presiding at the San Jose convention.

retreat chairman, and a member of the Hospitality Committee for the 1979 ILWML convention. At the national level, she had chaired the committees for member development, bylaws, convention site review, the 1996 Assembly of Leaders, and the Minneapolis convention program. She was Vice President of Mission Education and on the ILWML restructuring task force.

She had also served as state coordinator for the 1993 Great Commission Convocation, district representative for the LCMS President's Commission on Women, and a Board member of Lutheran Family Services.

During her LWML presidency, she worked as Director of Development for Creighton (Nebraska) Area Health Services and was active in the Association of Lutheran Development Executives, the Nebraska Heart Association and the Creighton Chamber of Commerce. Besides all this, she still found time to serve as organist at her church.

After Virginia, a graduate nurse, married Burnell Von Seggern, a Nebraska farmer, they joined a new church where the women just assumed she would become involved in the LWML. She joined! As she said, "It was the natural thing to do!" Several years later, she volunteered to be a zone delegate to the 1967 Washington, D.C., convention. That did it—"I was hooked big time! If we had had YWRs then, I'd have been one."

Virginia is the first to admit that all this volunteer work would be impossible if her husband were not supportive, but he is just as active in the church as she. Sometimes when they attended the same meeting, they found themselves asking each other, "Now who is with whom at this meeting?" If it was Virginia's meeting, she made the decisions. If his, he did. He served on the Nebraska LCMS Board of Directors and was involved with the Nebraska Lutheran Laymen's League.

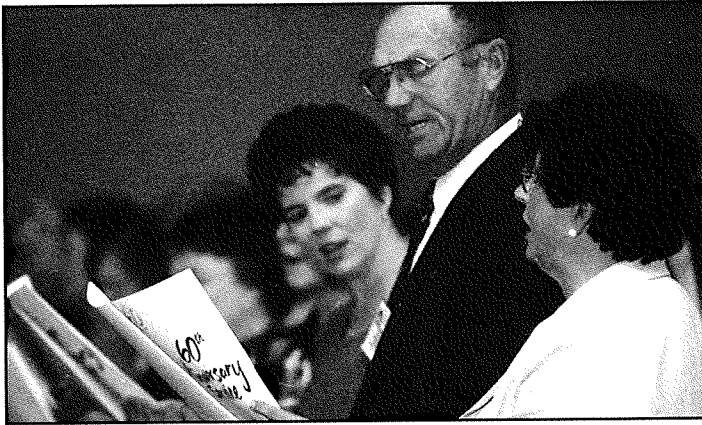
After she became president, Virginia bought a license plate holder that said "Lutheran Woman on a Mission." She wondered if anyone would notice. She didn't have to wait long. One cold day as she and Burnell were driving home, a vehicle passed them and flagged them over. The occupants said they were having car trouble and needed a ride home—and they knew with that license plate holder, the car ahead of them had to belong to Virginia.

As Virginia traveled across the U.S., she played a game called "Where in the world is Grandma?" with her granddaughter, Kimberly, who was

homeschooled. Virginia always sent her postcards, and then Kimberly called to interview Grandma about the site.

The Von Seggerns' marriage was blessed with a son, David, and two daughters, Susan and Kay. Regardless of how busy they were, family things always came first. Susan, who lived in Colorado, was Kimberly's mother and an Air force officer's wife. She found it strange to have to schedule time to talk with her mother during the four years of her presidency. Kay, a nurse living in Lincoln, Nebraska, was very active in the LWML and served as her mother's page for the 2001 Convention in San Jose, California. Kay was experienced—she was Helen Gienapp's page for the Detroit convention.

Comforted to Be a Comfort



Together at the 2001 communion service, Virginia and Burnell Von Seggern, with daughter Kay Hincker, who died just two weeks after the convention

Just two weeks after the San Jose gathering, Kay, who had been the picture of health there, began to experience vague symptoms of what she thought was a pulled muscle in her back. Instead, it was Beta Strep pneumonia, a vicious virus. Within days, this mother of two small children was dead. Virginia was grateful for the gift of a week with Kay in San Jose, for the 500 who attended the memorial service, and for the outpouring of love from sister Leaguers.

Before long Virginia was called to comfort other LWML leaders whose adult children were also called home by the Lord shortly afterwards—Janis McDaniels, Carolinas president, whose son was killed in Gary, Indiana; Dorothy Sincebaugh, North Dakota president, whose son was found dead in his apartment; Marlys Taege, *Quarterly* Bible study editor, whose daughter died of malaria in Tanzania; and former President Florence Montz, whose son, a doctor, died while jogging.

Another heart-touching moment for Virginia was the funeral of Joan Dougherty, the English District LWML president. Joan's daughters asked Virginia to pin Joan's president's pin on her in the coffin, and afterwards take the pin to the District's convention starting the next day in Tucson, Arizona. As part of the funeral service, Virginia presented to Joan's family the certificate that is normally given a retiring president when she lays down her gavel.

Because He Loves Me...

In all these situations, the families relied on the promise of the 2001 San Jose theme, "Because He First Loved Me," based on 1 John 4:19 ("We love because he first loved us") and its assurance that all who believe are His and have eternal life. The planning committee for this first LWML convention of the 21st century wanted all participants to be motivated to reach out to all cultural and ethnic groups with the Good News of Jesus.

To spark a passion for more Leaguer involvement in diverse missions, a half dozen "Workers in the Vineyard" described the excitement they found in telling others about Jesus.

Past LWML President Helen Gienapp told of her short-term mission trip to Ghana. Describing it as a life changing experience, she said, "Now when I look at a group of people, I wonder if they know Jesus, and I'm more ready to speak about Him."

Elizabeth Gonzalez, an Agency Development Specialist for Lutheran Brotherhood, spoke of her life growing up in a missionary family in Puerto Rico.

Carla and Rev. Peter Kirby, missionaries in Jamaica, were training national Christian leaders to help plant Lutheran churches there.

Mary E. Smith, a member of the LCMS Board for Black Ministry



A Hawaiian delegate offers a greeting at San Jose—and a lei for the president, an LWML tradition.



(above) Young Women Representatives at San Jose prepare to carry the banners of the nations in the processional at the opening worship service.

(left) Hands-on exhibits at San Jose allowed attendees to serve others by activities such as making hats for cancer patients.

Services and administrator of Lutheran City Ministries in Detroit, Michigan, shared stories of her service among the downtrodden of the inner city.

Amy Hau Mui, born in Hong Kong, began her mission endeavors as an interpreter for Missionary Wilbert Holt, who started LCMS work among the Chinese in San Francisco. She described her 33 years of ministry to three generations of Chinese families at the Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit, which received support through an LWML mission grant.

As LCMS Mission Development Counselor, Gary Thies has traveled to more than 63 countries in his work. Sharing some “miracle stories,” he reminded Leaguers that “Mission is not the padded pew and the stained glass windows.” He urged the women to “catch a vision for mission!”

The keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. Donald Muchow, chairman of the LCMS Board of Directors, shared stories from his experiences as a military chaplain. He also thanked the League for the scholarship he received

that enabled him to attend the seminary. “Without it,” he said, “I would most likely not be here today.”

As a fountain flowed continually at the front of the convention hall, Rev. David Andrus, who is blind and served as LCMS Counselor for Blind Mission, led attendees through Biblical word pictures—adoption, clothed, guarantee, washing and drowning—to deepen their understanding of Baptism.

In her president’s report, Virginia issued some thought-provoking challenges. “Is it time,” she asked, to:

—Have national conventions only every three years?

—Evaluate the League’s total outreach?

—Invigorate our zones—or evaluate their viability?

—Encourage women to volunteer to help with our service projects without necessarily becoming members?

To her three emphases for the biennium (Missions, Mites and Mentoring), she added a fourth—Motivate!

Pointing to the Book of Revelation, where the words, “every tribe and nation and language and people” are found three times, the convention’s worship proclaimer, Rev. Gerald Coleman, added more challenges. Look around you, he urged. “Where are the African-Americans, the Hispanics, the Asians, the pierced and tattooed, and the green-haired? And where are the people wearing clothes that make us uncomfortable? And where, oh where, are the young?”

What would happen, he asked, if:

—Each one present brought a young woman to the 2003 convention?

—Each Christian brought some “least of these” into his/her congregation?

—All Christians looked beyond their comfort zones and actually became active ambassadors for Christ?

Continuing this emphasis, Rev. Ed Westcott, the Sunday proclaimer, advised, “Every evening before you drift off to sleep, thank God for wiping away all your sins. Each morning as you awake, remind yourself, ‘Today I am Christ’s ambassador.’”



LWML members raised money for missions in the League’s first “Mission Mile Pledge Walk” at San Jose

Ten of the 67 Young Women Reps attending were third-generation LWMLers, and three-fourths became acquainted with LWML through their mothers. Pat Hambaum, who had been a missionary after graduation from college, said, "My grandmother had so many LWML women praying for me that I wanted to be a member."

At the Mission Vineyard Festival (convention exhibit area), Leaguers could stomp grapes, get their feet washed, make a braided ribbon lei, take a salsa lesson, make a cameo appearance in a skit, or play "Who Wants to Be a Missionary?" For the customary ingathering, the women brought almost 12,000 items to benefit eight agencies serving the poor of San Jose. The third convention run/walk had a new purpose—to raise money for LWML missions. Over 500 early risers participated in the "Mission Mile Pledge Walk," raising \$21,191 for LWML mission grants.

Multi-cultural Outreach

Delegates also adopted the largest mite goal in LWML history—\$1,650,000. That included \$1,155,000 (70%) for 20 mission grants and \$495,000 (30%) for LWML inreach. One of the grants, \$75,000 for "Reaching New Ethnic Groups Through Children," noted in its explanation that the U.S. is the most ethnically diverse country on earth. Hispanic, Asian and African-American populations are expected to make white, English-speaking people among the minorities by the middle of the 21st century. To help the LCMS, which was declining in membership, reach ethnic people, the grant would enable the development of a new model to evangelize ethnic children and through them the parents.

Three other grants also aimed at outreach to people of diversity: \$50,000 to develop a bilingual curriculum for the Hispanic Institute of Theology to train Hispanic men as ministers to the Hispanic population; \$40,000 for "Gospel Outreach to Chinese People in Carbondale, Illinois" and \$50,000 for "St. Matthew's Outreach to Japanese People" in Michigan, the U.S. and Japan. The rapidly growing Japanese Outreach, established in 1995 in Detroit, was initially led and staffed by Lutheran women. The University of Southern Illinois in Carbondale had over 2,000 students enrolled from over 30 nations, making it one of the largest concentrations of international students in the U.S. Many came from China.

All these initiatives meshed with the League's "Bridging Cultures" initiative that began during Gloria Edwards' term and continued under Virginia's presidency. To address the question of how the LWML could

include more women of diverse cultures, 13 women from different districts and various backgrounds, including one who was deaf, gathered to dialogue in March 2000. They predicted that the LWML would soon see a diversity “like nothing ever before.”

Multi-cultural objectives were established at a second meeting prior to the San Jose Convention. “We need to keep our doors open,” they said, to the refugees from Africa and Eastern Europe, as well as to various Hispanic groups (Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Central and South Americans) coming to the U.S. “We need to be ready to greet everybody,” said Lucy Wilke of San Antonio, Texas. “We have the Gospel. We don’t dare just hold it for ourselves. It’s for everybody.”

A goal of the Messianic congregation to which Jennifer Krupp belonged in St. Louis was to educate Lutheran neighbors on how to reach out to over 70,000 Jewish people who live there.

Margaret Leong of True Light Lutheran Church in New York’s Chinatown shared how they were trying to get the children of both cultures, American and Chinese, who worship there to speak Chinese and English together. The LWML held a spring rally for which women of both cultures cooked traditional dishes to share.

To get started in ministry to diverse cultures, Angela Jeppesen offered this advice in the Winter 2001 *Quarterly*: 1) Pray. 2) Embrace diversity—meet those you are trying to reach. 3) Discover their needs. 4) Be yourself. 5) Find common ground. 6) Allow God to open doors. Genuine relationships take time. 7) Just do it! Angela was director of LIGHT House, an LCMS ministry to students of the Haskell (Kansas) Indian Nations University.

Respecting Diversity became one of three critical targets selected by the LWML Board for the 2001–2003 biennium. The others were Personal Spiritual Living and Servant Response.

To implement the goal of a more diverse membership in LWML, the Gospel Outreach Committee proposed a \$50,000 mission grant at the 2003 Oklahoma City convention. Entitled “Heart to Heart Sisters—A Cross Cultural Gathering for 2005,” it was adopted. It was intended to create materials in several languages, provide scholarships for greater numbers of ethnic women to attend the 2005 convention, and fund a task force of ethnic women to carry out strategies to enhance the ministry and leadership of ethnic women in the LCMS during the 2003–2005 biennium.

Resources Aid League Goals

For the 2001–2003 biennium, three new products supported the League's emphasis on diversity and mentoring:

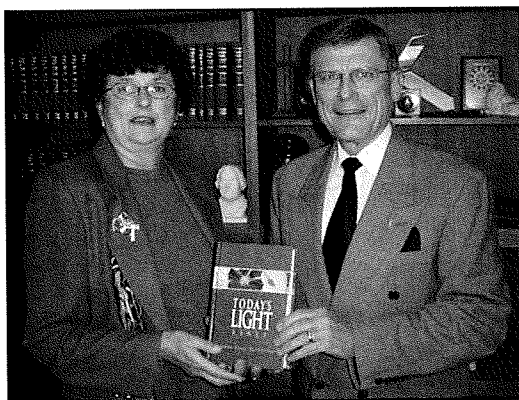
—*Celebrating Oneness—Diverse Yet One in the Lord*, a community-building program with helps for achieving unity while recognizing the differences that make people unique.

—*Woman-to-Woman Mentoring*, a guide for intentional mentoring, older to younger, peer to peer, experienced to novice.

—*Sister to Sister Celebration Kit*, with a video on women missionaries in the Philippines, Thailand, Japan and the U.S, filmed during the "Sister to Sister" visits. The kit suggested ways societies could build bridges with internationals in their local community.

In addition, several new resources were created to brighten society meetings: *Timeless Jewels*, 60 devotions from previous *Program Planners*; *Decade of Excellence*, two collections of Bible studies from the last 20 years of the *Quarterly*; *Victorious Living*, four short reproducible Bible studies; and another handbook in the *Bright Ideas* series. This contained a user-friendly monthly planning calendar, program suggestions and 26 devotions and dramas based on the convention theme.

There was also a new purple convention bear (José, who debuted at San Jose), children's cards, and a pocket calendar. LWML products had become so popular that more money was being spent on them than was given in Mite Boxes. At that point, Virginia urged members to reassess their priorities and make sure their giving matched their buying.



Virginia presents President Gerald Kieschnick with the first edition of the purple *Today's Light Bible*.

Product sales were important to the League, though, because the proceeds covered all the office expenses. Products included not only resources and a purple-covered Bible, but also promotional items developed through the efforts of Public Relations Director Carol Zemke. Among these were monogrammed shirts, caps, watches, jewelry, a flowered scarf whose design

was commissioned and suitable for framing, and a coordinated flowered mug. To match the new League pin, a new president's pin was also created.

More new products were added over the next two years—an LWML license plate holder, a Bible cover, a yard flag to match the flowered cover of the special purple LWML edition of the *Today's Light Bible*, a terry baby bib decorated with a bear and an LWML emblem, and, at the 2003 convention, a red convention bear named Hope.

'Bearing' Love Amidst Tragedy

Leaguers found a new use for the convention bears after the tragedy of the 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City. The LCMS Atlantic District asked pastors of other districts to come to New York to relieve local pastors of regular duties while they counseled and attended to needs of families directly affected by the disaster.

One who responded was Rev. Dan Heuer, LWML counselor. Supplied with 200 bears, he distributed them in November to children at St. Matthew Lutheran School in Manhattan, who had dealt with a second tragedy that month—a plane crash in nearby Queens. Some of the students at Trinity Lutheran School in New York did not get picked up the night of the tragedy and had to stay at different homes. They also received bears to assure them that others cared.

The caring continued as Leaguers kept donating money so more bears—almost 10,000 eventually—could be distributed by more pastors. LWML seamstresses also shipped dozens of lovingly stitched quilts to the Atlantic District LWML President, Nancy Graf Peters. The first 36 to arrive were dedicated at the Atlantic District LWML convention and given to children who had experienced a loss.

But more quilts kept coming! In remembrance on September 11, 2002, the LCMS district planned a daylong event, "Grace at Ground Zero." Busloads of families came together on that Saturday for workshops, a keynote address, an afternoon visit to Ground Zero, and a commemorative concert emceed by the Rev. Gerald Patrick Coleman. Some of the remaining quilts were displayed at the event, and others were stacked near the church entrance.

As people left the concert, the quilts were quietly placed into the arms of new owners—a sorrowful little boy, an FBI chaplain at the Pentagon, those who had lost a loved one in the attack, and others who knew of a

child longing for a gift of comfort and warmth. Thus, Peters commented, “God’s amazing grace...and these quilts of grace...found a home at Ground Zero” (Spring 2003 *Quarterly*, page 21).

When the U.S. began preparing for war in Iraq in 2002, an expanded market developed for an LWML devotional booklet, “In His Service,” published in 1999. Designed to give Christian encouragement to people, especially women, serving in the military, it addressed topics such as loneliness, self-esteem and prayer. It had a camouflage cover and was small enough to fit into a uniform pocket.

After military chaplains began ordering them in quantity, the League created two more small devotional booklets, “By His Side,” for military families whose loved ones were deployed, and “As His Hands,” for people in community service professions (fire fighting, law enforcement, EMTs and others). “The military folks just love us,” commented LWML Business Administrator Norine Stumpf. “Their Website has a direct link to the LWML.” In response to one chaplain’s request, the League even airlifted a supply to a military carrier.

Most chaplains have a budget for such materials, and LWML societies have donated money for those whose funds were exhausted. “The Lord has always met the need,” commented Norine. She cited one instance when the LWML Disaster Fund was empty. The shipment went out anyway in the morning. That afternoon the mail contained donations to cover it!

Sharing Hope—An Urgent Mission

Tragedy also struck Oklahoma City a few weeks before the 2003 LWML convention was to be held there. A tornado ravished a large area on the southwest side of the city, where the Interdepartmental meeting had been held in Fall 2002. However, the downtown location of the convention center and hotels was undamaged, so the convention could go on as planned, under the theme, “Lord of my Heart...our Hope.”

The theme was based on 1 Peter 3:15 in which believers are told, “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.”

With respect for those who died at the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, many convention-goers took time to travel the few blocks to the memorial with its 168 chairs representing persons who lost their lives in that tragedy. Standing at the site of the “largest

domestic terrorist attack in the history of the United States,” the League’s mission emphasis took on new urgency.

As President Virginia opened the LWML’s 2003 “family reunion,” as she liked to call the biennial national gatherings, her daughter Susan lit the convention candle, serving as her page, and her son, David, carried the LWML processional cross. Speakers included Pastors



Contracts Administrator Ruth Ann Johnson and Terry Kieschnick, wife of LCMS President Gerald Kieschnick, prepare to receive Holy Communion at Oklahoma City. Both the Kieschnicks spoke at the convention.

Bill Diekelman and David Callies (presidents of the LCMS host districts) as Bible study leaders; LCMS President Rev. Dr. Gerald Kieschnick as proclaimer for the opening worship service; and the Rev. Dr. Thomas Zehnder as proclaimer for the Sunday worship celebration. The Rev. Dien Ashley Taylor of The Bronx, NYC, shared his enthusiasm for the Gospel as song leader.

President Kieschnick urged Leaguers to be “HUGS” people—Hope with Christ-filled hearts; Understand Christ’s mission; Grieve for the lost; and Share the Hope of Christ.

Calling the United States morally bankrupt, Keynote Speaker Kay Orr, the first woman governor of Nebraska and an LCMS member, urged a commitment to the Ten Commandments. Initially her goal in life was to make a difference as a volunteer, she said. She never dreamed of becoming a politician, but volunteering led to political appointments and eventually to elected office. Realizing then that her commitment to God was in her head, not her heart, she learned that “We need to be what the Lord will have us be before we can do what the Lord will have us do.”

Mission messages were given by:

Dr. Jotham Johann Jhang, executive director of CAME (Center for Asian Missions and Evangelism), which in its first five years started 68 missions. He pointed out that 97% of the Asian population in North America is non-Christian. Like Jonah, he had avoided God’s call to

become a missionary and began his professional career as a lawyer. With the advent of CAME, he felt the Lord's call to become a pastor, like his father and grandfather, and enrolled in the DELTO program (Distance Education Leading to Ordination).

Rev. Robert Roegner, LCMS World Mission head, described the LCMS mission outreach effort, Ablaze!, whose goal was to share the love of Jesus Christ with 100 million people by 2017. "People are living and dying without Christ," he said, "and that is unacceptable!" He also complimented the LWML: "You do mission better than anyone else in our Church today."

Alice Brauer, a medical missionary in India for 35 years, has been called the "Lutheran Mother Theresa." She described India as the land of one thousand religions and one million gods. Trying to improve community health, she ministered to deaf, blind and physically handicapped people. She closed with: "Thank you, LWML. You are among the faithful few who have stuck with me for 35 years."

A surprise visitor was Professor Gao Zahn who shared how her faith sustained her after she was arrested and held on charges of espionage while visiting in China. An LCMS member, she said she depended on the promise of 1 Corinthians 10:13 that God will always provide a way out.

Continuing the "Heart to Heart" discussions among women of various cultures, 22 African-American and Hispanic women met for two days before the beginning of the convention. Then they shared their hopes at a booth in Heritage Plaza, the convention exhibit hall.



Vice President of Gospel Outreach Judy Knebel and President Virginia Von Seggern, front row center, surrounded by the Heart to Heart women before the Oklahoma City convention.

Delegates set \$1,575,000 as the 2003–2005 mite goal because it was more realistic than the preceding one and represented a \$100,000 increase over what was received in the past biennium. The 2001–2003 goal of \$1,650,000 had not been met, although Leaguers did contribute more money than in any previous biennium—a total of \$1,478,056. The short-fall of \$171,944 would be paid from 2003–2005 receipts.

With 1,043 participants registered for the convention's Mission Mile Walk, Virginia wondered if it would be a "shuffle" rather than a walk or run. Regardless of the pace, it raised \$60,046 in pledges toward the mite goal.

When Bill Snyder heard that his mother, Betty Snyder of Mercer, Wisconsin, was going to walk in this "Garden Gallop," he offered \$1,000 as a matching grant. Betty did cleaning for other people. A Jewish lady for whom she worked gave \$20; a man, \$25; and another woman, \$25. Betty announced her plan in her church newsletter, and members contributed \$300. A friend gave \$100, and her LWML society gave \$100. Eventually she reached \$1,015 in contributions that, with the matching gift, brought her Pledge Walk total to \$2,015.

At the end of the 2003 biennium, the League closed the Transportation Fund that had helped distant districts send delegates to national conventions. Most districts had found alternate ways of funding delegate travel—some were even flying free with frequent flyer miles.

Memories—and More!

Virginia reported to the convention that during her four years, she had spent 373 nights in motels and hotels. She had logged 150,000 air miles and sent 180,000 e-mails.

As her term concluded, she gave thanks for a motivated membership and more lives touched by LWML mentors, mites and mission efforts—and for the fun times.

One name would never be forgotten—Betty Miller! When Treasurer Janet Miller was late for a convention planning meeting at the Kirkwood Inn near the LCMS International Center in St. Louis, leaders checked with the hotel and were told that "Betty Miller" had arrived. Although there was no Betty Miller on the LWML reservation list, all attempts failed to get the name changed. When people attempted to leave messages for Janet, they were told that only Betty was there. Because the hotel was so sure that "Betty" was there, Janet had the luxury of staying alone in her

room—something that never happens at a cost-conscious LWML event.

Before the Executive Committee arrived for its meeting the next day, someone put “Wanted” posters all over the hotel asking where Betty Miller was. Soon if anything unusual happened, if anything was missing, it was attributed to the infamous Betty Miller. The “comedy” continued as a humorous diversion during the Board meeting that followed.

But it didn’t stop there. Virginia later received valentines from “Betty Miller.” Staff at the hotel still asked about Betty years later, whenever Virginia stayed there. They even got in on the fun by leaving messages and fruit baskets from her for Virginia. On one occasion when Virginia was riding on the van from the Inn to the airport, the driver received a message, “Come back because you forgot a woman. Her name is Betty Miller.” “Don’t you dare,” Virginia responded. “This is a hoax.”

An LWML cookbook distributed at the next Assembly of Leaders was dedicated to Betty Miller. As Virginia said, “It was great fun” and especially helpful at that first board meeting because members were dealing with “heavy stuff, and the humor helped break the ice!”

A president must listen—and talk! But in January 2001, when Virginia was scheduled to discuss a doctrinal review problem with LCMS President Al Barry, laryngitis took her voice. She couldn’t say a word! Her solution was to take the LWML counselors along to be her voice. “It turned out fine,” she reported. “They said what I wanted them to!”

Virginia has several special memories:

—Riding on the Lutheran Hour float in the 2001 Rose Parade. Her husband came along for the fun and enjoyed a prime bleacher seat at the parade’s starting line. “It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for both of us,” said Virginia.



Virginia and LLL volunteer Mel Steuve ride in the 2001 Rose Parade.

—Attending an Alaska Zone LWML Retreat. Traveling for miles and miles across the Kenai Peninsula without even seeing one moose made her realize how isolated those Leaguers were.

—“The blessings of the women you meet. They are the best examples of servanthood

you can find. I've 'taken the temperature' of the LWML from New York to California, Atlanta to Alaska, and found the heart of mission present in every one of them. Their needs differ from culture to culture, and their expectations vary, but they are LCMS Lutheran women who just want to serve their Lord through this organization."

At the conclusion of her term, Virginia was elected to a six-year term on the LCMS Board of Missions.

MISSION GRANTS

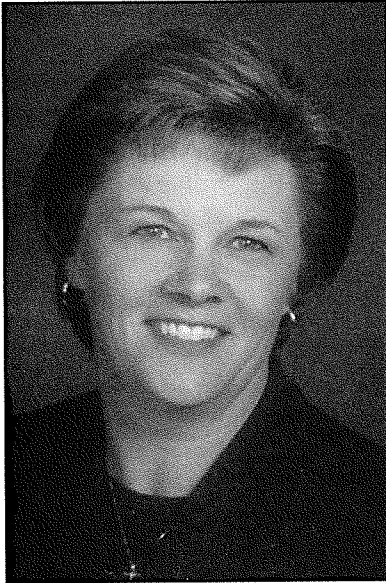
1999-2001: Children's Ministry in Russia, \$30,000; New Urban Missionaries in the United States, \$100,000; New Mission Fields in Kyrgyzstan, \$100,000; Inner-City Scholarships Project, \$100,000; Teaching Special-Needs Children in Inner-City Minneapolis, \$104,000; Evangelistic Training for Women in West Africa, \$50,000; Rural/Small Town Great Commission Leadership Initiatives, \$40,000; Jewish Missionary Training Center, St. Louis, \$100,000; Zaragoza, Mexico, Jesus Loves You, Too, \$76,430; Training Vietnamese Women in Health Issues, \$50,000; Training Multi-National Missionary Teams for Asia's Unreached Peoples, \$80,000; ASSIST'EM, \$50,000; International Student Ministry Start-Ups, \$100,000; and Arab Family Ministry Center, \$51,792.60. The mission goal of \$1,430,000 included \$1,001,000 for mission grants and \$429,000 for inreach and leadership expenses. The overage of \$31,222.60 from the previous biennium was added to the grant goal.

2001-2003: Lutheran Girls' Home, Ambur, South India, \$35,000; Expansion of Ministry to Native Americans in Alaska, \$75,000; LCMS Prison Ministry Outreach, \$61,000; Mission Outreach to the Navajo Nation, \$30,000; Outreach Ministry to the Children of Kazakhstan, \$45,000; Fortify and Strengthen Black Family Mission and Ministry in the LCMS, \$100,000; Health Care for Women and Children in Sudan, \$50,000; Establishing Training Center for North American Missions, \$50,000; Support of Seminary Students' Families, West Africa, \$75,000; Reaching New Ethnic Groups through Children, \$75,000; Assisting Medical Mission in India with Prosthetic Devices, \$46,100; Interactive, Bilingual Curriculum for the Hispanic Institute of Theology, \$50,000; Prenatal/Postnatal/Well Baby Clinic and Educational Services in Kyrgyzstan, \$37,000; Idaho Circuit Rider Ministry Truck, \$100,000; Messiah Migrant Ministry, Hillsborough County, Florida, \$40,000; Evangelistic Outreach in Siberia, \$75,000; Gospel Outreach to Chinese People, Carbondale, Illinois, \$40,000; St. Matthew's Outreach to Japanese People in Detroit, \$50,000; Support of National Missionaries in Africa, \$75,000; and Ghana Translation, Scripture Use and Literacy Materials, \$47,161.89. The mission goal of \$1,650,000 included \$1,155,000 for mission grants and \$495,000 for LWML inreach. The overage of \$1,261.89 from the previous biennium was added to the grant goal.

Chapter Nine

TEAM LWML

(Linda Reiser, 2003–2007)



Linda Reiser

An All-STAR TEAM! That's how Linda Reiser liked to describe the LWML. The acrostic represented her goal for the League during her presidency. "All" emphasized her desire to build a bridge between "we" and "they." STAR stood for "**S**isters, **T**eamed Together, **A**ctively Praying and Serving, because we are **R**edeemed by Christ." TEAM meant "**T**ogether **E**veryone **A**ccomplishes **M**ore."

"I so often hear the term, 'they,' referring to national LWML, and it should be 'we,'" Linda said. "This organization has always been about unity—mite gifts together that exceed what we can do individually, and a trust in the leadership over the years."

She wanted to remind members of "what a tremendous organization" they belong to and what a blessing it had been for over 60 years to the Missouri Synod. She also wanted younger women to realize the great opportunity LWML offers.

The effort began with increased utilization of modern technology:

—A PowerPoint presentation was developed to acquaint district convention-goers with the programs and personnel of their national organization. It allowed all 40 districts to receive a similar message.

—E-News was created to communicate more effectively with mem-

bers. This service enabled the League to promptly share LWML progress, products, grant updates, and messages from the officers with every member who provided her e-mail address. More information was also made available on the Website.

—A CD of convention highlights and newly-adopted mission grants was ordered for every full-time registered attendee at the 2005 Tampa convention.

—To make regular giving more convenient, the League offered members the option of automatic withdrawal through “Simply Giving®,” an electronic funds transfer program of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

—Leaguers could create their own traveling Mite Box by downloading a wrap-around label for a 1.75 oz. Pringles can. Picturing people of many cultures and countries, the label encouraged people to give “Mitey Change for Almighty Change.”

League Progress Evaluated

An Evaluation/Self Assessment Task Force, appointed in 2002, reported its findings to the Executive Committee (EC) in January 2004. The Task Force used focus groups, written surveys, and e-mail questions to obtain input from local groups, the LWML Board of Directors, individual members and non-members, LCMS officials, and pastors.

Among the research conclusions were:

—Bible study, fellowship and support, prayer, missions, and service are the most important needs of LCMS women. The LWML was perceived by members and pastors as strong in providing those opportunities, but they, along with non-members, viewed the LWML as an “old” group, not attractive to younger women, and resistant to change.

—Time constraints are the basic reason that women were not active or more active. They saw the organization as strong at the national level, but viewed zones and societies as weak in leadership and structure.

—The *Quarterly* is the primary resource known and used by members and pastors, but respondents said communication did not flow effectively between LWML levels. Some were not even aware of the League’s annual prayer service. People believed that technology offered new opportunities, but could be a stumbling block for some older members.

—The study was done during a period when the LWML, for the first time in its history, did not reach its mission goal, leading members also to voice concerns about that situation.

Preparing for the Future



Viewed by their districts as up-and-coming leaders, these Young Women Representatives were selected by their districts to attend the November 2004 Leadership for Tomorrow training event.

To consider the findings, the EC held a strategic planning session in January 2004, at which it formulated steps to impact the challenges that were identified.

Retooling and revamping the quadrennial Assembly of Leaders, the League conducted a Leadership for Tomorrow event in November 2004. Each district was invited to send its president and two women who had never attended a national training event.

To help participants share the training in their districts, each attendee received a CD of all the PowerPoint presentations used in the program.

To offer teens an opportunity to support missions, enjoy Christian fellowship, and delve further into God's Word, the EC decided to encourage involvement of teens in the mission of LWML. Utilizing the experience of some younger groups that were already meeting in several districts, national leaders planned a big focus on Teen LWML efforts for the 2005–2007 biennium.

Continuing the Heart to Heart Sisters emphasis, a task force was appointed to arrange leadership training for ethnic women and to encourage them to be advocates for the LWML among LCMS women. To accommodate women's groups of other cultures, LWML society applications were produced in Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Arabic, Chinese and Hmong. In addition, the Quarterly began printing one article in Spanish in each issue starting in Spring 2004.

Scholarships for ethnic women who had never attended a national LWML convention were made available for the 2005 gathering from the \$50,000 grant adopted for this purpose at the 2003 Oklahoma City convention. The money would also fund a cross-cultural, pre-convention summit for key ethnic women leaders.

Live Joyfully

With “Live Joyfully as Salt and Light” as its theme, the 2005 convention in Tampa was designed to help attendees understand what it means to be salt and light and then to live joyfully for Christ as they let their light shine.

The list of mission speakers included four individuals who had experienced mites at work:

—Connie Sikkema, who served thousands of migrant families in Tampa for 17 years while surviving cancer and heart problems.

—Rev. Donald Treglown, a former missionary to the Philippines, who claimed that through his mother, he had been an “LWML mission project” most of his adult life.

—Rev. Tich Hoa Luu, a Vietnamese immigrant, who was the first of 17 generations of Buddhists to become a Christian. Sixteen years after fleeing from war-torn Vietnam, he became an LCMS pastor. After serving a church in New York City, he was called to the Lutheran Student Center at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, where his fluency in Cantonese, Mandarin and English made him a blessing to the hundreds of foreign students enrolled there.

—Angelina Gomez, a proud member and president of the first “Heart to Heart Sister” LWML society. An advocate of ethnic involvement in LWML as a result of her 2003 Heart to Heart Sister experience, she is an active member of St. John’s Lutheran Church, Montebello, California. After serving as a Vista Volunteer in Houston, Texas, during the Vietnam War, she worked for 33 years in the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services. Coming from a family of 13 children, she graduated from Lutheran High School, Inglewood, California, and studied at East Los Angeles College.



Linda Reiser and Carol Coerber, Washington-Alaska District President, practice decision-making at the buffet table during the Tampa 2005 board meeting. Carol is wearing the Tampa convention shirt.

Back by popular demand, Donna Streufert was invited to be the convention Bible study leader for the third time. Devotions were written by Annetta Dellinger, founder of Joyful Ministries, who said her “PHD” meant “Perky, Happy Disciple.” Once again, Jan Struck would provide humorous interruptions.

Attendees could also buy Alma Kern’s fourth and latest book, *You Make a Difference*.

“Joyful Jaunt” was the name given to the convention’s early morning mission pledge walk, and there would be service opportunities available for “Salty Servants.” Attendees also were asked to bring “Gifts from the Heart” (towels, washcloths, sheets, children’s underwear, and health kits) for Tampa social service agencies.

The Servant Activities included making birdhouses for Habitat for Humanity, marking Bibles for Prison Ministries, assembling quilts and Braille books, packaging seeds for shipment around the world, and decorating banners and wooden crosses for developmentally disabled residents of Bethesda Lutheran Homes to hang in their rooms.

LWML = A Life-Enhancing Experience



Linda Reiser serving as LWML representative at the 2004 Oklahoma LWML district convention in Duncan.

As President Linda prepared for this convention, she faced a uniquely busy time in her life. The Reisers’ son, Matthew, and his wife, Amanda, were expecting their first child in March 2005, and their daughter, Amy, was getting married in April. Being president gave Linda “more appreciation for my husband! Ron has been so supportive, encouraging and helpful!”

After graduating from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a Bachelor of Science degree in Education, Linda taught business education for several years before raising their children as a stay-at-home mom. Even then, she occasionally taught some adult edu-

cation classes and volunteered at Lutheran elementary schools. While LWML president, she has continued to do the payroll for a fertilizer/chemical dealer.

Several months after Linda first joined the LWML, friends asked her to attend a district convention with them. Pregnant and eager for a day of Christian inspiration, she quickly said, “Yes!” She looks back on that one day event “as a life-enhancing experience....I saw joy, hugs, purpose, service, fun, laughter, and missions. I was awed at the women in leadership and the entire focus of that event.” While representing the entire LWML at district conventions following her election to national offices, she found that same life-enhancing experience repeated at each of those gatherings. “It is such a joy,” she said, “to see women gathered with such focus and purpose to support missions and to be in service for their Lord.” On the morning that elections were to take place at the Oklahoma City convention, Linda had a different kind of experience! Arriving early to take care of vice presidential duties, she stopped in the large rest room near the stage entrance—and could not get out! After trying unsuccessfully to open the door, she “reverted to nothing I learned in LWML or in college, but what my mother taught me to do when in trouble—I yelled! And I yelled, and I yelled.

“Finally I just sat down and wondered what it was going to be like when the candidates were introduced and I wasn’t there! Then I decided to try getting someone’s attention again, and fortunately two EMTs heard something. From the hall, they asked where I was and came to my rescue.” Earlier that morning, a maintenance person had unlocked the “in” door, but not the “out” door. With no handles on the “push” door, there was no way to open it from the inside.

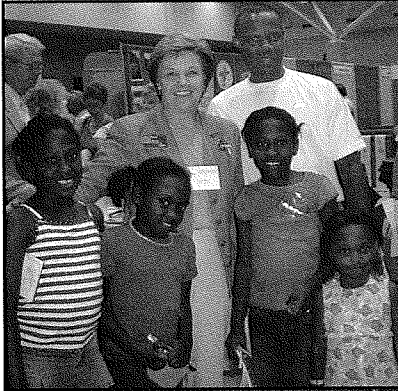
Unforgettable Blessings

As president, Linda’s more pleasant but equally unforgettable experiences have included:

—Representing the LWML in the 116th Tournament of Roses Parade, where she rode on the 2005 Lutheran Hour float, whose theme was “The Family of God.”

—Attending the 2004 LCMS Missionary Alumni Reunion and hearing words of thanks from so many missionaries for the gifts, prayers, support, and encouragement they received from women of the LWML.

—Hearing the appreciation for the LWML from many Synod officials.



(left) President Reiser greets an African missionary family that visited the LWML display at the 2004 LCMS convention.

(below) Offering a vast variety of LWML resources and products, the star backdrop of the League display at the 2004 LCMS convention reminded visitors that the LWML is an All-STAR TEAM: Sisters, Teamed Together, Actively Praying and Serving, because we are Redeemed by Christ.



“The mission purpose and focus is truly recognized as a blessing in our Church.”

—The opportunity to host the annual LWML receptions at both seminaries for graduating students and their wives or fiancées. “To share the LWML story and the support that Leaguers will give them in their parish is always special.”

—“Being associated with so many gifted women of God who have servant hearts....Their prayer support, financial support, and enthusiasm for this organization is truly a blessing.”



At the 2005 annual LWML dessert buffet for fourth year seminary students, Linda Reiser congratulates three St. Louis seminarians who received LWML aprons for their participation in the program.

As she prepared for Tampa, Linda also looked forward to the second convention of her presidency in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in 2007. Because she could drive there for pre-convention meetings, she would have opportunities to spend a few nights with her parents, still living on their farm in northeast Nebraska. "They are very supportive of my LWML involvement," Linda said, "and my mom is an active LWML member. I give them my travel schedule and they pray for me regularly."

Another blessing, always mentioned by each LWML president, was the dedication of Executive Committee members. Harmonious and unified, "even when we agree to disagree," they love serving the Lord, Linda said gratefully. "We work hard, but we also relax and enjoy each other with laughter, stories and TEAM-building activities!"



The Executive Committee poses with stars to illustrate Linda's All-Star Team emphasis. (Front row L to R): Jan Wendorf, VP of Christian Life; Marguerite Christman, VP of Servant Resources; Linda Reiser, President; Shari Miller, Recording Secretary; Kaye Cairns, VP of Human Care; Top Row: Beverly England, Public Relations Director; Judy Knebel, VP of Gospel Outreach; Elaine Nelson, Meeting Manager; Louise Rickey, Treasurer; Rev. Dan Heuer, Sr. Counselor; Norine Stumpf, Business Administrator; Janet Hurta, VP of Communications; Rev. Larry Miller, Jr. Counselor; Barbara Volk, Planner

MISSION GRANTS

2003-2005: Lutheran Adoption Network, \$75,000; Mission to Southeast Alaska (remodeling and updating the Gospel ship, M/V Christian), \$100,000; Support for Women and Children in Latvia, \$60,000; Ministry to Impoverished Families in Guatemala City, \$100,000; Resources and Materials for Lutheran Special Education, \$75,000; Heart to Heart Sisters—A Cross Cultural Gathering for 2005, \$50,000; Responding to New Opportunities in Afghanistan, \$100,000; People of God Seminary in Kazakhstan, \$60,000; Training Pastors in High Risk Areas—Southern Philippines, \$70,000; Immigrant Afghani Women and Children Ministries, \$71,000; Concordia Day Care Center in Bangkok, Thailand, \$54,000; MOST Ministries NEW Christians Project, \$47,000; Ethnic Children with Partners in Mission—Minneapolis Area, \$100,000; and Beth El Messianic Congregation Storefront Ministry—New York, \$20,139. The mission goal of \$1,575,000 included \$171,944 to cover the shortfall from the previous biennium, \$982,139 for mission outreach, and \$520,917 for mission inreach.

Chapter Ten

Touching Individual Lives

(The Blessings of LWML)

Although the impact and influence of the LWML can easily be measured in terms of grants funded and Bible studies published, it is in the touching of individual lives that it becomes especially meaningful. An example is this e-mail from Hillary Lambert, a California college student, to Roger Buck, a former missionary now serving a Wisconsin parish:

“The journey that brought me to write this e-mail to you is an interesting one, and I pray that you will be as blessed as I have been in finally finding you. I grew up in Willows, a small farming community in Northern California, where my grandmother was the president of the LWML at First Lutheran Church.

“One Sunday, I was seven at the time, the women were handing out rocks with three crosses drawn on the front and a missionary’s name on the back. The congregation members were instructed to pray for the missionary on the rock they were given. I was only a little girl, so they passed right by me without giving me a rock. After church, however, I asked my grandmother if I could have one. She allowed me to have hers, but only if I understood that it was my responsibility to pray for the person whose name was on the back. The person’s name on the back of my rock was yours.

“I took my task very seriously and remembered to pray for you every night. I never stopped praying for you until I got into high school. I never really knew what to pray for, and I always wondered who you were, but the Lord did something amazing in my life through this process. He taught me HOW to pray. I knew He heard me, even though I was very small and immature in my walk with Him.

“Sometimes I wish my prayer life would be like it was when I was a

seven-year-old girl who was confident that her prayers changed things. I guess our ultimate goal in life should be to attain a childlike faith in order to glorify Him in all we do.

“Since high school, the Father has reminded me off and on to continue praying for you. Lately, however, His calling has been very strong. He keeps reminding me to lift you up in prayer to Him. I got on the Internet to see if I could find you, and surprisingly it wasn’t very difficult. I didn’t know whether I should cry or laugh when I found you. It was such a blessing to finally see what you look like and to know what type of ministry you have been doing these last 15 years.”

Hillary then decided to write to Roger to learn more about him and his family so she could pray more specifically. Her e-mail reached the Bucks at just the right time! Roger had just had surgery for prostate cancer. Follow-up revealed no need for additional treatment, causing the doctor to say, “I should make you our ‘poster boy’!”

Says Roger’s wife, Alice, an active LWMLer, “This e-mail confirmed what we already knew through many other cards, letters and prayers from other Christian friends that God cares deeply for us and moved someone far away, who doesn’t even know us, to pray.” She then cites Deuteronomy 4:7, “What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him?”

The e-mail, Alice adds, “affirms the wonderful ministry of the LWML.”

It’s been affirmed in many other ways also. Even a restaurant visit can touch lives as an Ohio group on the way home from the 1989 Rapid City convention discovered. When Jan Wendorf left her tip, she put a *Mustard Seed* with it. After the women were back on the bus, a waitress came running out to them. She was an LWML member who was feeling sorry for herself because she had to work and could not go to the convention. With tears in her eyes, she told the group that their visit was almost as good as her being there!

When Tragedy Strikes

“What an impact we had!” Carolyn Stucky said, recalling the 1998 Oregon District LWML Convention in Springfield, Oregon. Because the women planned no outreach effort away from the convention site, some thought they didn’t need a goal statement for the event. When others

insisted, they agreed their goal would be “That the power of the Holy Spirit sets us ablaze to draw others to Christ!”

“Little did anyone know,” Carolyn continued, “when the few ladies of the Emerald Zone boldly offered to host the convention that so few would grow to such a powerful force. Little did anyone know that even though Memorial Weekend was the only May weekend available, it would occur the day after the terrible shootings in the Thurston High School. *[A freshman, who had been expelled because he tried to bring a gun to school, went on a rampage the next day, killing two students and wounding 25.]* Little did we know that the only place to house the media arriving from everywhere was the Doubletree Hotel where we had more rooms reserved than we needed.

“It was not long before the media wanted to know why we were there and what effect the tragic situation had on us. Pastoral Counselor Michael Bailey spoke to the media on our behalf.”

The women prayed for the families and students and gathered \$2000 for the disaster fund through a special door collection. Several carloads of women hung a giant sign on the school fence. It contained messages of condolences from all in attendance. The opportunity for witnessing was everywhere, and the Holy Spirit empowered the women to speak to a hurting community.

Despite the committee’s plans, “the convention did not stay inside the hotel that year.” Carolyn noted. “The Holy Spirit directed the zone, the place, the time, and the goals.”

The preceding convention was held just after extensive flooding in the state. The theme, chosen months earlier, also was uniquely appropriate: “There Is a River.”

Blest by Ingatherings

Thousands of lives have also been touched by convention ingatherings. Sometimes the ingatherings impacted the planners too. Past President Ruth Kerbel recalls a year when her Wyoming district collected over 500 teddy bears for orphanages, hospital pediatric wings and crisis centers. To illustrate his Bible studies, the District Counselor Lee Rupert brought Frank, his childhood teddy bear.

Never having had one as a child and living alone in later years, Ruth decided she needed a teddy bear too—so just before adjourning the session, she chose one from the collection. Pastor Rupert encouraged her to

give it a name. Looking in the audience, the first person Ruth saw was Marilyn Eglund, the international LWML representative.

Now “Marilyn,” the bear, rides everywhere with Ruth in her car. Strapped in her seat belt, “Marilyn” reminds Ruth that she is never really alone. That’s because, as Ruth tells curious passengers, she knows “God is always with me and protecting me.”

LWML Convention Bears have also been used to touch lives in many ways besides the 9/11 distribution described in Chapter Eight. North Dakota Leaguers have distributed them to children whose mothers are in prison. Prison chaplains in other states have provided them to prisoners to use as Christmas gifts for their children. Of course, LWML members have also given them to their own children and grandchildren to say, “I love you!”



Four very special bears! San Jose—Purple 2001 named José,
Tampa—Tan 2005 named Joy, OKC—Red 2003 named Hope,
Minneapolis—White 1999

Stitched with Love

Some groups of LWML seamstresses have produced thousands of quilts for Lutheran World Relief (LWR) over the years. The total after 60 years is undoubtedly in the millions. In 2003 alone, LWR shipped 406,460 quilts to refugees, AIDS orphans, widows, victims of war, poverty and natural disasters. People around the world have used them in hospitals and homes, as bed coverings, tents, curtains, room dividers and clothing.

In Burkina Faso, West Africa, one woman was ashamed to go out of her home because she had no appropriate clothing. She lived an isolated life until she was given a quilt. She cut it in half to create a wraparound skirt and a cape for her shoulders. Wrapped in LWML love, she was comfortable appearing in public, even dancing, singing and celebrating with her neighbors. Once again, thanks to a quilt, she had a life!

And, as the *Quarterly* pointed out (Summer 2004, p. 3), quilts have additional benefits: "In regions where villagers are supplied with quilts, it is no longer necessary for them to use up valuable trees for wood to make fires for warmth. This holds true for other material resources as well. When basic material needs are met, energy can be put into harvesting crops, fighting AIDS, and educating children and longer-term projects that benefit the community."

Besides the quilts, members who like to sew have provided:

—Caps for preemies, and clothing for the burial of those who are still-born, in conjunction with the Diana's Angels Project, also known as Patterns for Preemies.

—Warm, soft colorful fleece robes for 100 dialysis patients at an Oregon hospital. Patients sit for up to four hours in cold, sterile conditions. Little "love notes" stitched into each robe explained the love of God.

—Gustava Larson of Trinity, Grand Rapids, Iowa, has hemstitched baptismal napkins for her church for 40 years.

—When Verna Vachalek of Lexington Park, Maryland, began battling cancer, she created a very comfortable cap for those who lost their hair due to chemotherapy treatments. After the Lord called Verna home, Trinity LWML members continued making the caps to which they attach an inspirational poem.

—At St. Mark's Church, Eureka, Missouri, a Knit One, Pray Too group mentors congregational members as they learn to knit and pray for others in need. They create prayer scarves to give to people who are ill or frail and who need to know that someone cares. As they knit, members pray and keep a journal of Bible verses that have inspired them. The journal is given to the scarf recipients. Carol Hurt, founder of Knit One, Pray Too, was inspired by Psalm 139:13, which says that God knit us together in our mother's womb.

As the *Quarterly* reported (Summer 2004, p. 19), Carol realized that "our Father 'cast us on' (formed us). He created the garment of our lives,

and He will be with us as we ‘bind off’ (enter eternal life in heaven). Even though our knitting and our lives have mistakes and missed stitches, He is there forgiving us for Jesus’ sake, holding us in His hands and helping us through this earthly life.”

Sharing in Special Ways

In Yankton, South Dakota, Leaguers not only sew quilts, but also distribute Portals of Prayer to area motels, host a dinner for 300 needy people, and send greeting cards and devotional booklets to shut-ins.

As members of Grace LWML, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, worked at the Lutheran Cooperative Feeding Program for impoverished individuals, they saw an additional need—intercessory prayer. Placing a Prayer Box at each ministry site, the Leaguers invited clients and staff to leave prayer requests and praises or just a name in the box. Each week they type the list and distributed it to a prayer partner at each of the 12 Lutheran churches in the area, through whom each request becomes the subject of hundreds of prayers.

Leaguers have been innovative when it comes to creating opportunities to talk about Jesus. Marie Biesenthal of St. Louis, Missouri, always wears a butterfly on her left shoulder. She tells inquirers that it represents Christ’s resurrection. A Minnesota Leaguer, whose initials are P.S., has a large “J” for Jesus attached to her key chain. People who know her name often ask about the “J.” Other Leaguers use LWML products—the purple Bible on a desk at work, the LWML scarf around the neck, and the LWML briefcase—as discussion openers.

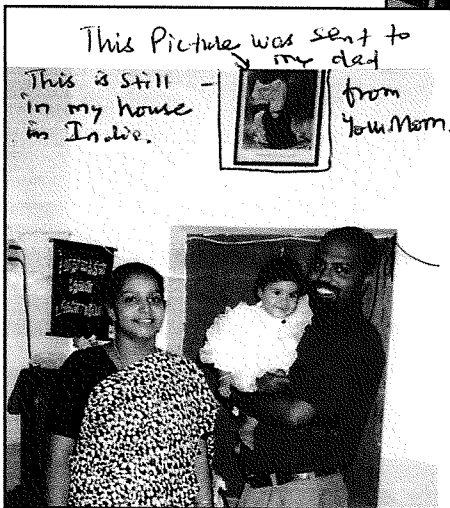
When a car wreck forced Laura Page of Mount Calvary, Beverly Hills, California, to ride the bus to work, she often saw homeless people at her bus stop. She began placing items from her closet in a box on the bench. They were always gone when she came home from work. When she ran out of clothes she could spare, she asked friends to help. Soon people were contacting her with good used clothing and other items, and a 15-year bus ministry was begun. When the homeless began to sit and talk with her about God and their lives, she concluded her car accident was no accident.

Many societies purchase and mark Bibles for prisoners. A San Francisco, California, group prepares Easter baskets for the County Juvenile Holding Facility. Each basket contains candy and a Christian tract.

When women of Hope Lutheran Church, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, realized that 134 women in their county had abortions in 1999, they founded New Beginnings Pregnancy Care Center. The center is a non-profit, non-denominational, state-licensed maternity home where women in a crisis pregnancy may live free up to three months after the birth of their baby. Four residents are accommodated at a time in a house rented from the church. It is staffed around the clock by volunteers. Residents must attend the daily devotion and prayer time. Leaguers help in a variety of ways, including prayer, fund-raising and donation of supplies.

Bible Pictures Led to Ministry

In 1964, members of Zion LWML, Neshkoro, Wisconsin, collected Sunday school materials and pictures for missionaries to use in remote villages of South India. When Mrs. W.G. Brockopp, the pastor's wife, mailed them, she always included encouraging letters.



(above) Pastor Rethsinasamy meets with Darlene Krueger and her husband, Pastor Theodore Krueger. (left) The Rethsinasamy family in India with a photo on the wall that was sent by Mrs. Krueger's mother.

The notes and pictures made an impact on the son of an indigenous missionary, who followed in his father's footsteps and became a pastor in 1998. Two years later that son, Rev. Elwin Johnson Rethsinasamy, moved to the U.S. for further studies and was called as a mission developer among Asian Indians in New York City. Eventually he became pastor of the first Tamil Lutheran congregation in the U.S.

Using an old, yellowed card written by Mrs. Brockopp and supplied by his mother, the pastor tried without success for four years at Synod and LWML gatherings to find someone who knew of Neshkoro and the lady who sent the pictures. He still sees those “eye-catching Sunday school pictures” in his mind as he teaches the Bible stories today.

Finally at an LLL convention in Rapid City, South Dakota, in 2004, he stopped at the South Wisconsin booth. There he met Darlene Krueger, who had decided to attend only at the last minute. She told Pastor Rethsinasamy that her maiden name was Brockopp, and the woman he was seeking was her mother, now deceased. Addresses were exchanged and hugs shared.

He later sent Darlene a picture of his family. Hanging on the wall behind the family is a picture of Christ in Gethsemane, sent by Mrs. Brockopp to his father many years ago. The young pastor sees himself as a beneficiary of his father’s ministry, supported by Zion LWML and Mrs. Brockopp many years ago from the tiny central Wisconsin village of Neshkoro.

Chaplain Charles Weinrich also credits the LWML with leading him into the ministry. When he was a child in Northern Illinois, his mother was a Mite Box collector for her society. Charles often went with her as she made her rounds of women of the church who lived in her neighborhood.

One time she was unable to do it and asked Charles to be her substitute. At one home, the lady said to him, “Charles, I think you would make a fine pastor, just like your grandfather.” The idea excited the boy, and when he arrived home, he announced to his mother, “I’m going to be a pastor!”

And that’s what he did! His grandfather, the Rev. Charles Noack, was pastor of St. Peter Lutheran Church, Arlington Heights, Illinois, and chaplain at the Lutheran Home for the Aged there. Pastor Weinrich not only entered the ministry, but after five years in a parish, he too became a chaplain at a senior citizen facility and now heads a Wisconsin training program for chaplains.

Sharing God’s Word

To further share God’s Word, LWML members in various districts are leading Bible studies in nursing homes and senior residential centers. Women employed outside the home have made use of *Mustard Seeds* and

a successor product, *Noontime Nibbles*, for Bible studies with co-workers during lunch and coffee breaks. Other LWML Bible studies have helped members care for one another, plan meetings more effectively, share their faith, meet the challenges of marriage and parenthood, deal with grief and sorrow, and answer “The Age-Old Question: Why?”

Members of St. Paul’s LWML, Concordia, Missouri, decided they didn’t want anyone in their town (population 2,300) not to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. So they purchased enough copies of the Gospel of John to hang one in a bag on the doorknob of every home. The bags also included an invitation to worship services at their church.

As e-mail became more popular, the League suggested Internet Bible study. Peggy McKeown of Minnesota North ran with the idea. Participants each provided a short biography so they could get acquainted with one another. They chose their study by vote and allowed two weeks to complete a chapter and answer its questions. They agreed to send their answers to all involved. Those who wished to comment on them also shared their comments with all participants.

All LWML programs have been undergirded with prayer, and here too modern technology has been utilized. Not only the LWML but also district and congregational organizations share requests promptly via e-mail. Unlike telephone prayer chains, which are also provided by many societies, e-mail prayer groups receive news of prayer needs simultaneously and no one has to pass on the information.

Sometimes special needs have led to more concerted efforts. When a member of Zion LWML, Rockville, Missouri, faced cancer surgery, the society developed a calendar for the “difficult month.” Each member was assigned a day to pray for the member, phone her, send a card or call her and pray on the phone with her. All followed through faithfully, and the member was deeply grateful for the joy and comfort provided by the prayers and contacts.

The League’s annual prayer service has afforded another opportunity for zones and societies to get together to pray about church and community concerns. The 1991 service celebrated 50 years of mission project blessings. Participants gave thanks for the 172 mission projects and 15 special gifts funded by the LWML in its first 50 years. They had assisted 55 ministries in 30 countries on five continents—Asia, Africa, North America, South America and Europe—with a total of \$8,840,964. By the

end of the 2003–2005 biennium, that amount will have more than doubled—and that’s just from national grants and thankofferings! With district grants, the combined total will approach \$75,000,000.

‘Mike’ Boxes

Elizabeth Koss, who in the 1940s was the president of her LWML society at Trinity Lutheran Church in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, handed down the story of a German/Russian immigrant woman who was a member of her society. The woman loved her Lord, contributed what she could to LWML mission projects and one day was distraught when she reported that she had lost her “mike box” and needed a replacement. With her limited English skills, she thought that since the boxes looked like the microphones used by radio announcers at that time, “mike” box was the correct term!

This anecdote, reported by Alberta Krafft (Elizabeth’s daughter) of Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin, included these words of wisdom:

Just like microphones are used by radio stations
to broadcast news and music to listeners,
the money collected in our Mite Boxes
is used to broadcast God’s saving Word
to people all around the world!

And mites have surely done that by funding schools, hospitals, dormitories, churches, trucks, motorcycles, jeeps, library resources, Bibles, videos, audiotapes, mission homes, media centers, Braille paper, land, wells, TV specials, student life centers, scholarships, day care and teen centers, resources for people with disabilities, music and athletic equipment, nurses’ homes, medical instruments, emergency and disaster needs, leprosy treatment, medical missions, radio transceivers, retreat homes, Bible institutes, tracts, religious literature, ethnic and cultural ministries, and more!

Encouraging Gifts for Grants

Excited about the good that is accomplished through LWML mission grants, Leaguers have found creative ways to encourage giving. At a Washington-Alaska retreat, an officer suggested “tipping” the LWML servers, who would put the tips into mites. Result: \$293.15. Two Leaguers who were sunning themselves in bathing suits offered to jump into the Spokane River for an instant “pledge” of \$5 for mites. Within 10

minutes, they collected \$110. Adding in the Sunday worship offering brought the weekend total to \$839!

A printer cartridge recycling project started by Oklahoma Leaguers to help cover expenses for the 2003 convention netted \$42,000. It also helped reduce the refuse sent to landfills. Because of its success, the district continued the collection, with proceeds designated for LWML mission and ministry.

Maggie Kruser of St. John, Wheaton, Illinois, remembers a veteran LWMLer named Lillian who always declared, "I haven't spent a penny in 20 years!" Every penny she received in change went into her mite box. That led Maggie to view every penny in her wallet as mission money.

LWML: Fun—and Life-Changing

Another aspect of LWML that members appreciate is the fun, fellowship, and inspiration that Leaguers enjoy at conventions, retreats and local meetings. To attend zone and district gatherings in populous areas, travel is short. Things are different for members of Denali LWML in Alaska. Their parish is one of the largest in the world in geography. It covers an area larger than Wisconsin, Michigan and Iowa combined.

Denali LWML therefore is comprised of small groups called Fellowships throughout the state of Alaska. When the Washington-Alaska convention presented Denali LWML with its charter in 1998, the goal of the Alaska LWML zone was to make members of this new society, separated by many miles, feel as if they just lived a few miles down the road.

The 2000 fall rally in Copper Center was virtually a retreat with guests staying overnight in the school gym. Some women brought their sleeping bags and slept on the school floor. Others stayed in nearby motels. Still others brought their families and came in campers.

One of the rally highlights was the Servant Event. LWML members donned work clothes and put the first coat of paint on the inside of the worship center/community center that the Copper Center Fellowship was building. The first service in the new building took place on the Sunday following the rally.

In conjunction with the Alaska Mission Committee, Denali LWML members help with vacation Bible School in their own community and with VBSs in communities as far as 275 miles away. Sandi Schauer, a member of the Copper Center LWML Fellowship, is the committee's Coordinator of Children's Ministry. The committee also hosts an annual

mission tour, during which participants see scenic Alaska, many mission sites and the fruits of LWML mites.

For St. Peter's LWML, Rock Springs (North Wisconsin), fun meant having a pajama party at which members shared their favorite Bible verses. The other members highlighted the passage in their own Bibles and wrote the member's name beside it.

Oftentimes fun is added to LWML events as husbands join in with their own unique sense of humor. For example, when Marge (Mrs. Al) Bruning attended the Edmonton convention with her family, her pastor husband took the children to the city's huge mall one day. Dressed in casual clothes, he saw some women approaching and stopped them to say, "I'm the LWML Convention Police. Aren't you ladies supposed to be at the session that's going on now?"

The women were baffled and started to make excuses, even stating that they had told their district president where they were going. They didn't understand how he knew they were LWML members. Laughing, Pastor Bruning told them the tote bags were a dead giveaway! Unlike some other gatherings, LWML conventions enjoy the rapt attention of participants, and rarely do members "play hooky."

Some who flew to the Edmonton convention will never forget the last part of their flight. Instead of landing, the plane began to circle the airfield. After awhile the pilot announced that the landing gear would not come down, and the co-pilot would be opening a trapdoor in the cabin floor to try to remedy the problem. One of those on board was Bea Daily, Gulf States president. As she prayed, she was also concerned that "if I have to evacuate the plane, I won't have a banner to carry in the procession! If I live, I'll have to wear what I have on for the whole convention!"

She also prayed for Doris Evers, a friend from Alabama, whom she had persuaded to go by plane even though Doris was afraid of flying. Just then the pilot announced, "We have just passed over the control tower, and they report that it looks like the landing gear is in place." A cheer went up, followed by the singing of "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow." They landed without incident—and with thanksgiving that none of the fire trucks and rescue vehicles lining the runway had been needed.

As they left the plane, Bea told the pilot, "You probably don't know this but 90% of the people on this plane are Lutheran women going to a

convention here, and we were all praying.” He replied, “Ma’m, if I had known that, I would have just landed!”

In the terminal, Doris immediately phoned her husband, saying, “Start driving because I am not getting back on a plane.” By the next day, she calmed down and called him back to say she could do it. When Bea’s term was completed, Doris was elected president. Doris flew to all distant meetings and continued to fly after her term was over.

Conventions have also made a personal impact upon many attendees. Joyce Kaestner of South Wisconsin experienced that at the Kansas City convention. Recently widowed, she prayed that through the speakers, the Lord would “give me something to help me muster my strength for going on.” Throughout the convention, she waited and waited for an answer to her prayer. Then Marva Dawn, at the end of her presentation, referred to Revelation 3:2 and its directive to “strengthen what remains.”

“There it was, a gift for me from the Lord,” said Joyce. “I could not be what I was, but with God’s help, I could strengthen what was left.” With that as her goal, she developed her gift of poetry, grew in faith substantially, and began to take on “much more than ever I thought I could,” including the district LWML presidency.

Including Other Cultures

Because of the League’s growing emphasis on multi-cultural outreach, the *LWML Catalog* has added an increasing variety of materials in Spanish. One resource, *Lead Me Lord, Through...Motherhood*, has also been translated into Portuguese, Vietnamese, Chinese and Korean.

Glad to assist people of other cultures, First Good Shepherd LWML, Las Vegas, Nevada, eagerly responded when a pastor from African Ministries asked them to help furnish homes of people from his congregation. To get better acquainted, they sponsored a “Christmas in Africa” celebration.

Leaguers have also provided Christian hospitality to international students at local universities and volunteered as ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers for family members accompanying them. Some have used *The Life of Jesus*, 12 Bible story leaflets published by LWML for this purpose.

Through the huge influx of foreign students in the last decades of the 20th century, the Lord brought the mission field to the doorstep of American Christians. When the LWML began, its founders envisioned an

organization that would not only support missionaries going to foreign fields, but also a League that would educate Lutheran women to be missionaries to their own communities.

The Pacific Southwest District took a step to reach Spanish-speaking women by hosting a conference for Hispanic women in June 2002. Fifty attended and enjoyed topics on prayer, evangelism and women's ministry.

Members Become Missionaries

In recent years, “missionary” has taken on a new dimension for LWML members, thanks to MOST (Mission Opportunities Short Term) Ministries, a recognized service organization of the LCMS. Its goal is to help individuals experience mission outreach by “empowering the found in reaching the lost” on a short-term basis.

Since 1989, MOST teams have shared the Gospel through education, eyeglasses distribution, health, agriculture, construction, and women's ministries programs in 16 countries. In 2003, LWML delegates adopted a \$47,000 grant to enable MOST Ministries to expand its work.

LWML members have joined MOST teams, becoming foreign missionaries themselves. Several have participated under the Michigan District's WINGS (Working in Nations as God's Servants) program in which Past District President Sandra Hardies has taken a leading role. Through the program, she has gone twice to India, twice to Nicaragua, once to Panama and once to China. Among her special memories are:

—Visiting with longtime missionary Alice Brauer on the veranda of her home in Ambur, India, while across the yard young girls from the Tabitha Lutheran Girl's Home were singing their evening praises. LWML mites helped built their dormitory, and Sandy was moved to become a sponsor of one of the students.

—Working side by side with long-term missionaries doing women's retreats at church locations throughout Panama.

—Seeing firsthand how the national church trains pastors and deaconesses in Nicaragua, and then being invited to speak on a radio program hosted by one of the pastors. For one of the retreats in Nicaragua, some women got up at 2 a.m., walked an hour and then rode a bus four hours to be there to hear the Word of God.

“The enthusiasm of the women in each country as they studied God's Word with us was wonderful,” said Sandy. “Hearing the singing and the prayers of those women in their own language gives you goose bumps as

you picture what the praises of God will be when we all gather around His throne together.”

After a Northern Illinois and Michigan LWML team had done 10 retreats in Nicaragua, the national church leaders noted a marked increase in attendance at their churches. “That’s awesome that God used us to make a difference!” Sandy commented. Several on the Nicaragua team returned home determined to become more involved in Hispanic ministries in their local community.

“There are so many reasons LWML members should consider a mission trip,” Sandy continued. “There is such a unity of spirit that happens when you are doing mission work together. You are usually working under trials—limited resources, hot or cold temperatures, different kinds of food and culture shock, the challenge of a different language, but through it all, God uses each person in special ways.

“Coming back so excited about missions, we are able to excite others for going themselves, for being better mite givers and better pray-ers for missions, and for seeing the possibilities in our own back yard.”

Nancy Graf Peters, former Atlantic District president, agreed. “While serving on the mission field, it becomes clear in a very personal way that the Holy Spirit is close by and directing each moment and each situation you encounter.... ‘Life changing’ is the phrase that seems to sum it up.”

Nancy has served as Spanish language interpreter on trips to Venezuela, Panama and Nicaragua. Amazed that she had the ‘chuzpah’ to go on those trips, she recalled hearing her favorite Sunday school teacher talk about the importance of missionaries, “and I knew right away that I was going to be doing some sort of mission work—and I was terrified! I didn’t want to go to Africa or any uncomfortable, faraway place! I knew He wanted me to serve and, in true Jonah-style, I didn’t want to do it.”

After assuring Nancy that God would not expect a seventh grader to go on the mission field, the teacher told the story of a missionary who was not called but went “just because.” On the field, the missionary was asked, “Did ya went, or wuz ya sent?” Nancy held onto those words and let the years pass, not even joining Girl Scouts because she was afraid of camping in the woods.

But she did study Spanish and expected to teach it in a Lutheran grade school in New York City. However, after her marriage, she moved to a small community with no jobs for a bilingual educator. Then two things

happened. Her church called a seminary graduate whose classmate became a missionary to Venezuela, and her daughter joined the Girl Scouts. As a troop leader (there was a shortage of leaders), Nancy had to learn to rough it!

Then the Lord added one more element—Nancy's first LWML international convention! Traveling to Ames, Iowa, she had to get on a plane by herself, fly to a place she had never been before, and even deal with cultural differences between New York and Iowa. There was new terrain, a variety of accents, and "a distinct LWML culture with its own way of doing things."

Looking back on her experiences, Nancy realized that "each time the LWML calls women out of the comfort of their communities to come together at a national/international convention, that organization is truly living up to its 'Missionary' name. It is preparing a future army of women to take the bold step of journeying onto the mission field."

"In a sense, my first LWML convention was inadvertently my first cross-cultural mission trip. How great that LWML conventions can serve as the basic training ground to mentor the next round of Lutheran women in mission...who then go off and do the mission...on the mission field."

For most members, the mission field may continue to be their family, their neighborhood, and the internationals who study in the U.S. Many churches remind them of this with a parking lot exit sign that says, "You are now entering the mission field." But for many women, the world may become their calling as more districts join the MOST adventure for the Lord.

Whatever the route, the example of Christian women through the ages and the LWML heritage of praying, sharing, learning, leading, teaching, telling, serving, and supporting the Lord's cause will enable Lutheran women of the future to continue living joyfully and courageously as salt and light—in league with the Lord! To God be the glory!

Appendix

Those Mighty Mite Boxes!

Although “cent” or “mite” societies were begun in the early 1800s to raise money for missions, it was not until 1881 that the first mite box was introduced by Woman’s Mission to Woman, a Baptist organization. The garnet colored box had the name of the group in shining gold letters on its side. Soon women of other denominations were doing the same.

Although permission was not granted for the women to organize until 1911, the United Norwegian Church (now part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) gave mission boxes to pastors’ wives to distribute among the women of their congregations as early as 1903. Other groups used “dime books” and “thankoffering boxes.”

Ladies from six Oklahoma congregations met in Zion Lutheran Church, Oklahoma City, March 11, 1928, to organize the first district Lutheran Women’s League in the LCMS. A year later they adopted mite boxes for collecting moneys to furnish bed linens for St. John’s College, Winfield, Kansas. In 1932, they agreed to sponsor loans to parochial schools and Sunday schools needing equipment, and in 1935 they promised to pay the debt on the first Black American mission in Oklahoma. Soon women of other districts organized and also chose the mite box as a collection device.

Many groups gave mite boxes to all the women of the congregation, and members made personal calls each quarter to collect the contents of the boxes. At Trinity in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, the “collector” was Emma Hurtze, and she kept up her rounds even after she had a pacemaker. The first item on the weekly grocery list of Florence Grothaus, Fort Wayne, Indiana, was always 50 pennies to feed her mite box. After her death, her husband continued the practice until he was 87.

When the LWML was organized in 1942, the board agreed to provide “uniform collection devices” to all who wished them, and the president and one counselor were given the authority to choose the design. Societies called the boxes by various names, including blessings boxes, mission boxes, thankoffering boxes, and of course, mite boxes. Not all groups used them, but those that did reported a sizeable increase in contributions.

Although the first issue of the *Lutheran Woman’s Quarterly* referred to the availability of “attractive mite boxes,” the name was never officially adopted. Periodically suggestions were made at national conventions to change the name because “mite denotes a small amount of money,” completely missing the significance of the mite gift in Mark 12:41-44. The woman who gave two small copper coins to the temple treasury in Jerusalem gave all she had. However, because League members are to give their first fruits to the local congregation, no change of name was ever approved for the LWML’s collection device.

Changes to the design have been made several times over the years.

The original 1942 blue and white box portrayed the death and resurrection of our Lord and also had a drawing of the world to represent the LCMS mission fields. On the top were the words, “My Offering Box,” and on the side was a place to write the name of the district.

To provide an appropriate collection device for meetings, displays and placement in the church narthex, the League in 1967 developed wrap-around artwork for creating large mite boxes. Eventually a pre-printed display-size box was produced for sale.

After 40 years of use, the mite box design was changed in 1982. Using the League colors, purple and gold, it included the LWML motto, “Serve the Lord with Gladness” and had the official LWML seal on both end flaps.

The 1991 white box with purple print was simpler and more streamlined. It featured the new LWML logo and a percentage pie chart showing that 75% of the money was used for district grants, and 25% was sent to the national LWML.

In 2001 the League produced a technologically streamlined design for the new millenium. Using two tones of purple on white, the box included the LWML’s founding date of 1942, its motto, and the new alternative name, “Lutheran Women in Mission.” The box also reminded users of its



purpose—"Spreading the Gospel." Imprinted on the bottom was the LWML address, e-mail, website and toll-free phone number, and there was a place to write the owner's name.

That same year a colorful children's mite box debuted and found uses in Sunday schools and parochial schools.

A 2004 innovation was a "traveling mite box" label that could downloaded from the LWML Web site and affixed to a small, round, plastic, covered container (like those in which individual servings of snacks are sold). Proclaiming "Mitey Change for Almighty Change," it featured pictures of people around the world who still need to hear the Gospel—and it could travel in the beverage holder of a car.

As the LWML membership and mite gifts have increased, mission funding has grown from the first \$15,000 project to the current 2003–2005 grant goal of \$1,575,000. The Lord has not only blessed the mite contributions—He has protected those gifts, too, as Gladys Ostermeier of Hardy, Arkansas, discovered after a 1982 tornado. Inside her wet, damaged house, which was surrounded by fallen trees, stood her mite box, loaded with coins, right on the dresser where she had placed it. The water-soaked box had collapsed, but it collapsed right around the coins and not a penny was lost!

(This appendix is based on the LWML's two history books, *Women on a Mission* and *Women in God's Service (WINGS)*, and a mite box monologue written by Willa Brinkmeyer and presented at the 2001 San Jose national LWML Convention.)

LWML Elected Officers

PRESIDENT

1942-47 Clara (Mrs. Otto) Schmitt
1947-53 Mrs. Sadie Fulk Roehrs
1953-59 Lillian (Mrs. Arthur) Preisinger
1959-63 Emma (Mrs. Walter) Hoppe
1963-67 Eula (Mrs. Gilbert) Hankel
1967-71 Evelyn (Mrs. Warren) Hartman
1971-75 Florence (Mrs. C.R.) Montz
1975-79 Helen (Mrs. William) Morris
1979-83 Helen (Mrs. Walter) Gienapp
1983-87 Alberta (Mrs. Ross) Barnes
1987-91 Betty (Mrs. John, Jr.) Duda
1991-95 Ida (Mrs. Kenneth) Mall
1995-99 Gloria (Mrs. Ross) Edwards
1999-2003 Virginia (Mrs. Burnell)
Von Seggern
2003- Linda (Mrs. Ron) Reiser

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

1942-47 Evelyn (Mrs. H.W.) Lembke
1947-53 Lillian (Mrs. Arthur) Preisinger
1953-59 Emma (Mrs. Walter) Hoppe
1959-63 Eleanor (Mrs. Harold) Brandt
1963-67 Evelyn (Mrs. Warren) Hartman
1967-71 Florence (Mrs. C.R.) Montz
1971-75 Helen (Mrs. William) Morris
1975-79 Helen (Mrs. Walter) Gienapp
1979-83 Doris (Mrs. Philander) Durkee
1983-85 Anita (Mrs. Herbert) Gaede

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

1942-47 Miss Gertrude Ressmeyer
1947-53 Helen (Mrs. H. Max) Hunter
1953-57 Selma (Mrs. William) Fischer
1957-61 Gertrude (Mrs. Albert) Pollex
1961-65 Mrs. Lucie Hahn
1965-69 Miss Ruby Rutkowski
1969-73 Lillian (Mrs. A.E.) Swanson
1973-77 Elnora (Mrs. Raymond)
Briggeman
1977-81 Beulah (Mrs. Arthur) Werner
1981-85 Lucille (Mrs. Leonard)
Roehrkassee

THIRD VICE PRESIDENT

1967-71 Ethel (Mrs. Albert) Schultz
1971-75 Marie (Mrs. Alfred) Sump
1975-79 Alma (Mrs. Herbert) Kern
1979-83 Delores (Mrs. Ronald) Rhode
1983-85 Sandy (Mrs. Jerry) Thompson

VICE PRESIDENT FOR MISSION EDUCATION

1985-87 Sandy (Mrs. Jerry) Thompson
1987-91 Delores (Mrs. Joseph) Pavicic
1991-95 Marilyn Egland
1995-99 Virginia Von Seggern

VICE PRESIDENT OF SERVANT RESOURCES

1999-2003 Linda Reiser
2003- Marguerite Christman

VICE PRESIDENT FOR MISSION INSPIRATION

1985-89 Betty (Mrs. Winfred) Haar
1989-93 Norma (Mrs. Howard) Kramin
1993-97 Iri Skinner
1997-99 Ida Luebke

VICE PRESIDENT OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

1999-2001 Ida Luebke
2001-05 Jan Wendorf

VICE PRESIDENT FOR MISSION SERVICE

1985-87 Anita (Mrs. Herbert) Gaede
1987-91 Pearl (Mrs. Mark) Biar
1991-95 Gloria Edwards
1995-99 Jane Turner

VICE PRESIDENT OF HUMAN CARE

1999-2003 Helen Bice
2003- Kaye Cairns

MISSION PROJECTS

1975-77 (Secretary)
Lois (Mrs. Ray) Dankenbring
1977-79 (Secretary)
Alberta (Mrs. Ross) Barnes
1979-81 (Chairman)
Alberta (Mrs. Ross) Barnes
1981-85 (Director)
Betty (Mrs. John, Jr.) Duda

VICE PRESIDENT FOR MISSION PROJECTS

1985-89 Alice (Mrs. Tom) Cross
1989-93 Barbara (Mrs. James) Going
1993-97 Naomi Schilling
1997-99 Jan Rueter

VICE PRESIDENT OF GOSPEL OUTREACH

1999-2001 Jan Rueter
2001-05 Judy Knebel

VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATION

1999-2001 Karol Selle
2001-05 Janet Hurta

RECORDING SECRETARY

1942-47 Adelia (Mrs. Walter) Widmann
1947-51 Mrs. R.H.C. Meyer
1951-57 Louise (Mrs. F.A.) Eggert
1957-61 Viola (Mrs. Herbert) Oberle
1961-65 Dorothy (Mrs. Wilbert) Rosin
1965-69 Lorraine (Mrs. W.C.) Nieman
1969-73 Miss Esther Schoessow
1973-77 Eleanore (Mrs. Theodore) Zeile
1977-81 Ruby (Mrs. R.A.) Falk
1981-85 Edna (Mrs. Hugo) Haeder
1985-89 Charlotte (Mrs. E.H.)
Peapenburg
1989-93 LaVada (Mrs. Richard) Traskowsky
1993-97 Dorothea Otte
1997-2001 Barbara Volk
2001-05 Shari Miller

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

1942-49 Pauline (Mrs. Raymond)
Roehrkasse
1949-53 Ruth (Mrs. Frederick)
Schuermann

LWML Elected Officers

1953-59	Lydia (Mrs. Merrill) Gerstner
1959-63	Eula (Mrs. Gilbert) Hankel
1963-67	Leona (Mrs. Henry) Tuchenhagen
1967-71	(Appointive Secretary to the President) Mrs. Gene Waldkoetter
1971-73	(Administrative Assistant) Edna (Mrs. Hugo) Haeder

FINANCIAL SECRETARY

1942-43	Hannah (Mrs. B.J.) Theimer
1943-49	Elesa (Mrs. C.A.) Hass
1949-53	Theresa (Mrs. Earl) Boucher
1953-59	Mrs. L.S. Kenyon
1959-63	Irene (Mrs. Arthur) Prueter
1963-67	Miss Hella W. Hillger
1967-71	Meta (Mrs. Herman) Krueckeberg
1971-75	Thelma (Mrs. Frank) Ritzen
1975-79	Edna (Mrs. Fred) Eickemeyer
1979-83	Karen (Mrs. Leon) Curry
1983-87	Ruth (Mrs. James) Doty
1987-89	Puddin' (Mrs. Wesley) Krueger

TREASURER

1942-49	Leona (Mrs. A.H.) Meitler
1949-56	Miss Hilda Tarbach
1956-61	Mrs. E.C. Lehman
1961-65	Mrs. E.H. Kramer
1965-69	Miss Louise Krueger
1969-73	Della (Mrs. Ralph) Gnagy
1973-77	Lil (Mrs. Albert) Thingstad
1977-81	Erika (Mrs. Lewis) Certain
1981-85	Mary Helen (Mrs. Richard) Kelly
1985-89	Karen (Mrs. Leon) Curry
1989-91	Puddin' (Mrs. Wesley) Krueger
1991-95	Dottie Hildebrandt
1995-99	Bev Erdmann
1999-2003	Janet Miller
2003-	Louise Rickey

COUNSELORS

1942-53	Rev. Walter Birkner
1942	Rev. J.H. Deckman
1942-51	Rev. Oscar Fedder
1942-49	Rev. R.H.C. Meyer
1942	Rev. A.H. Semmann
1949-55	Rev. Martin Mayer
1951-54	Rev. Hubert G. Bruggemann
1953-59	Rev. Ray Eissfeldt
1955-61	Rev. Theodore Gerken Rev. Herman Sieving
1959-63	Rev. Alwin Rubin
1961-65	Rev. Paul Lessmann
1961-67	Rev. John Zimmermann
1963-69	Rev. Andrew Sabo
1965-71	Rev. Edgar Kaiser
1967-73	Rev. Theodore Zeile
1969-75	Rev. Eugene Kramer
1971-77	Rev. Erhard D. Eifert
1975-79	Rev. Fred Stennfeld
1977-81	Rev. Thomas Zehnder
1979-83	Rev. Frederick Riemer
1981-85	Rev. Howard Kramin
1983-87	Rev. Dennis Glick
1985-89	Rev. Curtis R. Moermond
1987-91	Rev. Gerhard Bode
1989-93	Rev. Darold A. Reiner
1991-95	Rev. Dr. Mark Behring
1993-97	Rev. Vernon Schindler
1995-99	Rev. Gregory Cynova
1997-2001	Rev. David Buuck
1999-2003	Rev. Dr. David Bernthal
2001-05	Rev. Dan Heuer
2003-	Rev. Larry Miller

Committee Chairmen and Appointed Personnel

CHRISTIAN GROWTH

*(Originally established as "Leadership
Training Committee")*

- 1953-57 Eleanor (Mrs. Harold) Brandt
- 1957-59 Mrs. Earl Muck
- 1960 Ruth (Mrs. Frederick)
Schuermann
- 1961 Frances (Mrs. Charles)
Burkart
- 1962 Dorothy (Mrs. Elmer) Fischer
- 1963 Lillian (Mrs. Raymond)
Krusemark
- 1964 Ruth (Mrs. Wilbert) Kaspar
- 1965 Evelyn (Mrs. Henry) Lammel
- 1966 Miss Juanita Weber
- 1967-69 Lillian (Mrs. A.E.) Swanson
- 1969-73 Elnora (Mrs. Raymond)
Briggeman
- 1973-77 Talitha (Mrs. Willard) Stark
- 1977-79 Emeline (Mrs. Max) Goodman
- 1979-81 Lucille (Mrs. Leonard)
Roehrkassee
- 1981-85 Virginia (Mrs. Edward)
Schmidt
- 1985-87 Norma (Mrs. Howard) Kramin
- 1987-89 Mona (Mrs. James) Mueller
- 1989-91 Eleanor (Mrs. William)
Sandholm
- 1991-93 Gwen Braddock

- 1993-95 Marguerite Christman
- 1995-97 Ida Luebke
- 1997-99 Shari Miller

CHRISTIAN LIFE

- 1999-2001 Kaye Cairns
- 2001-03 Nancy Kohrs
- 2003-05 Deaconess Betty Knapp

QUARTERLY EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

- 1943-44 Rev. W.C. Birkner
- 1944-48 Mrs. M.C. Kenn
- 1948-51 Miss Emma Kiefer
- 1951-56 Miss Emelia E. Wefel
- 1956-60 Mabel (Mrs. Albert) Warnke
- 1960-62 Ruth (Mrs. Ellwood) Zuelsdorf
- 1962-66 Lorna (Mrs. Wilbur)
Hagebusch
- 1966-77 Marlys (Mrs. Jack) Taege
- 1977-81 Delores (Mrs. Joseph) Pavicic
- 1981-87 Louise (Mrs. Howard) Mueller
- 1987-97 Patricia Beach Schutte
- 1997- Donna J. Streufert
- 1997- (Associate Editor) Janice
Kerper Brauer

Committee Chairmen and Appointed Personnel

PROGRAM RESOURCES

*(Known as Materials Committee, 1963-71;
Manuscript Review Committee, 1971-85)*

1963-67	Erica (Mrs. Frederick) Baepler
1967	Mrs. Leonard Wuerffel
1967-71	Lois (Mrs. Ray) Dankenbring
1971-73	Nell (Mrs. Martin) Eggers
1973-77	Carmen (Mrs. Robert) Nieting
1977-79	Helen (Mrs. Louis) Konz
1979-81	Emy (Mrs. Max) Goodman
1981-83	Loraine (Mrs. Carl) Losser
1983-87	Betty (Mrs. Martin) Mueller
1987-89	Delle (Mrs. Victor) Byrant
1989-91	Katherine (Kate) (Mrs. William) Hallock
1991-93	Carol Sokofski
1993-95	Carol Maas
1995-97	Judy Chase
1997-99	Kaye Cairns

CHRISTIAN RESOURCES

EDITORS

1999-2001	Shari Miller
2001-03	Vivian Ernst
2003-05	Edie Norris

MISSION SERVICE

1963-67	Margaret (Mrs. Raymond) Hodges
1967-71	Anamelia (Mrs. Edmond) Eden
1971-73	Gertrude (Mrs. Chester) Norton
1973-75	Winifred (Mrs. Carl) Kleist
1975-77	Marie (Mrs. Alfred) Sump
1977-81	Martha (Mrs. Harvey) Hunt
1981-83	Ruth (Mrs. Edgar) Ziegler
1983-85	Rose (Mrs. Joseph) Wallace
1985-89	Margaret (Mrs. H. Earl) Goodson
1989-91	Florence (Mrs. Lewis) Harms
1991-93	Rachel Taylor
1993-95	Marlene Bartlett

1995-97 Deaconess Betty Knapp

1997-99 Deaconess Betty Knapp

HUMAN CARE

1999-2001	Jan Wendorf
2001-03	Shirley Hein
2003-05	Dorothea Sincebaugh

CARING MINISTRY

1991-93	Jan Rueter
1993-95	Jan Rueter
1995-97	Karen Avenson
1997-99	Karol Selle

MISSION HOSPICE

*(Established in 1947 as Committee for
Housing Missionaries on Furlough with
Mrs. Max Hunter as chairman.
Restructured as Mission Hospice in 1950.)*

1950-56	Mrs. Theodore Moeller
1956-59	Mrs. F. Henry Bosse
1959-63	Mrs. A.W. Trinklein
1963-67	Helen (Mrs. Harold) Rammler
1967-71	Dorothy (Mrs. August) Biermann
1971-75	Elvira (Mrs. Raymond) Schmidt

MISSION PROJECTS

1985-87	Barbara Strenger
1987-89	Mary Hohman
1989-91	Eloise Schaan
1991-93	Naomi Schilling
1993-95	Adrienne Going
1995-97	Gerda Treglown
1997-99	Connie Markquart

MISSION ADVOCACY AND GRANTS

1999-2001 Marge Bruning
2001-03 Judy Barnes
2003-05 Melody Rosenwinkel

CHRISTIAN OUTREACH

1993-95 Pat Roudebush
1995-97 Rita Konda
1997-99 Judy Knebel

GOSPEL OUTREACH

1999-2001 Judy Knebel
2001-03 Janis McDaniels
2003-05 Cassandra Hebermehl

PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR

1964-66 Marlys (Mrs. Jack) Taege
1966-71 Luella (Mrs. Arthur) Greenwood
1971-75 Lois (Mrs. Ray) Dankenbring
1975-79 Marie (Mrs. Leroy) Biesenthal
1979-83 Dorothy (Mrs. Lorman) Mansholt
1983-87 Ida (Mrs. Kenneth) Mall
1987-91 Sandy (Mrs. Jerry) Thompson
1991-97 Karol Selle
1997-99 Naomi Schilling
1999-2003 Carol Zemke
2003-05 Beverly England

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1993-95 Jan Wendorf
1995-97 Jan Wendorf
1997-99 Carol Zemke

MEDIA AND MARKETING

1999-2001 Kate Hallock
2001-03 Connie Kruelle
2003-05 Judy Westergren

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP TRAINING

1970-75 Helen (Mrs. Walter) Gienapp
1975-77 Fran (Mrs. John) Gemmer
1977-79 Dorothy (Mrs. Dan) Hildebrandt
1979-81 Elsa (Mrs. Frank) Neuner
1981-83 Neoma (Mrs. Raymond) Maier
1983-85 Ada (Mrs. Robert, Jr.) Towers

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

1983-85 Virginia (Mrs. Burnell) Von Seggern
1985-87 Martha (Mrs. Robert) Morse
1987-89 Ida (Mrs. Kenneth) Mall
1989-91 Marilyn (Mrs. Vernon) Eglund
1991-93 JoAnn Henningsen
1993-95 JoAnn Henninsen
1995-97 Helen Bartz
1997-99 Linda Reiser

LEADER DEVELOPMENT

1999-2001 Sandy Hardies
2001-03 Pat Biar
2003-05 Luana Kading

COMMITTEE ON YOUNG WOMEN

1991-93 Marcella Gaus
1993-95 Sandy Sweeney

CONSULTANT TASK FORCE (MMV COMMITTEE)

1997-99 Mary Gray

HOPE (HELPING ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATE EFFECTIVELY)

1999-2001 Mary Gray
2001-03 Beverly England
2003-05 Jan Brunette

Committee Chairmen and Appointed Personnel

DISCIPLING WOMAN TO WOMAN

1983-85 Helen (Mrs. Walter) Gienapp
1985-87 Mary Helen (Mrs. Richard) Kelly
1987-89 Anita (Mrs. Herbert) Gaede
1989-91 Delores (Mrs. Ronald) Rhode

SISTER TO SISTER

1997-99 Gerda Treglown
1999-2001 Marilyn McClure

HEART TO HEART SISTERS

2003-05 Marilyn McClure

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

1942-47 Evelyn (Mrs. H.W.) Lembke
1947-53 Lillian (Mrs. Arthur) Preisinger
1953-59 Emma (Mrs. Walter) Hoppe
1959-63 Garnette (Mrs. Robert)
Janowski
1963-67 Edna (Mrs. Gerhard) Molden
1967-71 Helen (Mrs. William) Morris
1971-73 Madonna (Mrs. Albert) Ruhlig
1973-77 Amalie (Mrs. Wayne) Long
1977-79 Millie (Mrs. Charles)
Herrmann
1979-83 Norma (Mrs. L.J.) Bruns
1983-85 Dorothy (Mrs. Lorman)
Mansholt
1985-89 Signe (Mrs. Kenneth) Carlson
1989-91 Catherine (Mrs. Robert)
Burkhard

BYLAWS

1991-93 Vera Valeskie
1993-95 Virginia Von Seggern
1995-97 Barbara Volk
1997-99 Helen Bartz

STRUCTURE

1999-2001 Dianne Hill
2001-03 Nancy Graf Peters
2003-05 JoNette Brogaard

HISTORIAN

1943-47 Mrs. Sadie Fulk Roehrs
1947-53 Lillian (Mrs. Arthur) Preisinger
1953-57 Mrs. William Fischer
1957-61 Gertrude (Mrs. Albert) Pollex
1961-65 Mrs. Lucie E. Hahn
1965-67 Miss Ruby Rutkowski
1967-79 Esther (Mrs. Otto) Stahlke
(first appointed historian)
1979-93 Gladys (Mrs. Harold) Grovender

ARCHIVIST-HISTORIAN

1993-2001 Gladys Grovender, Consultant
2001- Gladys Grovender, Emeritus
1993- Peggi Lawrence

PARLIAMENTARIAN

1951-53 Emma (Mrs. Walter) Hoppe
1956 Amalia Schroeder
1956-57 Miss Olga Kaiser
1957-59 Viola Walker
1959-63 Miss Olga Kaiser
1963-67 Mrs. Oscar Fischer
1967-71 Mrs. H.W. Kammerlohr
1971-75 Irene (Mrs. Glenn) Kinhead
1975-77 Thelma (Mrs. Frank) Ritzen
1977-81 Verna (Mrs. Warren) Zelt
1981-83 Elva (Mrs.C.E.) Kauer
1983-87 Beulah (Mrs. Arthur) Werner
1987-93 Verna (Mrs. Warren) Zelt
1993-2001 Marlis Schmidt
2001-03 Darleen Harens
2003-05 Julia Riess

NEWSLETTER

GRAPHICS EDITOR

1991-93 Kate Hallock
1993-95 Kate Hallock
1995-97 Janet Hurta
1997-99 Janet Hurta

FINANCIAL DIRECTOR

1991-99 Karen Curry

MEETING MANAGER

1991-95 Marie Biesenthal
1995-2001 Ruth Ann Johnson
2001-03 Dianne Hill
2003-05 Elaine Nelson

PLANNER

1989-91 Ida Mall
1991-95 Sandy Thompson
1995-99 Marilyn Egland
1999-2001 Deaconess Betty Knapp
2001-05 Barbara Volk

CONVENTION MANAGER

2001- Jan Rueter

CONTRACTS ADMINISTRATOR

2001- Ruth Ann Johnson

District Presidents

ALBERTA AND BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Affiliated July 4, 1951)

1951-56	Ellen (Mrs. Harold) Witte
1956-60	Emma (Mrs. Reinhold) Henning
1960-64	Emma (Mrs. Frederick) Schole
1964-68	Emerald (Mrs. Walter) Schoepp
1968-72	Margaret (Mrs. A.M.) Ginther
1972-76	Helen (Mrs. Ed) Enders
1976-80	Lillian (Mrs. Claude) Wachtner
1980-84	Elsa (Mrs. Frank) Neuner
1984-87	Esther A.D. Janzow
1987-92	Carole (Mrs. Larry) MacKay
1992-96	Helen (Mrs. Ron) Leonhardt

ATLANTIC (May 20, 1942)

1942-46	Flora (Mrs. Herman) Hecker
1946-50	Ruth (Mrs. Louis T.) Buchheimer
1950-54	Florence Bosse
1954-58	Dorothea (Mrs. Ernest B.) Priebe
1958-62	Lucie Hahn
1962-66	Dorothy (Mrs. August) Biermann

1966-70	Kae (Mrs. Ernest) Handschin
1970-74	Alma (Mrs. Herbert) Kern
1974-78	Charlotte (Mrs. Grant) Wingate
1978-82	Marie (Mrs. Charles) Ballner
1982-86	Marya (Mrs. Myron) Smith
1986-90	Julia (Mrs. John) Draper
1990-94	Edith (Mrs. Theodore) Zetzer
1994-98	Kathy (Mrs. Richard) Lowe
1998-2002	Nancy (Mrs. Richard) Graf Peters
2002-04	Joan (Mrs. James) McHugh
2004-	Maureen (Mrs. Frank) Consiglio

CALIFORNIA AND NEVADA

(May 28, 1942)

(Area organizations held joint annual district-wide conventions beginning Oct. 19, 1938.)

1942-44	Dora (Mrs. C.F.) Wessel
1944-48	Evelyn (Mrs. H.W.) Lembke
1948-52	Freda (Mrs. T.L.) Frank
1952-56	Eleanor (Mrs. Harold) Brandt
1956-58	Marie (Mrs. Oscar) Wilson
1958-60	Aletha (Mrs. Floyd) Shelby
1960-62	Mrs. Waltraut A. Wilson
1962-66	Wilma (Mrs. Paige) Keiser
1966-70	Erna (Mrs. Richard) Matousek

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA-HAWAII

(Name changed 1970)

- 1970-74 Agnes (Mrs. Paul) Frincke
 1974-78 Borghild (Mrs. Sherman) Quinlan
 1978-82 Ruth (Mrs. Walter) Callaway
 1982-86 Rebecca (Mrs. Harold) Calloway
 1986-90 Gloria (Mrs. Ross) Edwards
 1990-94 Helen (Mrs. Herbert) Bartz
 1994-98 Carol (Mrs. Steve) Petronzio
 1998-2002 Louise (Mrs. Wayne) Rickey
 2002- Kathie (Mrs. Burt) Lindquist

CAROLINA (Sept. 20-21, 1958); name changed to **CAROLINAS** in 1978)
(Previously Southeastern—Carolinas and Georgia)

- 1958-60 Louise B. Pence
 1960-64 Thelma (Mrs. H. Frank) Hollar
 1964-68 Marion (Mrs. George) Marschall
 1968-72 Martha (Mrs. Harvey) Hunt
 1972-76 Ruth (Mrs. James) Creel
 1976-80 Barbara (Mrs. H.L.) Voelkert
 1980-84 Kathlee Hicks
 1984-88 Jeanette (Mrs. Emory) Huffman
 1988-90 Jane (Mrs. Kenneth) Schamens
 1990-94 Lynn (Mrs. Rayford) Bumgarner
 1994-98 Kathy (Mrs. David) Ludwig
 1998-2002 Janis (Mrs. James) McDaniels
 2002- Martha (Mrs. Robert) Burke

CENTRAL (May 27, 1942)
(Previously Lutheran Women's Missionary Endeavor, June 27, 1928)

- 1942-46 Sadie Fulk Roehrs

- 1946-50 Emma (Mrs. Walter) Hoppe
 1950-54 Magdalene (Mrs. Emil) Frank
 1954-58 Helen (Mrs. C.W.) Gruenhagen
 1958-62 Olga E. Kaiser
 1962-64 Meta (Mrs. Herman) Krueckeberg

CENTRAL ILLINOIS (May 19, 1946)
(Previously Women's Missionary Endeavor, Oct. 6-11, 1940)

- 1946-49 Theresa (Mrs. Earl) Boucher
 1949-51 Elverta (Mrs. Orville) Asper
 1951-55 Edna (Mrs. Edwin) Semelka
 1955-57 Melinda (Mrs. Alvin) Bluhm
 1957-61 Ruth (Mrs. Wilbert) Kaspar
 1961-64 Eleanor (Mrs. Raymond) Eissfeldt
 1964-68 Esther (Mrs. Otto) Stahlke
 1968-70 Lois (Mrs. John) Wenthe
 1970-72 Leota (Mrs. Martin) Garbe
 1972-76 Helen (Mrs. John) Meyer
 1976-80 Erna (Mrs. Howard) Mull
 1980-84 Florence (Mrs. Lewis) Harms
 1984-88 Dorothy (Mrs. Luther) Kohn
 1988-92 Norma (Mrs. Stuart) Yagow
 1992-96 Joyce (Mrs. James) Dodge
 1996-2000 Elaine (Mrs. Raymond) Stuckemeyer
 2000-04 Betty (Mrs. Wayne) Dietrich
 2004- Karen (Mrs. Erwin) Ruhlig

CHESAPEAKE (Oct. 18-19, 1952)
(Previously Southeastern, Northern Branch)

- 1952-54 Ruth (Mrs. Eric) Johnson
 1954-56 Margaret (Mrs. Lee) Eirich
 1956-60 Mildred (Mrs. Henry) Kroll
 1960-62 Florine Noide
 1962-66 Dorothy (Mrs. Edward) Cockrell
 1966-70 Alice (Mrs. William) Schaefer

District Presidents

1970-74	Althea (Mrs. Loren) Steinhauer	1966-70	Helene (Mrs. Adolph) Steinke
1974-76	Lydia Beyer	1970-74	Lorraine (Mrs. John) Fey
1976-80	Karen (Mrs. Donald) Soeken	1974-78	Elda (Mrs. Arthur) Brune
1980-84	Lorraine (Mrs. Clyde) Berndsen	1978-82	Henrietta (Mrs. Elmer) Maurhoff
1984-88	Hope (Mrs. George) Miller	1982-86	Lois (Mrs. Earl) Gibbons
1988-92	Jan (Mrs. Fred) Rueter	1986-90	Ruth (Mrs. John) Holquist
1992-96	Karen (Mrs. Roger) Matthiesen	1990-94	Ruth (Mrs. Alfred) Hope
1996-98	Sharon (Mrs. Timothy) McGuan	1994-98	Darlene (Mrs. Ronald) Byrns
1998-2002	Connie (Mrs. Frederick) Kruelle	1998-2002	Dorothy (Mrs. Mark) Koschmann
2002-	Sylvia (Mrs. Robert) Shives	2002-	Claire (Mrs. David) Carlson

COLORADO (District organized in 1942; affiliated with LWML June 19-20, 1945; became Rocky Mountain District, 1984)

1942-43	Lena (Mrs. Fred) Scherzer
1943-45	Helen (Mrs. H. Max) Hunter
1945-47	Lorna (Mrs. Fred) Zobel
1947-50	Matilda (Mrs. Earlyon) Brass
1950-53	Lorna (Mrs. Fred) Zobel
1953-56	Eula (Mrs. Gilbert) Hankel
1956-58	Clara (Mrs. P. Alfred) Abelt
1958-62	Elma (Mrs. Oscar) Fischer
1962-66	Lillian (Mrs. A.E.) Swanson
1966-70	Marjorie (Mrs. Martin) Pollock
1970-73	Pearl (Mrs. R.E.) Mehl
1974-78	Delores (Mrs. Ronald) Rhode
1978-82	Pauline (Mrs. James) Groerich
1982-84	Edith M. Johnson

EASTERN (March 9, 1944)

1944-50	Jean (Mrs. Walter) Thorman
1950-54	Elsa (Mrs. Henry) Schroeder
1954-58	Gretchen (Mrs. Karl) Kriesel
1958-62	Hella W. Hillger
1962-66	Ruth (Mrs. Alfred) Hope

ENGLISH (Jan. 14, 1944)

1944-46	Ethel (Mrs. Edward) Kasch
1946-48	Anna (Mrs. Bert) Allen
1948-52	Ruth (Mrs. Robert) Jack
1952-54	Claire (Mrs. Francis) Boyd
1954-58	Ruth (Mrs. Elwood) Zuelsdorf
1958-62	Minette (Mrs. Dan) Ludwig
1962-66	Nell (Mrs. Martin) Eggers
1966-70	Evelyn (Mrs. George) Hampe
1970-74	Olive (Mrs. Ruben) Spannaus
1974-78	Betty (Mrs. Theodore) Pelikan
1978-82	Ruth (Mrs. James) Doty
1982-86	Ruth (Mrs. Edwin) Kringel
1986-90	Dr. Mary Todd, PhD
1990-94	Gerda (Mrs. David) Treglown
1994-98	Marilyn (Mrs. Garry) McClure
1998-2000	Joan (Mrs. James) Dougherty
2000-02	Connie (Mrs. Bruce) Johnson
2002-	Deaconess Sylvia (Mrs. Keith) Johnson

FLORIDA-GEORGIA

(Oct. 25, 1948)

*(Previously Southern, Florida Branch,
Nov 10-12, 1944—First Branch presi-
dent: Virginia [Mrs. Elmer] Bellhorn*

1948-50 Dorothy (Mrs. F.H.) Zucker

1950-52 Dorothy (Mrs. William)
Hofman

1952-54 Eleanor (Mrs. Otis) Lundquist

1954-56 Mrs. Esther Fischer

1956-58 Irene (Mrs. John) Senkarik

1958-62 Mrs. Esther Fischer

1962-72 Tookie (Mrs. Ted) Berk

1972-76 Laura (Mrs. Luther) Bunge

1976-80 Betty (Mrs. John, Jr.) Duda

1980-84 Mary (Mrs. William)
Wooldridge

1984-88 Judy (Mrs. William) Hofman

1988-92 Dorothea Otte

1992-96 Doris (Mrs. Walter) Zentner

1996-2000 Margie (Mrs. Don) Smith

2000-04 Jean (Mrs. Roland) Roehrs

2004- Lois (Mrs. Tom) Ford

GULF STATES (Nov. 8-9, 1949)

*(Previously Southern, Gulf States
Branch, Nov. 10-12, 1944)*

1949-52 Muriel (Mrs. A.B.) Thomas

1952-55 Marie (Mrs. Henry) Miller

1955-60 Gretchin (Mrs. Frank)
Schenk

1960-64 Marjorie (Mrs. William)
Kennell

1964-68 Patty (Mrs. George) Engel

1968-69 Lois L. Libbers

1969-70 Evelyn (Mrs. James) Stone

1970-74 Ruth (Mrs. William)
Kiskaddon

1974-78 Addie (Mrs. Walter)
Messersmith

1978-82 Vera (Mrs. Martin) Brown

1982-86 Lucille (Mrs. Walter) Fasse

1986-90 Ruth (Mrs. Dennis) OíSteen

1990-94 Bea (Mrs. James) Daily

1994-98 Doris (Mrs. Richard) Evers

1998-2002 Linda (Mrs. Darrel) Bailey

2002- Judy (Mrs. Richard)
Lessmann

IDAHO (June 6, 1948)

(Previously Washington-Oregon-Idaho)

1948-50 Gladys (Mrs. A.F.) Beaver

INDIANA (July 15-17, 1964)

(Previously Central)

1964-66 Meta (Mrs. Herman)
Krueckeberg

1966-70 Gertrude (Mrs. Chester)
Norton

1970-74 Frances (Mrs. Ross) Jennings

1974-78 Mary (Mrs. H.S.) Patterson

1978-82 Sandy (Mrs. Jerry) Thompson

1982-86 Iola (Mrs. Edgar) Boehme

1986-90 Elise (Mrs. Kenneth)
Koenemann

1990-94 Roberta (Mrs. Hal) Stroh

1994-98 Emily (Mrs. Rick) Rogers

1998-2002 Bonnie (Mrs. Michael) Hazen

2002- Margaret (Mrs. Raymond)
Gruber

IOWA EAST (May 20, 1942)

1942-46 Adelia (Mrs. Walter)
Widmann

1946-48 Edith (Mrs. Carl) Conway

1948-49 Kathryn Rinderknecht

1949-50 Lucile (Mrs. R.C.) Gerlach

1950-54 Bertha (Mrs. Arthur) Tibben

1954-58 Mildred (Mrs. Elmer)
Tiedemann

1958-62 Margie (Mrs. Ed) Guetzko

1962-66 Mary (Mrs. Harold) Affeldt

District Presidents

1966-70 Valeda (Mrs. Verle) Francik
 1970-74 Velma (Mrs. Walter) Brickman
 1974 Joyce Sievers
 1974-78 Ruth (Mrs. Alvin) Jipp
 1978-82 Pearl (Mrs. Ernest) Lentfer
 1982-86 Loras (Mrs. William) Troge
 1986-90 Marlene (Mrs. Robert) Bartlett
 1990-94 Lynn (Mrs. Murray) Evans
 1994-98 Gail (Mrs. Donald) Maurer
 1998-2002 Judy (Mrs. Larry) Westergren
 2002- Kathryn (Mrs. Melvin) Schweer

IOWA WEST (May 15, 1946)

1946-50 Lois (Mrs. Earl) Schoenrock
 1950-54 Esther (Mrs. Ralph) Krenzin
 1954-58 Adaline (Mrs. Albert) Roepe
 1958-62 Adelheid (Mrs. L.M.) Patterson
 1962-66 Louise (Mrs. Waldemar) Fegebank
 1966-70 Marie (Mrs. Alfred) Sump
 1970-74 Mary Ann (Mrs. Harold) Ostermann
 1974-78 Lois (Mrs. Edward) Kotz
 1978-82 Alice (Mrs. Tom) Cross
 1982-86 Rachel (Mrs. Albert) Taylor
 1986-90 Patsy (Mrs. Roger) Linke
 1990-94 Vivian (Mrs. Eugene) Ernst
 1994-98 Helen (Mrs. Lawrence) Bice
 1998-2002 Luana (Mrs. Doug) Kading
 2002- Kathryn Sprecher

KANSAS (May 16, 1943)

1943-46 Elesa (Mrs. C.A.) Hass
 1946-48 Renata (Mrs. L.H.) Mehl
 1948-50 Molly (Mrs. Ray) Boger
 1950-52 Nina (Mrs. Henry) Buck
 1952-54 Estella (Mrs. Verle) Bowers
 1954-60 Louise (Mrs. F.A.) Eggert

1960-64 Helen (Mrs. William) Noller
 1964-68 Elnora (Mrs. Raymond) Briggeman
 1968-72 Cleone (Mrs. Donald) Neff
 1972-76 Eunice (Mrs. Erwin) Wehmeier
 1976-80 Joan (Mrs. Art) Sommer
 1980-84 Irene (Mrs. Kenneth) Duitsman
 1984-88 LaVada (Mrs. Richard) Traskowsky
 1988-92 Jane (Mrs. Harold) Turner
 1992-96 Donna (Mrs. Robert) Wehmeier
 1996-2000 Velma (Mrs. Larry) Bass
 2000-04 Lois (Mrs. Lew) Llewellyn
 2004- Judy (Mrs. Ed) Carlson

LAURENTIAN (May 15, 1950)

1950-54 Margaret (Mrs. Herbert) Zadow
 1954-58 "Sonny" (Mrs. Charles) Kritsch
 1958-61 Margaret (Mrs. E.H.) Polster
 1961-64 Dorothea (Mrs. John) Korcok
 1964-Nov. Miss Ida Mau
 1964-68 Hilda (Mrs. Gerald) Marion
 1968-72 Gertrude (Mrs. Karl) Zieroth
 1972-76 Miss Ruby M. Rutkowsky
 1976-80 Shirley (Mrs. Kellard) Witt
 1980-84 Joan (Mrs. Stan) Addison
 1984-90 Dorothy (Mrs. Thomas) Brophy
 1990-94 Shirley (Mrs. Earl) Saar

LOUISIANA (October 29-30, 1949)

(Previously Southern, Louisiana Branch Nov. 10-12, 1944)

1949-52 Del (Mrs. William) Borcharding
 1952-56 Miss Norma Stoll
 1956-60 Clara (Mrs. Frank) Kothe

District Presidents

1960-64 Miss Hazel G. Gadmer
1964-68 Anna (Mrs. Edmond) Burns
1968-72 Katherine (Mrs. Harold)
Brackhage
1972-76 Ida (Mrs. Kenneth) Mall
1976-80 Gerry (Mrs. Wallace)
Chaplain
1980-84 Beverly (Mrs. Anthony)
Gambino
1984-86 Iri (Mrs. John) Skinner

LOUISIANA-MISSISSIPPI

(Name changed April 18-20, 1986)

1986-88 Iri (Mrs. John) Skinner
1988-90 Carolyn (Mrs. Larry) Bellard
1990-92 Gerry (Mrs. Wallace)
Chaplain
1992-96 Anna (Mrs. Thomas) Dickson
1996-2000 Elaine (Mrs. Al) Miller
2000-03 Anita (Mrs. Scott) Granger
2003-04 Erma (Mrs. Claude) Winston
2004- Marcia (Mrs. Kermit)
Wittenburg

MANITOBA AND SASKATCHEWAN

(Oct. 12, 1953)

1953-54 Linda (Mrs. J.H.) Lucht
1954-56 Augusta (Mrs. Valentine)
Hergesheimer
1956-60 Laura (Mrs. John) McHugh
1960-64 Natalie (Mrs. D.C.) Appelt
1964-68 Inez (Mrs. Marvin) Naber
1968-72 Irene (Mrs. Edward) Besser
1972-76 Gertie (Mrs. H.P.) McCormick
1976-80 Helen (Mrs. Peter) Machmer
1980-84 Edna (Mrs. G.W.) Ulrich
1984-88 Gloria (Mrs. Fred) Koehler
1988-92 Marilyn (Mrs. Ronald)
Schultz
1992-96 Judith (Mrs. John) Grande

MICHIGAN (Oct. 22, 1944)

1944-48 Minnie (Mrs. Louis)
Schwinger
1948-49 Rena (Mrs. Victor) Felten
1949-52 Alma (Mrs. J.H.) Rieck
1952-56 Helen (Mrs. Richard) Deirlein
1956-60 Helen (Mrs. Harold) Rammier
1960-64 Pauline (Mrs. E.F.) Wiese
1964-68 Helen (Mrs. Walter) Gienapp
1968-72 Madonna (Mrs. Albert) Ruhlig
1972-76 Emy (Mrs. Max) Goodman
1976-80 Viola (Mrs. Clemens) Gruber
1980-84 Edythe (Mrs. Edward) Azzam
1984-88 Beatrice (Mrs. Lloyd) Larson
1988-92 Nancy (Mrs. Richard) Challis
1992-96 Kay (Mrs. Everitt) Miller
1996-2000 Sandra (Mrs. Renwood)
Hardies
2000-04 Barbara (Mrs. Wil) Hoffmeier
2004- Anita (Mrs. David)
Beyersdorf

MID-SOUTH (1968)

(Previously Western)

1968-72 Sophia (Mrs. F.M.) Burger
1972-73 Jan Franke
1973-76 Janie (Mrs. R.W.) Ulm
1976-80 Rose (Mrs. Joseph) Wallace
1980-84 Rose Marie (Mrs. William)
Davis
1984-88 Ruth (Mrs. Guy) LaChine
1988-92 Bertha (Mrs. Robert) Jeske
1992-96 Irma (Mrs. Bob) Pinkerton
1996-2000 Esther (Mrs. Lee Roy)
Mahnke
2000-04 Ladell (Mrs. Jack) McWhirter
2004- Martha P. Bergeron

District Presidents

MINNESOTA (May 19, 1942)

1942-46	Edith (Mrs. J.H.) Deckman
1946-50	Emma (Mrs. L.G.) Gallman
1950-52	Edith (Mrs. E.A.) Dicke
1952	Lydia (Mrs. H.H.) Mesenbring
1952-56	Rose (Mrs. Albert) Plagens
1956-60	Della Wolf
1960-64	Gladys (Mrs. William) Buege

MINNESOTA NORTH (June 4, 1964) *(Previously Minnesota)*

1964-68	Lydia (Mrs. Edgar) Bode
1968-72	Thelma (Mrs. Ferd.) Derky
1972-76	Kathryn (Mrs. Donald) Pipho
1976-80	Virginia (Mrs. Karl) Ansorge
1980-84	Kay (Mrs. C.J.) Repulski
1984-88	Elda (Mrs. Willard) Maynard
1988-92	Betty (Mrs. Earl) Wagner
1992-96	Helen (Mrs. Vernon) Beck
1996-2000	Phyllis (Mrs. Robert) Jastram
2000-04	Lucille (Mrs. Robert) Phillips
2004-	Laurain Jurchen

MINNESOTA SOUTH (June 4, 1964) *(Previously Minnesota)*

1964-70	Helen (Mrs. William) Morris
1970-74	Ruth (Mrs. Edgar) Ziegler
1974-78	Doris (Mrs. Philander) Durkee
1978-82	Carol (Mrs. Leonard) Zemke
1982-86	Doris (Mrs. Verland) Johnson
1986-90	Darlene (Mrs. Ernest) Johnson
1990-94	Connie (Mrs. Paul) Markquart
1994-98	Marge (Mrs. Dale) Knoll
1998-2002	Joyce (Mrs. Richard) Swedean
2002-	Gloria (Mrs. David) Kenow

MISSOURI (May 8, 1968)

(Previously Western)

1968-70	Thelma (Mrs. Frank) Ritzen
1970-74	Esther (Mrs. Wilburn) Vedder
1974-78	Dorothea (Mrs. Clarence) Mangels
1978-82	Lois (Mrs. Albert) Haas
1982-86	Mary (Mrs. Harry) Hohman
1986-90	Ruth (Mrs. Alfred) Rodewald
1990-94	Joann (Mrs. Ray) Mirly
1994-96	Delle (Mrs. Victor) Byrant
1996-98	Patti (Mrs. Dennis) Haubein
1998-2002	Joyce (Mrs. William) Bischoff
2002-	Jennifer (Mrs. David) Huecker

MONTANA (Sept. 30, 1942)

*(Previously North Dakota-Montana
Lutheran Women's Missionary Endeavor,
June 23-29, 1937)*

1942-44	Clara (Mrs. William) Bethke
1944-46	Wynn (Mrs. V.J.) Schultz
1946	Marie Lambrecht
1946-48	Eileen (Mrs. Richard) Brandt
1948-52	Beatta (Mrs. R.E.) Gumpf
1952-56	Jerry (Mrs. Frank) Lewis
1956-60	Pat (Mrs. Leo) Knopatzke
1960-62	Phyllis (Mrs. Ray) Blohm
1962-66	Gladys (Mrs. Leo) Wohler
1966-70	Ruth (Mrs. George) Rummel
1970-74	Adoline (Mrs. Gerhard) Seidler
1974-78	Edith (Mrs. Harley) Ketterling
1978-82	Louise (Mrs. Jesse) Eayrs
1982-88	Barbara (Mrs. James) Going
1988-92	Marlene (Mrs. Robert) Koenig
1992-96	Nenette (Mrs. Don) Loftsgaarden
1996-2000	Ruth Ann (Mrs. James) Robinson

District Presidents

2000-04 Jo (Mrs. Lowell) Young
2004- Pam (Mrs. Paul) Kercher

NEBRASKA NORTH (Oct. 30, 1942)
*(Originally was Northern Nebraska,
1942-72, and included part of Wyoming.)*

1942-46 Hattie (Mrs. Theo.) Mueller
1946-50 Clara (Mrs. A.H.) Guettler
1950-54 Miss Ruth Ebmeier
1954-58 Hattie (Mrs. C.B.) Drake
1958-62 Leona (Mrs. Henry)
Tuchenhagen
1962-66 Sylvia (Mrs. Warren) Raabe
1966-70 Cornelia (Mrs. Harold)
Rabbass
1970-74 Gertrude (Mrs. Herbert)
Heywood
1974-78 Martha (Mrs. Ray) Prochaska
1978-82 Janyce (Mrs. Leonard)
Warneke
1982-86 Carol (Mrs. Dwaine)
Rethwisch
1986-90 Virginia (Mrs. Burnell) Von
Seggern
1990-94 Yvonne (Mrs. Martin)
Gruenke
1994-98 Lorna (Mrs. Willis) Hollman
1998-2002 Gwen (Mrs. Dick) Lindberg
2002- Pat (Mrs. Orville) Neujahr

NEBRASKA SOUTH (Oct. 22, 1942)
*(Originally was Southern Nebraska,
1942-72, and included part of Wyoming.)*

Organized Oct. 16, 1940 as Lutheran
Women's League of Southern Nebraska.)
1942-44 Ruth (Mrs. M.C.) Duensing
1944-48 Clara (Mrs. L.) Lentz
1948-52 Pauline (Mrs. Raymond)
Roehrkas
1952-56 Viola (Mrs. Herbert) Oberle

1956-60 Evelyn (Mrs. H.E.) Lammel
1960-64 Lois (Mrs. Rudy) Munderloh
1964-68 Louise (Mrs. Edwin) Hahn
1968-72 Ruth (Mrs. Bernard) Taylor
1972-76 Aletha (Mrs. Kenneth)
Huebner
1976-80 Bernita (Mrs. Raymond)
Neujahr
1980-84 Betty (Mrs. Irvin) Holtzen
1984-87 Judy (Mrs. Ron) Kahle
1987-92 Nancy (Mrs. Robert) Werth
1992-96 Linda (Mrs. Ron) Reiser
1996-2000 Edna (Mrs. James) Moll
2000-04 Jan (Mrs. Bill) Beck
2004- Karen (Mrs. Loyd) Christner

NEW ENGLAND (1973)
(Formerly part of Atlantic)

1973-76 Wilma (Mrs. Ralph)
Schneider
1976-78 Mildred (Mrs. Charles)
Emmons
1978-82 Martha (Mrs. Robert) Morse
1982-84 Martha (Mrs. Paul) Littmann
1984-88 Gladys (Mrs. Martin) Schmidt
1988-92 Marcia (Mrs. Thomas)
Beineke
1992-96 Barbara (Mrs. Robert) Giger
1996-2000 Nancy (Mrs. Kenneth)
Fischer
2000-04 Donna (Mrs. Michael) Gruel
2004- Dorothy (Mrs. Charles) Pettit

NEW JERSEY (1973)
(Formerly part of Atlantic)

1973-78 Norma (Mrs. L.J.) Bruns
1978-80 Mildred (Mrs. George) Moller
1980-86 Anne (Mrs. Wilbur) GaNun
1986-90 Irene (Mrs. Walter) Vollmer
1990-94 Judy Barnes
1994-98 Susan Epper

District Presidents

1998-2002 Eleanor Hoffman
2002- Gladys (Mrs. Milan) Nesko

NORTH DAKOTA (June 7, 1942) (Previously North Dakota-Montana Lutheran Women's Missionary Endeavor)

1942-46 Lillian (Mrs. A.G.) Kellam
1946-50 Wanda (Mrs. F. E.) Brauer
1950-52 Henrietta (Mrs. H.J.) Eininger
1952-56 Esther (Mrs. H.H.) Weiss
1956-60 Selma (Mrs. Fred) Fiechtner
1960-64 Elvira (Mrs. J.H.) Ruettel
1964-68 Florence (Mrs. C.R.) Montz
1968-72 Delores (Mrs. Joseph)
Pavicic
1972-76 Lenice (Mrs. Mandley)
Johnson
1976-80 Neoma (Mrs. Raymond) Maier
1980-84 Ursula (Mrs. Donald)
Wunderlich
1984-88 Lilly (Mrs. Harlan) Hintz
1988-92 JoAnn (Mrs. Glen) Bladow
1992-96 Marlene (Mrs. Don)
Brandenburg
1996-2000 Dorothea (Mrs. Norman)
Sincebaugh
2000-04 Kay (Mrs. Mark) Kreklau
2004- Debbie (Mrs. Scott) Larson

NORTH WISCONSIN (Sept. 20, 1944)

1944-46 Anna (Mrs. Conrad) Teschke
1946-50 Dorothy (Mrs. Lloyd) Goetz
1950-52 Beata (Mrs. Robert) Rossow
1952-56 Alma (Mrs. Fred) Goetz
1956-58 Maxine (Mrs. T.H.) Hartman
1958-62 Lois (Mrs. Robert) Kroenke
1962-66 Lou (Mrs. Arnold) Schoepke
1966-70 Elvira (Mrs. Raymond)
Schmidt
1970-74 Florence (Mrs. Lester)
Schultz

1974-78 Carola (Mrs. Leonard)
Buelow
1978-82 Violet (Mrs. Roland) Golz
1982-86 Doris (Mrs. Charles) Holdorf
1986-90 JoAnn (Mrs. John)
Henningesen
1990-94 Concordia (Mrs. Arnold)
Beversdorf
1994-98 Shirley (Mrs. James) Hein
1998-2002 Leah (Mrs. Herbert) Lehman
2002- Joyce (Mrs. Dennis) Voss

NORTHERN ILLINOIS (Nov. 5, 1943) (Previously Lutheran Women's Missionary Endeavor of Northern Illinois—May 5, 1938)

1937-38 Minnie Eggersmann
(temporary)
1938-40 Mae Bresemann
1940-43 Hulda Schumm
1943-44 Hulda (Mrs. E.T.) Schumm
1944-48 Lillian (Mrs. Arthur)
Preisinger
1948-50 Bernice (Mrs. E.H.)
Rupprecht
1950-54 Adeline (Mrs. Albert) Maurer
1954-58 Lora (Mrs. Bernard) Klemm
1958-62 Ellen (Mrs. T.H.) Barkow
1962-66 Mildred (Mrs. F. Arthur) Karst
1966-70 Ina Lee (Mrs. E.W.) Parlee
1970-74 Edna (Mrs. Fred) Eickemeyer
1974-78 Herta (Mrs. Harold)
Heidenrich
1978-82 Grace (Mrs. Philip) Lohse
1982-86 Ruth (Mrs. Edgar) Luhman
1986-90 Dorothy (Mrs. Dan)
Hildebrandt
1990-94 Marion (Mrs. Walter) Holm
1994-98 Dorcas (Mrs. Bruce)
Meissner
1998-2002 Carli (Mrs. Stanley) Zygowicz
2002- Linda (Mrs. Clayton) Arnold

NORTHWEST (May 3-4, 1952)

(Previously Oregon-Washington; later divided into Oregon and Washington-Alaska.)

1952-54 Selma (Mrs. William) Fischer
1954-56 Edna (Mrs. Gerhard) Molden

OHIO (July 15-17, 1964)

(Previously Central)

1964-68 Alberta (Mrs. Ross) Barnes
1968-72 Irene (Mrs. Glenn) Kinhead
1972-76 Beulah (Mrs. Arthur) Werner
1976-80 Louise (Mrs. Wayne) Schowalter
1980-84 Marie (Mrs. Albert) Moeller
1984-88 Rhea (Mrs. Edwin) Zarn
1988-92 Marlis (Mrs. Edmund) Schmidt
1992-96 Marilyn (Mrs. William) Britton
1996-2000 Nancy (Mrs. George) Milanich
2000-04 Ida (Mrs. Lynwood) Luebke
2004- Elfrieda (Mrs. Wayne) Spencer

OKLAHOMA (Oct. 11, 1942)

(Previously Lutheran Women's League of Oklahoma—March 11, 1928.)

1940-42 Hannah (Mrs. B.J.) Theimer
1942-44 Gertrude (Mrs. E.T.) Schmidtke
1944-46 Eudora (Mrs. A.J.) Brase
1946-48 Gertrude (Mrs. C.W.) Luekens
1948-52 Alvina (Mrs. Miles) Klima
1952-54 Emelia (Mrs. H.O.) Lockensgard
1954-56 Iris (Mrs. Homer) Benkendorf
1956-60 Myrtle (Mrs. H.E.) Kehr
1960-64 Jaunita Weber
1964-68 Alberta (Mrs. L.E.) Henkel
1968-72 Frances (Mrs. John) Gemmer

1972-76 Kay (Mrs. Raymond) Brady
1976-79 Doreen (Mrs. Ralph) Walker
1979-80 Emma Lou Collins
1980-84 Ebba (Mrs. William) Johnson
1984-88 Joy (Mrs. Maurice) Schweer
1988-92 Marilyn (Mrs. Richard) Laramy
1992-96 Thelma (Mrs. Harold) Kamman
1996-2000 Marguerite (Mrs. Tom) Christman
2000-04 Carol (Mrs. William) Diekelman
2004- Patti (Mrs. William) Ross

ONTARIO (October 15, 1950)

1950-52 Irene (Mrs. H.J.) Neeb
1952-56 Gertrude (Mrs. A.F.) Pollex
1956-60 Ruth (Mrs. H.W.) Mehling
1960-64 Betty (Mrs. Harry) Berlet
1964-68 Edna Schierholtz
1968-72 Frieda (Mrs. Elmer) Fink
1972-76 Ruth Maxwell
1976-80 Irene Pakrul
1980-84 Ruth (Mrs. Glen) Bragonier
1984-88 Eloise (Mrs. Lloyd) Schaan
1988-92 Dorothea (Mrs. John) Korcok
1992-96 Joyce (Mrs. Keith) Mauman

ONTARIO SONSET (June 20, 1990)

(Previously part of Ontario)

1990-92 Mary (Mrs. Jorma) Tuomisto
1992-96 Tarja (Mrs. Mauri) Puumala

OREGON (May 17, 1956)

(Previously Northwest)

1956-60 Dorothea (Mrs. Walter) Kahle
1960-64 Grace (Mrs. Richard) Moeller
1964-68 Evelyn (Mrs. A.D.) Moore
1968-72 Irene (Mrs. Wayne) Hensley
1972-76 Edna (Mrs. Carl) Nitz

District Presidents

1976-80 Edna (Mrs. Norbert) Dey
1980-84 Irma (Mrs. Maynard)
Fuerstenau
1984-88 Loraine (Mrs. Carl) Losser
1988-92 Joan (Mrs. Charles) Mahaffy
1992-96 Charlotte (Mrs. Gordon)
Kroemer
1996-2000 Priscilla (Mrs. Michael) Greig
2000-04 Julia Riess
2004- Nancy (Mrs. Norman)
Nibblett

OREGON-WASHINGTON

(May 10-11, 1948)

(Previously Oregon-Washington-Idaho)

1948-50 Hattie (Mrs. W.W.) Buttenhoff
1950-52 Selma (Mrs. William) Fischer

OREGON-WASHINGTON-IDAHO

(April 29, 1942)

1942-46 Amelia (Mrs. George) Nickles
1946-48 Hattie (Mrs. W.W.) Buttenhoff

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST

(May 13-15, 1988)

(Previously Southern California)

1988-92 Sandra (Mrs. Martin) Hente
1992-96 Char (Mrs. E.H. Pete)
Peapenburg
1996-2000 Kathi (Mrs. Jerad) Romsa
2000-04 Barb (Mrs. Tim) Virus
2004- JoAnn (Mrs. Rick) Bradley

ROCKY MOUNTAIN (1984)

(Previously Colorado)

1984-86 Edith Johnson
1986-90 Carol (Mrs. Edward) Maas
1990-91 Ramona (Mrs. James)
Mueller
1991-94 Sue (Mrs. Lee) Anderson
1994-98 Kaye Cairns

1998-2002 Sue (Mrs. Lee) Anderson
2004- Mary (Mrs. Richard) Marten

SELC (1986)

1986-92 Ann Havar (Mrs. Luther) Bajus
1992-96 Millicent (Mrs. Walter)
Kwiatkowski
1996-2000 Ann Havar (Mrs. Luther) Bajus
2000-04 Millicent (Mrs. Walter)
Kwiatkowski
2004- Ann Havar (Mrs. Luther) Bajus

SOUTH DAKOTA (May 10, 1942)

1942-43 Leona (Mrs. A.H.) Meitler
1943-44 Eva (Mrs. A.L.) Ellwein
1944-48 Ruth (Mrs. J.H.) Jungemann
1948-52 Eva (Mrs. A.L.) Ellwein
1952-54 Gladys (Mrs. Victor) Hammer
1954-56 Leah (Mrs. Ed) Proehl
1956-60 Marie (Mrs. L.B.) Mueller
1960-62 Elna (Mrs. Ed) Dite
1962-66 Millie (Mrs. C.F.) Schmidt
1966-70 Josephine Carmen
1970-74 Edna (Mrs. Hugo) Haeder
1974-75 Betty (Mrs. Gerhard)
Reimnitz
1975-80 Norma (Mrs. Darrel) Harer
1980-84 Betty (Mrs. Winfred) Haar
1984-88 Ruth (Mrs. Tom) Neuberger
1988-92 Sharon (Mrs. Charles) Falk
1992-96 Annette (Mrs. Charles)
Jarratt
1996-2000 Pat (Mrs. Don) Reichert
2000-04 Janell (Mrs. Earl) McKinstry
2004- Dianne (Mrs. Gerald)
Diekmann

SOUTH WISCONSIN

(Nov. 21, 1946)

1946-47 Clara (Mrs. E.W.) Schultz
1947-50 Helen (Mrs. E.W.) Kienow

1950-56	Bernina (Mrs. H.L.) Stone
1956-60	Amalia (Mrs. Albert) Schroeder
1960-64	Norma (Mrs. Carl) Erdmann
1964-68	Esther Schoessow
1968-72	Loretta Gabriliska
1972-76	Anita (Mrs. Herbert) Gaede
1976-80	Laverne (Mrs. Carl) Selle
1980-84	Barbara (Mrs. Roger) Strenger
1984-88	Edith (Mrs. William) Mossner
1988-92	Gerry (Mrs. Robert) Burkee
1992-96	Lauren (Mrs. Marshall) Beale
1996-2000	Marlys Taege (Mrs. David) Moberg
2000-04	Joyce (Mrs. Chuck) Kaestner
2004-	Carolyn (Mrs. Robert) Blum

SOUTHEASTERN (Southern Branch—Carolinas and Georgia—Oct. 18, 1942) (Previously Lutheran Women's League in the Southeastern Conference—April 24, 1938—renamed Carolina, Sept. 20–21, 1958.)	
1938	Margaret (Mrs. L.B.) Buchheimer
1938-39	Ilah (Mrs. F.A.) Freed
1939-41	Nellie (Mrs. C.O.) Smith
1941-43	Ilah (Mrs. F.A.) Freed
1943-45	Bernice (Mrs. Vernon) Eckard
1945-48	Bernice (Mrs. George) Smith
1948-50	Olga (Mrs. Howard) Davis
1950-52	Ruth (Mrs. William) von Spreckelsen
1952-54	Mary (Mrs. James) Summers
1954-55	Ruth (Mrs. Martin) Rupprecht
1955-58	Olga (Mrs. Howard) Davis

SOUTHEASTERN (Northern Branch—June 14, 1942) (Renamed Chesapeake, 1952.)	
1942-44	Lucille (Mrs. Theo.) Kaltenkamp
1944-46	Ilah (Mrs. F.A.) Freed
1946-50	Monica (Mrs. Theodore) Ernst
1950-52	Ruth (Mrs. Eric) Johanson
SOUTHERN (Nov. 10-12, 1944)	
1944-46	Lydia (Mrs. Merrill) Gerstner
1946-48	Marie (Mrs. Henry) Miller
1948-49	Del (Mrs. William) Borchering

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (Jan. 20, 1946) (Name changed to Pacific Southwest, 1988)	
1946-50	Esther (Mrs. T.H.) Joeckel
1950-52	Marion (Mrs. Arthur) Holmberg
1952-56	Emma (Mrs. George) Theiss
1956-60	Winnie (Mrs. Walter) Rosenbrock
1960-64	Alice (Mrs. Samuel) Turner
1964-68	Mary Helen (Mrs. Richard) Kelly
1968-72	Verna (Mrs. Warren) Zelt
1972-76	Millie (Mrs. Charles) Herrmann
1976-80	Patricia Beach
1980-84	Setma Ramlo
1984-88	Elaine (Mrs. John) Nelson
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS (Jan. 20, 1943)	
1943-46	Elsa (Mrs. A.W.) Saxonmeyer
1946-50	Ora (Mrs. William) Boese
1950-54	Ruth (Mrs. Martin) Simon

District Presidents

1954-58 Dena (Mrs. Fred) Droste
1958-62 Valeria (Mrs. Edward)
Schoenleber
1962-66 Anamelia (Mrs. Edmond)
Eden
1966-70 Olivia (Mrs. O.L.) Donner
1970-74 Winnie (Mrs. Carl) Kleist
1974-78 Dorothy (Mrs. Lorman)
Mansholt
1978-82 Jane (Mrs. Vernon) Lucht
1982-86 Jeannette (Mrs. Wilmer)
Johnson
1986-90 Ruth Ann (Mrs. Willard)
Arbeiter
1990-94 Vicki (Mrs. Paul) Davis
1994-98 Mary (Mrs. Robert) Gray
1998-2002 Faith Richardson
2002- Peggy (Mrs. Dean)
Sachtleben

TEXAS (June 10, 1942)

1942-43 Hildegard (Mrs. A.E.) Bruns
1943-45 Erna (Mrs. Walter) Dorre
1945-46 Miss Toni Kraatz
1946-47 Lil (Mrs. E.C.) Kobs
1947-50 Edith (Mrs. A.O.) Rast
1950-52 Anne (Mrs. Carl) Blasig
1952-56 Gladys (Mrs. W.B.) Oswald
1956-12/56 Vera (Mrs. Walter) Wilkinson
1956-58 Virginia (Mrs. Leroy)
Tschatschula
1958-60 Lillian (Mrs. E.A.) Kramer
1960-64 Ann (Mrs. J.M.) Garrett
1964-68 Gladys (Mrs. Walter)
Kaltwasser
1968-72 Amalie (Mrs. Wayne) Long
1972-76 Jeanne (Mrs. F.L.) Cargile
1976-80 Pat (Mrs. Johnnie) Barlow
1980-84 Pearl (Mrs. Mark) Biar

1984-88 Marcella (Mrs. Donald) Gaus
1988-92 Doris (Mrs. Carl) McKay
1992-96 Pat (Mrs. Louis) Biar
1996-2000 Peggy (Mrs. Milton)
Turnipseed
2000-04 Eloise (Mrs. Robert)
Kuhlmann
2004- Dorothy (Mrs. Rudy) Hunger

UTAH-IDAHO (June 9, 1950)

(Previously Idaho)

1950-52 Gladys Beaver
1952-54 Mrs. Walter Conrad
1954-58 Irmgard (Mrs. Arthur) Kaster
1958-62 Mildred (Mrs. Herbert) Zafft
1962-67 Louise (Mrs. H.W.)
Kammerlohr
1967-70 Doris (Mrs. Louis) Reinke
1970-74 Irene (Mrs. R.F.) Adolf
1974-78 Dorothy (Mrs. Elmer) Fischer
1978-82 Gladys (Mrs. Edwin) Johnson
1982-86 JoAnne (Mrs. Hugo) Meyer
1986-90 Naomi (Mrs. David) Schilling
1990-94 Jeanette (Mrs. Norm) Priebe
1994-98 Roberta (Mrs. Rudolf)
Trenkle
1998-2002 Jane (Mrs. Robert) Kaestner
2002- Sherrie (Mrs. Leroy) Prien

WASHINGTON (May 17, 1956)

(Previously Northwest)

1956-58 Edna (Mrs. Gerhard) Molden
1958-62 Evelyn (Mrs. Warren)
Hartman
1962-66 Loretta (Mrs. Victor)
Rengstorf
1966-70 Leona (Mrs. Norval) Roberts

WASHINGTON-ALASKA (1970)

1970-74 Lu (Mrs. Victor) Lierman
1974-78 Theo (Mrs. Edwin) Sahnnow

1978-82 Betty (Mrs. Joel, Jr.) Ross
1982-86 Bernice (Mrs. L.M.) Schmidt
1986-90 Alice (Mrs. Larry) Niemeier
1990-94 Adeline (Mrs. Arnold) Stern
1994-98 Marjorie (Mrs. George)
Longan
1998-2002 Charli (Mrs. William)
Hamaker
2002- Carol (Mrs. Dennis) Coerber

WESTERN (Dec. 9, 1941)

*(Previously Lutheran Women's League,
March 18, 1932—divided into Missouri
and Mid-South Districts in 1968.)*

1932-40 Clara (Mrs. Otto) Schmitt
1940-46 Frieda (Mrs. Henry) Schultz
1946-48 Pauline (Mrs. Paul) Streufert
1948-52 Emma (Mrs. Oscar) Brauer
1952-54 Emma (Mrs. Richard)
Devanthal
1954-58 Irene (Mrs. Arthur) Prueter
1958-62 Anita (Mrs. Paul)
Walkenhorst
1962-66 Ethel (Mrs. Albert) Schultz
1966-68 Thelma (Mrs. Frank) Ritzen

WYOMING (Spring 1971)

*(Formerly zones of both Nebraska
districts; voted to form district 1970; offi-
cially accepted and organized 1971.)*

1971-74 LeOra (Mrs. Alex) Pitsch
(acting president 1970-71)
1974-78 Bernice (Mrs. Frank) Craft
1978-82 Doris (Mrs. Otto) Gernant
1982-86 Gerry (Mrs. Alfred) Mass
1986-90 Ruth (Mrs. William) Kerbel
1990-94 Lucille (Mrs. Orville) Zwiebel
1994-98 Ruth (Mrs. William) Kerbel
1998-2002 Eunice (Mrs. Vernon)
Boehlke
2002- Chris (Mrs. Thomas) Fiechtl

For Further Reading

To learn more about women of the LWML and the LCMS, read the following books.

Published by the Lutheran Women's Missionary League:

Women in God's Service (WINGS), the 50th anniversary history of the LWML, by Marlys Taege, 1991

Women on a Mission, the 25th anniversary history of the LWML, by Ruth Fritz Meyer, 1967

A Rainbow of Saris, the story of women missionaries in India, edited by Janice Kerper Brauer, 1996

Dreams Dawn in Africa, the story of women missionaries in Africa, edited by Janice Kerper Brauer and coordinated by Louise Mueller, 1999.

One Cup of Water, the story of five women missionaries in China, edited by Janice Kerper Brauer.

Published by Concordia Publishing House:

Dr. Bessie, the life story and romance of a pioneer lady doctor on the Western United States and the Canadian frontiers, by Alfred M. Rehwinkel, 1963.

Katharina Von Bora, by Rudolph and Marilynn Markwald, 2002.

Light in the Dark Belt, the Story of Rosa Young "as Told by Herself," 1950.

Women Through the Bible, by Marlys Taege, 1987.

Some of the above books are out of print but may be found in church libraries, used book stores, and on the Internet.

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