

To Our Readers

In the early summer of 2009, it became evident that it was time for a change in how the *Lutheran Education Journal* would be formatted, published and distributed. In part, this was driven by some financial considerations but, on the whole, the idea had been circulating for some time prior to that. In a series of conversations with our editorial and communications staff, the executive staff of the Lutheran Education Association—which also included a poll of its members—and with Dr. John Johnson, President of Concordia University Chicago and Publisher of the Journal, the decision was made that this publication would transition to a wholly Web-based format. The issue that you are reading will be the last to be published in the present print-on-paper form; the target for the roll-out of the web version is set for spring of 2010.

Part of the consideration was a pragmatic solution to the problem of cost and in demonstrating fiscal responsibility from the standpoint of both CUC and LEA. The longstanding partnership between the university and LEA continues to be strong however the realities of respective “bottom lines” would have resulted in a significant curtailment of publication in the present format. While some upfront costs will be incurred, the move to the online format will allow the publication to continue with a much lower price tag attached. While we recognize that there will be certain tradeoffs, we believe that the transition will add tremendous versatility, timeliness, scope and will greatly enlarge the readership of the Journal.

Some advantages:

The *Journal*, as a Web publication of the faculty of Concordia University Chicago, will benefit from the expertise of the university’s Web site and technical staff in a style and format that complements existing CUC web publications, such as “The Forester”—but with its own unique features.

The *Journal* will be an open access Web resource without password restrictions or subscriptions for the general reader. The greatest of these

will be the “google effect”—hits on a website from anyone searching for particular key-word information in Web browsers—which will enlarge the reach of the Journal to students, researchers and professional educators of any background who are interested in what will remain as our major themes: Christian education, church-related ministries to young people and adults, faith-based values and professional support for those who are affiliated with parochial schools with parallel missions. We have always believed that Lutheran educators have much to offer the education profession at large.

The “Volume/Issue” format has as its purpose the arrangement of periodicals on a bookshelf but also imposes limits on page length and arrangement in order for a publication to be printed on paper at the most economical rate. A web journal has significantly fewer constraints. It remains to be seen what the “industry standard” will be for organizing current and archived electronic materials but the greatest advantage will be that the *Journal* can be in nearly continuous “publication” with new articles added on a rolling basis with date of posting as the point of reference.

The web version will allow categorization of article topics to be navigated at the option of the user. There are plans afoot to expand these with the addition of site sections anchored in several academic departments at Concordia University Chicago. At present, these include Foundations, Social Policy and Research, DCE ministry, Music Education and Theology. We will, of course, continue to focus on Teacher Education with contributions by our own faculty members as well as others within the Concordia University System. In addition, we intend to invite articles from professionals in the greater realm of education as the interests of Lutheran, other parochial and public educators and researchers intersect. The needs are so great and the challenges so daunting in providing excellence in education for *all* children that we would be remiss if we didn’t exchange the best of ideas with these colleagues.

Finally, the reader will continue to benefit from the thinking of those regular columnists who bring support, ideas, humor and reflection to our shared ministries. We will continue to post columns related to DCE ministry, educational servant/leadership, the Lutheran Teacher as an educational minister, Lutheran Secondary Education and those which encourage us to “multiply our ministries” until they are filled to the brim, pressed down and running over. The blessings of Lutheran Education for children, young people, their families and those who serve them will continue to be our focus, centered in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

As we make the change, we ask for the patience that these ventures inevitably require. It's my pledge to you that the quality and professional value of the *Lutheran Education Journal*—the oldest continuously published education journal in North America—will continue as they have since 1864.

This is going to be good... *LEJ*

In His Service,

O. John Zillman, Editor

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