Publisher: Dr. John F. Johnson, President
Concordia University, River Forest, Ill.

Editor: O. John Zillman, Department of Psychology

Contributing Editor: Ed Grube, Lutheran Education Association

Associate Editors: H. Robert Hayes, Department of History and Political Science
William Duey, Department of Human Performance

General Editor: Peter E. Pohlhammer

Regular Departments:

Administrative Talk: Glen Kuck, St. Paul Lutheran School, Chicago, Ill.

DCE: Expressions William Cullen, Department of Leadership, CURF

Multiplying Ministries Rich Bimler, past President, Senior Staff Associate
Wheat Ridge Ministries

Secondary Sequence Craig Parrot, Lutheran High, Denver, Colo.

Teaching the Young Shirley Morgenthaler, Early Childhood Education, CURF

Today's Lutheran Educator Jon Laabs, Executive Director, Lutheran Education Association

Cover Design: Del Klaustermeier

Lutheran Education Journal (ISSN 0024-07488) is published four times per year.
Subscriptions are $10 a year, and are available from Lutheran Education Journal, 7400 Augusta St., River Forest, IL 60305-1499.

Periodical postage paid at Nappanee, IN.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Lutheran Education Journal, 7400 Augusta St., River Forest, IL 60405-1499.

Lutheran Education Journal is available on microfilm. Write to University Microfilms, North Zebe Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. Printed in USA.

Lutheran Education Journal has been selected as the professional journal of the Lutheran Education Association (LEA). Members of the LEA receive the journal as part of membership benefits. Inquiries regarding membership may be addressed to LEA, 7400 Augusta St., River Forest, IL 60305-1499. The journal and LEA remain independent entities.
In This Issue:

Focus on: Whether their Calling is to teach, counsel, lead, assess special needs, or reflect on all of these in the context of our society, the authors in this issue offer a variety of thinking, example and implication of how they carry out God's purpose for them and those whose lives they touch.

233 Guidance and Counseling Issues in Lutheran Schools: A Descriptive Study
Tonjes' study focused on the philosophy and practice of school counselors at Lutheran schools in the Missouri District, LCMS, but the conclusions and implications offer some issues to consider for all.

by Bernard Tonjes

259 Why Are We Here? Christian Teachers in the Public Square: The Public School
By way of dialogue, the authors reflect on the role of the Christian teacher in the public school, each reflecting on her own faith walk and offering examples of how God provides opportunity for witness in a public elementary school.

by Lynne Zillman and Dona Davidhizar

263 Promoting Early Learning Success
A longtime advocate, administrator and teacher of children with special needs, Lewis offers perspectives on how these and the necessity of best practice in Lutheran schools in the enhancement of the educational experience for these children.

by Susan Lewis

271 Blinkered: The Effect of Values on Decisions of Principals
A Lutheran educator and administrator in Australia, Albinger offers thoughts on how the decisions that principals make reflect and influence values.

by Kenneth Albinger

A professor of political science and philosophy, Hayes reviews J.D. Carter's book and comments on its place in the current public debate on public and religious values.

by Robert Hayes
Departments

229 Here I Sit...In the Dean's Chair
God Moves in Mysterious Ways
Newly appointed as Dean of Education at Concordia University, Jane Buerger offers some reflection, in a guest editorial, on the journey that led her to River Forest and some perspective on where things are headed from here. Jane Buerger

283 Administrative Talk...“The Screwtape Letters” Revisited
Glen Kuck

287 Teaching the Young...Leading by Faith
Shirley Morgenthaler

289 Secondary Sequence...American Idols Among Us
Craig Parrott

291 Multiplying Ministries...Holy Habits
Rich Bimler

293 A Final Word...In the Spirit of Lent
John F. Johnson
God moves in mysterious ways. Yes, God moves in very mysterious ways. Usually those words remind me of Biblical characters whose lives were turned inside out by a call to serve our Lord. I think of David, the shepherd boy who became king of Israel and the great psalmist, or Mary, the young Jewish woman who became the mother of Jesus. Nothing could have been more mysterious than God choosing Saul, the persecutor of the early Christians, to become the apostle Paul. Possibly we take these examples for granted because they are so familiar to us. We know the whole story of David’s reign, of Mary’s life as the mother of Jesus, of Paul’s ministry after his conversion. But imagine how strange the events must have seemed at the time they occurred. God’s intent must have seemed very mysterious to the people who knew David, Mary, and Saul.

God’s mysterious ways weren’t reserved for those of Biblical fame. God continues to move in mysterious ways by guiding the ministries of those who serve Him — we who serve Him. There still are times when seemingly unrelated events fit together to accomplish His purposes in our very human lives.

As I’m writing this, I’ve just completed three months as Concordia’s dean of education. I’m also a graduate of Concordia, River Forest (Class of ’69). Many things have changed on the campus, but there are times when a familiar sight takes me back to my days as an undergraduate and I am amazed at the path my ministry has taken.

Like most of my classmates, I accepted my first call. In my case the call was to teach high school mathematics in a Lutheran high school. After one semester I was convinced that choosing teaching as a career was the worst mistake I could have made. It didn’t help that the school to which I was assigned was in trouble, but I managed to put in six years before I left. At that point I had no intention of ever teaching again, and in particular I had no interest in teaching in a Lutheran school.

I found a position working as an accounts receivable clerk for an air conditioning supplier, and, at first, it was...
exciting to be able to go to the movies on a school night without guilt over lesson plans and grading papers. Seven months later, I realized I wasn’t cut out for office work and applied for a teaching position in a large public school district near the Johnson Space Center. I was hired and given a typical “new teacher’s schedule” of multiple sections of first-year algebra. The environment was extremely positive, and I had every intention of spending the rest of my professional life at that school.

Looking back, I do believe that God had other plans for me. A number of seemingly unrelated events came together to prepare me for my current position. I’ll mention just three.

First, within a month of my arrival at the public high school, the math coordinator suddenly took another position. She had been teaching as well, and that left classes to be covered at the high school and at a local junior college. As it happened, my schedule of first-year algebra classes made it easy to move me to the coordinator’s pre-calculus class, and I was also asked to pick up the course she taught at the junior college. Eventually I was also able to teach calculus and linear algebra. The result was that I gained experience teaching upper level mathematics classes and also teaching at the college level. These were things I needed to do to be considered for a full-time college position, but remember, I had no intention of leaving the public high school.

The second event came when I ran into one of my undergraduate professors (from River Forest) at a regional mathematics conference. At one point in our conversation, he asked, “Would you like to work with us?” Shortly after that, he gave my name to Concordia College in Bronxville. I still wasn’t sure that I wanted to re-enter Lutheran education, and I actually wrote a letter declining the call to Bronxville. Something just didn’t feel right, and a few minutes after finishing the letter I was on the telephone telling the chair that I was coming to New York. As illogical as the decision seemed in terms of salary and my past experiences, I felt strangely compelled to re-enter the teaching ministry.

I had been teaching mathematics at Concordia-New York for twelve years and serving as chair of the science and math department when the third event occurred. The chair of Concordia’s education department took another call, and none of the remaining professors had any interest in administration. Since I had been working with the secondary math program, I volunteered to serve as acting chair for however long it took to find a new chair. Because of changes in New York regulations and
accreditation issues, there never was a good time for me to step down, but once again I was put in a position to gain valuable experience. Even though I once had lost all interest in teaching, I was now helping college students prepare for lives of professional service in education. In addition I was developing skills and meeting the people that eventually led me to accept the call to serve as dean of the College of Education of Concordia, River Forest.

God does move in mysterious ways. While spending one of my post-move weekends scraping off old wallpaper (one of the joys of being a new home-owner), I thought about the path that led me (reluctantly, I admit) from being a disillusioned new teacher to my current position. Looking back, I can see that the seemingly random events fit together to prepare me for my present responsibilities. The realization of this is humbling. There were times when I felt that I was making my own way, but the reality is that God was putting people and events in my life to guide me back into ministry. His mysterious ways were not always my ways, but the end result is much more than I expected as an undergraduate.

One of the joys of my position has been meeting others in ministry. Each one has followed a path; each has a story to tell. I suspect that many of us could point to seemingly random events that somehow caused things to fall into place. That “place” is our role in building God’s kingdom here on earth. That “place” is our part in bringing others to our Saviour.

Sometimes the demands of ministry can be overwhelming. I’m sure there are times when each of us wonders, as I did years ago, if we have made a mistake in our career choice. We may wonder if we have the skills, the knowledge and the ability to carry out our assigned roles. We may wonder if somehow those seemingly random events were just random and whether we are mistaken in reading too much into them.

At times like this, it is helpful to remember the fact that each one of us was put on this earth as part of God’s divine plan. We may try to find our own way, but it is part of God’s forgiving grace that He can take our missteps and use them for His purpose. Often what we thought was a path to a new goal turns out to be simply a detour to the work He intends us to do.

God does work in mysterious ways, but ministry also demands responsibility on our part. God may direct our path, but we must do
what we can to do our jobs effectively. As educators we must take the
time to keep up with our own professional growth so that we are on top
of new information. We must take time for our own physical, emotional,
and spiritual well-being so that we have the strength to effectively serve
others. We must continue to develop our own knowledge, skills, and dis-
positions in order to fulfill our role in His kingdom.

Finally, we must pray, as Solomon did, for a discerning heart and for
wisdom so that all our dealings with others may be God-pleasing. We
must pray for courage to stand for what is just and right, and we must
pray for the ability to love even those who are unlovable. We must pray
to see Christ in those whom we serve.

One of my assignments at Concordia-New York was to develop a
mission statement for the college’s department of education. My col-
leagues and I defined our

I suspect that many of us could
point to seemingly random events
that somehow caused things to
fall into place.

issues of the Journal, I plan to explore each of these in more depth to
see how they can lead to more effective ministry and help all of us to
meet the demands of being an educator in God’s kingdom.

In the meantime I’ll continue to pray for courage, wisdom, and the
other qualities that I’ll need in this challenging position. I’ll pray for you,
and I hope that you’ll pray for me as well.

God does work in mysterious ways, and the good news is that He
will accomplish His purpose for us. LEJ

Jane Buerger, B.A., Concordia, River Forest (1969); M.Ed, University of Houston; Ph.D.,
Columbia University, served as a Lutheran secondary school teacher, and on the faculty of
Concordia, Bronxville, NY before accepting the position as Dean of the College of Education at
River Forest in 2005. She may be contacted at cjfbuerger@conr.edu.
Guidance and Counseling in Lutheran Elementary Schools of the Missouri District
by Bernard Tonjes

In initiating this study, my preliminary investigation indicated that there were few, if any, formal guidance and counseling programs in the elementary schools of congregations in the Missouri-District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. This was the case in spite of the fact that almost all public elementary and middle schools in Missouri have counselors and utilize a comprehensive developmental guidance model for delivery of services to their students.

Using a sample of principals and teachers from one fourth of the Lutheran elementary schools in the Missouri District, LCMS, the project utilized, surveys, interviews and focus groups to compile a description of the methods and procedures used by Lutheran schools to meet the common developmental needs of their students.

The results demonstrate that while Lutheran schools are attentive to the developmental needs of their students across Academic/Educational and Personal/Social domains, it appears that less attention is given to the Career/Vocational domain. Although many in Lutheran elementary schools may not be familiar with the comprehensive developmental model of guidance, the study concludes that adequate programs exist to meet the needs of most students.

When beginning an examination of guidance and counseling practices in Lutheran elementary schools, many administrators, teachers, and parents are quick to assert, “Lutheran elementary schools don’t use counselors.” That this is true in the state of Missouri is considered somewhat remarkable by many in light of the fact that, just as in high schools, public elementary and middle schools in Missouri are required to have counselors. This difference in practice between Missouri public schools and the elementary schools of the Missouri District of the LCMS gives rise to the basic question considered for this research project: How do Lutheran elementary schools meet the common developmentally-based guidance and counseling needs of their students in the general absence of formal school counseling programs?
Definitions

For the information of the reader, it may be useful to define several concepts used throughout the study.

First, to establish a basis for understanding elementary guidance and counseling programs in Missouri public schools, one must first have an understanding of what is known as the comprehensive developmental model of school guidance. One of the primary originators of this model is Dr. Norman Gysbers at the University of Missouri-Columbia (Myrick, 1987; Arnold, 1999). Gysbers describes comprehensive developmental guidance programs:

They are developmental in that guidance activities are conducted on a regular, planned and systematic basis to assist students to achieve competencies. Although immediate and crisis needs of students are to be met, a major focus of a developmental program is to provide all students with experiences to help them grow and develop. Guidance programs are comprehensive in that a full range of activities and services, such as assessment, information, consultation, counseling, referral, placement, follow-up, and follow-through are provided (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000, p. 26).

Comprehensive developmental guidance programs differ from older models of school counseling programs which offered primarily individual counseling services because the developmental emphasis requires that school counseling services be made part of the educational experience of all students, not just those with special characteristics or those who happen to find themselves in temporary crisis (Borders & Drury, 1992). Developmental programs are designed to “help students cope with normal developmental tasks that characterize each developmental stage” (Borders & Drury, 1992, p. 488).

Second, care must be taken when discussing school guidance and counseling services because the terms “guidance” and “counseling” are frequently used as synonyms. Adding to the confusion is the frequent use of the term “counseling” when “therapy” might be more precise (Myrick, 1987). For the purposes of this project, the following distinctions have been found to be useful.

For our purposes, the term ‘school guidance’ will refer to a generic set of personal development services offered to students. Counseling is one of those services. These services are provided through an organized guidance program with specific objectives which focus on academic, personal, social, and career development of students. The term ‘guidance’ will also be used as a modifier.
(adjective) to identify a helping process which focuses on general developmental needs, interests, concerns, and behaviors of students who are within the normal range of functioning.

The term ‘counseling’ will be used to identify a personal relationship and interaction in which students confidentially explore their feelings, ideas, and behaviors with a professionally trained counselor. School counseling has an educational base and is limited in scope and duration. The process may have far reaching personal effects on students, but it is not intended to be a form of psychotherapy. Counseling may be provided to an individual student or a group of students.

Although attempts have been made to sharpen the definition of guidance and counseling by differentiating them from other helping processes, the distinctions are arbitrary and sometimes difficult to defend in practice. They may not even be necessary (Myrick, 1987, pp. 6-7).

Today, the services of the certified school counselor using a comprehensive developmental guidance curriculum has become an important part of the everyday program experienced by elementary and middle school students (grades K-8) in Missouri public schools. By 1997, 97% of the schools in the state of Missouri had begun using the comprehensive developmental model for the delivery of school guidance and counseling services (Lapan, Gysbers & Sun, 1997).

Third, counseling in general and the use of the comprehensive developmental guidance model in particular, are major innovations in elementary school curriculum and practice that have yet to be adopted by most Lutheran elementary schools of the Missouri District. These comprehensive developmental school counseling services are separate and distinct from those services traditionally identified as “pastoral” counseling services, that is, those counseling services that proceed from the office of the pastoral ministry in the congregation (Lueker, Poellot, & Jackson, 2004).

According to Diana Stroup, Director of Counseling Services for the Lutheran Elementary School Association of St. Louis, in the Missouri District during the 2003-2004 school year, less than 17% of the elementary students in the Missouri District were enrolled in schools with formal...
school counseling programs, and all of these students lived in the St. Louis metropolitan area (personal communication, Diana Stroup, September, 2003). At that time, only one school counseling program was known to have a full-time counselor, with the other schools having counselors available one day per week. The counselor to student ratio for the St. Louis program was one counselor for every 554 students.

For the purposes of this project, the practices and programs used by Lutheran schools to address students' developmental needs have been analyzed in terms of the vocabulary of counseling and the major components of a comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling model similar to that used in Missouri public schools. Such application of the comprehensive developmental guidance model is warranted as indicated by the "Vision Statement" included in the Standards Manual of National Lutheran School Accreditation.

National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) provides a service which empowers our child care centers, early childhood, elementary and secondary schools to develop and improve high quality Christian education through a voluntary process which helps them to analyze themselves according to rigorous national standards. (LCMS District and Congregational Services-School Ministry. 1998, August. p 4, emphasis added).

**Scope and Limitations of the Study**

This research project used a list of basic developmental needs of students developed from the literature related to elementary school counseling. These basic needs defined the scope of the research investigation. The description of programs and practices in Lutheran schools derived from interviews and focus groups were examined for evidence of individuals in Lutheran schools performing the tasks which are designed to address the common developmental needs of the students. Activities designed to meet the developmental needs of students may be similar to those used by counselors in public schools or, because of differences unique to Lutheran schools, they may take on a very different appearance. The descriptions of programs and practices in Lutheran schools were therefore examined for these unique activities not common to the public school model but which are intended to meet these same developmental needs of students.

**What Research Says**

As this project was a doctoral dissertation, the literature reviewed was extensive and beyond the scope of this article. What is presented are selected references relating to the developmental needs of elementary
school children and the impact of school counseling programs, as follows:

The school counseling model used in Missouri and many other states has taken on a developmental emphasis because developmental programs are better able to be of assistance to students across a wide range of ages. Responsiveness to developmental stages also gives these programs a context more in tune with the sociocultural reality of the students being served (Robinson, 1990). Being developmental means that the programs are focused on development of appropriate competencies on the part of the students (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).

Comprehensive developmental approaches to counseling generally divide the needs of students into three primary domains. While there is some variation in the specific names of the domains, three commonly used categories include: 1) Personal/Social, 2) Academic/Educational, and 3) Career/Vocational career (Ellis, 1990; Gysbers & Henderson, 1997; Kuhl, 1998).

The curriculum in the first of these, the Personal/Social domain, involves teaching various skills related to student needs in learning responsible decision making, knowing and describing the student’s own self concept, and improving interpersonal skills (Gysbers & Henderson, 1997; Kuhl, 1998).

Student needs in the second Academic/Educational domain are centered in needs for assistance in planning for success-oriented high school programs and planning for longer-term educational goals (Schneider & Stevenson, 1999). In addition, counselors work with the students on needs related to developing positive behaviors that are more conducive to school success and on strategies and behaviors needed to resolve those personal problems which might keep the students from achieving success in school (Schneider & Stevenson, 1999).

The third domain is the Career/Vocational domain. Students need developmentally appropriate career information and are assisted in developing education plans and career information searching skills that will help the student develop and meet vocational and career goals. In addition, students receive intentional instruction about academic requirements for advancement and information about the programs available at their school (DaGiau, 1997; Kuhl, 1998).

Elementary and middle school developmental counseling programs

The uniqueness of Elementary and middle school counseling programs as compared to each other and to counseling programs for secondary stu-
dents lies in the relative amounts of time spent in group curricular and individual planning activities. When students are at the elementary level, emphasis is placed on structured group activities that target developmental issues and the prevention of future problems. As students move through the middle grades, there is an increase in time needed for responsive services. As the students move into late middle school and high school, more time must be spent on helping students with individual planning activities (Nejedlo, Septowski & Tollerud, 1996).

In order to develop and maintain positive self perceptions, Thornburg (1986) suggested that elementary and middle level students can be best assisted by counselors who take a skill-building approach to the task of counseling. According to Thornburg, it is the role of the school counselor to be familiar with the developmental characteristics of these students, both collectively and individually, and to use that knowledge to teach effective decision making. The students gain by learning to use their developing abilities to make more complex decisions in what they perceive as a constantly changing environment. Further, according to Thornburg, students need the support of counselors and teachers because middle-level students may frequently find themselves confronted with tasks or situations which they do not yet know how to resolve.

Impact on the school and students

There is considerable evidence documenting the effectiveness of comprehensive developmental school counseling programs in having a positive impact on the overall school climate (Kornick, 1984; Bergin, Miller, Bergin & Koch, 1990; Lappan, Gysbers & Petroski, 2001). A major review of the literature studying the comprehensive developmental model of school counseling by Borders and Drury (1992) concluded that the comprehensive developmental model had already by that time become the desired approach for school guidance and counseling programs. This is because of the clear demonstration that this particular approach to the delivery of guidance services has a positive impact on the students in the school. The major activities of the comprehensive developmental guidance model (counseling services, peer facilitation training, group counseling, classroom guidance and counselor consultation activities) were all shown to have positive results for students and their families. Representative results included improvements in students’ attendance, test scores, grades, motivation, expressions of self-concept, and in changing inappropriate behaviors. Positive changes have also been documented in the attitudes of parents and teachers, parent-child com-
munication, and student’s at-home coping skills (Borders & Drury, 1992).

Two particularly applicable studies were done in 1997 and 2001 in Missouri elementary and middle schools which demonstrated that students who participated in well-implemented comprehensive developmental guidance programs had higher self-reported grades and reported the perception that school was preparing them for the future by making more career and college information available (Lappan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997) and that students felt safer at school, had better relationships with their teachers, were more inclined to express a belief that their education was relevant and important to their futures, earned higher grades and were more satisfied with the overall quality of education available to them in their schools (Lappan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2001). In their review of 30 years of studies relating to school guidance programs, Borders & Drury concluded:

School counseling interventions have a substantial impact on students’ educational and personal development. Individual and small group counseling, classroom guidance, and consultation activities seem to contribute directly to students’ success in the classroom and beyond...It seems very clear that policy makers and practitioners should ensure that every student has the opportunity to participate in a comprehensive school counseling program. (Borders & Drury, 1992, p. 495)

A comparison of standards: Missouri public schools

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE) has established specific standards for the inclusion and performance of guidance curriculum and services in its Missouri School Improvement Program Integrated Standards and Indicators Manual (MODESE, 2001). The Standard for the number of counselors assigned to a building stipulates that certificated counselors are to be assigned to schools on the basis of counselor to student ratios ranging from a minimum of 1/500 to a ratio of 1/375 (MODESE, 2001, p.11).

MODESE also sets standards which specify the inclusion of a guidance curriculum, and instruction in each of the major domains included in the comprehensive developmental model: Personal/Social, Academic/Educational and Career/Vocational.
Related National Lutheran School Accreditation standards

Standards which speak to issues related to school guidance and counseling can be found in several different parts of the NLSA Standards Manual. An allegiance to the use of “developmentally appropriate” curriculum and pedagogy is indicated in Section 4: School Climate standard 4:02 “A developmentally appropriate teaching/learning environment is evident.” (LCMS District and Congregational Services-School Ministry, 1998, August, p.7)

Other School Climate standards reflect the interest of Lutheran schools in helping students maintain appropriate behavior while also maintaining focus on the spiritual development of the student. School Climate standards 4:06, 4:07 and 4:10 address these issues.

4:06 Student behavior is appropriate to encourage growth and to maintain the school’s chosen teaching/learning environment as described in the school’s philosophy.

4:07 Students’ spiritual needs are given appropriate help by the church and school.

4:10 Students are helped to grow out of love for Christ. Spiritual growth is observed and recorded. (LCMS District and Congregational Services-School Ministry, 1998, August. p.7)

The ongoing assessment of student needs and response to those needs is dealt with in Section 5: Administration, Standards 5A:17 and 5A:18. Assessment and appropriate response to student needs are significant components to a successfully operating school guidance and counseling program. Lutheran school standards also recognize this importance:

5A:17 The school uses systematic procedures, which include involvement of staff, parents (members and nonmembers), congregation, and students for assessing school and student needs and evaluating student growth from these procedures.

5A:18 School planning includes efforts to resolve needs identified as a result of a needs assessment. (LCMS District and Congregational Services-School Ministry, 1998, August. p.8)

Section 8: Instruction, in standards 8:05, 8:06, and 8:08, also deals with questions related to individual assessment of the student.

8:05 Student ability level, development and learning are assessed through a variety of evaluation techniques for the purposes of
growth diagnosis, remediation, enrichment, and reporting.

8:06 Students with exceptional needs have education programs designed to meet their needs.

8:08 Evaluation of student development is based on the standards the school has developed for student growth. (LCMS District and Congregational Services-School Ministry, 1998, August, p.13)

While NLSA Standards demonstrate an allegiance to many of the fundamental concepts underlying the comprehensive developmental model of school counseling, the specific standards relating to school guidance in NLSA seem to be relying upon a counseling model that corresponds more closely to the “pupil personnel services” model of the 1960’s (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). Consider the following standards from Section 10: Student Services, 10A: Guidance:

10A:01 All student applicants are admitted according to established written admission criteria.

10A:02 The parents/legal caregivers of all new applicants are interviewed.

10A:03 Permanent cumulative records for each student are maintained, stored, and shared as appropriate and according to state and federal law.

10A:04 The school has an established written procedure for handling misbehavior, which incorporates provisions for the due process rights of students.

10A:05 The school has written procedures for handling student emotional, social, and psychological needs.

10A:06 The school has written procedures for evaluating students for promotion and/or graduation.

10A:07 A comprehensive analysis of programs which enhance student growth is made by the school on a regular basis. (LCMS District and Congregational Services-School Ministry, 1998, August, p.14)

Taken together, NLSA standards as a whole reflect a recognition of an awareness of the importance of developmental issues in the lives of students and their families. Considering Lutheran educators’ view of their duty as stewards of God’s gifts (LCMS District and Congregational Services-School Ministry, 1998) and their commitment to love their stu-
dents as Christ has loved us, NLSA standards also reflect a holistic concern for all aspects of the development of the students in Lutheran schools. However, the standards designated specifically for guidance imply an understanding of the term “guidance” that is no longer in current usage. Other standards for Lutheran schools include topics clearly related to the Academic/Educational and Personal/Social domains described by Borders and Drury (1992). Standards related to student development in the Career/Vocational domain seem to be absent.

The Research Design

A three-part hypothesis was proposed for this project.

I. It is likely that existing Lutheran school counseling programs in the Missouri District operate from a theoretical framework that predates the comprehensive developmental model and that views school counseling from a responsive, crisis-oriented basis.

Assuming reliance on this older, client/therapist, records-oriented framework, in both schools with formal counseling programs and in those that have no formal program, school counseling activities in Lutheran schools will be perceived as something reserved for students in crisis. In the absence of perceived crises among the students, there will be no formal school counseling program because of the perception that counseling is intended for students with problems. With the additional concerns common to all school counseling programs, it becomes even more likely that professionally staffed school counseling programs will be few and far between in Missouri District schools.

II. Because the comprehensive developmental model is so pervasive in Missouri public schools, it is likely that activities or procedures similar to those from the Missouri Model for Comprehensive Guidance (or other similar models) that are commonly included in the guidance curriculum in the public schools have found their way into various elements of the programming in Lutheran schools. In addition, the Lutheran schools’ commitment to a ministry dedicated to the whole person lend credence to the notion that significant developmental needs of students will be addressed by various aspects of programs found in Lutheran schools, even in the absence of formal school counseling programs. The common developmental needs of the students may not actually be directly addressed in any of the schools’ so-called “counseling” programs but may be addressed by other programs or practices not considered to be part of the school’s “counseling” efforts, for example the school’s religion classes. It is conceivable that well-developed programs
that speak to the developmental needs of students exist in many different locations, but that these activities have not yet been identified as “counseling programs” because of a different understanding of what the term “counseling” means in Lutheran schools.

III. It is also likely, because of the counseling function of the pastoral ministry, that many Lutheran elementary schools rely on the expertise of the parish pastor in those crisis situations that demand immediate intervention.

Project design: Descriptive Research Paradigm

This research project is qualitative in nature and used a descriptive research paradigm. In support of its qualitative elements it used data from a survey administered to Missouri District Lutheran elementary school principals at their 2004 conference as well as from interviews with individual school principals conducted between February and June, 2005, and from focus groups made up of Lutheran elementary school teachers which were conducted between April and June, 2005. The 16 schools included in the interviews and focus groups represented 25% of the schools in the Missouri District, LCMS.

Questions 1-8 in the interviews and focus groups posed brief descriptions of situations in school life which, in schools with counseling programs, usually involve the services of the school counselor. These situations included:

1. A student begins to fall behind academically.
2. Assisting students who demonstrate exceptional abilities.
3. Vocational education for students.
4. Academic planning with students.
5. A death in the student’s family.
6. Identity development.
7. Assisting parents with difficult children and.
8. Referrals.

Questions 9-15 dealt with general items such as curriculum issues, credentials, financing, and the reasons that a school did/did not have a school counselor. Significant attention was also given to what individuals might see as particularly “Lutheran” about their approach to school guidance and counseling.
Data Synthesis

Borders and Drury's major categories form the theoretical basis of the quality indicators against which the activities of the school can be compared. These included direct services (such as individual counseling, group counseling, classroom teaching and referrals) and indirect services such as consulting with teachers, parents or administrators about student issues. Additional quality indicators were created from the work of Nejedlo, Septowski & Tollerud (1996) which allowed for a school's activities to be examined according to the unique features of a comprehensive developmental approach to school counseling issues. Their criteria included staff qualifications, program availability, program options, program materials, the target population of the activity, the response orientation (proactive or reactive), the integration into the total school program, the developmental emphasis, whether or not skills were being taught, and the domain emphasis of the activity.

In this way the programs and practices in Lutheran schools described in the interviews and focus groups could be associated with one of more common counseling activities allowing for interpretation of these activities in the context of a comprehensive developmental model. One of the distinctions that was possible was to establish the general basis of guidance and counseling efforts in Lutheran schools as either that of a comprehensive developmental model similar to that in public schools, as a records-based, crisis resolution model as suggest by NLSA guidance standards, or some unique fusion of the two.

Results

The responses to the first eight questions which presented various situations to those being interviewed and participating in focus groups indicated that these Lutheran schools, in general, maintain an approach to these situations that conforms to the outlines of the comprehensive developmental model of school counseling. Instead of the old crisis-driven guidance model, schools used a variety of approaches which included activities similar to those classified as direct and indirect services delivered by counselors to students in schools with formal counseling programs. The direct services seen in these Lutheran schools tended to rely heavily upon whole-group classroom activities, especially direct instruction. Many times these services were structured activities which came directly from the school's curriculum. This was especially characteristic of the religion curriculum. Religion classes offer teachers an open door for engaging students in direct instruction and deep conversation.

Lutheran Education Journal • Volume 140, No. 4—Page 244
about a host of developmentally significant issues for students. There is a high level of overlap between the public school counseling curriculum and the topics included in the discussion of practical application of themes from religion class. Teachers interviewed demonstrated sensitivity to the developmental needs of their students and the religion curriculum maintained a high level of developmental appropriateness and sensitivity at all age levels examined.

A significant finding related to the teachers' and administrators' use of individual counseling. Both teachers and administrators indicated that their understanding of "counseling" included a private, privileged relationship between a counseling professional and a client (the student), usually with some sort of therapeutic purpose. This is very much in line with the older model of school counseling that predates the comprehensive developmental model. If using that definition, which includes privileged communication and a therapeutic purpose, formal counseling could be said to have occurred only in schools that had counselors on site.

However, if one broadens the definition of counseling to include individual private conversations with students intended to assist in resolving a problem, one finds that this kind of "counseling" was commonly reported by teachers and administrators as an effective way of dealing with certain crises and issues, especially those that a student may find personally embarrassing or intimidating. To the extent that these conversations assist the student with avoiding or resolving certain problems, they bear a striking similarity to many of the individual sessions conducted by school counselors.

One concern that always arises in looking at teachers and administrators in so-called counseling roles has to do with the limits of professional expertise held by these "nonprofessional" counselors. In this study teachers and administrators exhibited an excellent understanding of the limits of their professional preparation and reported a readiness to make referrals to other professionals when the situation moved into areas beyond their personal expertise. All but one of the principals reported well-developed networks of referral options which they have utilized as students' needs dictated. The sole exception to this was an individual who was new to the school and its community who had not yet had time or need to find these resources.

The only direct-service counseling practice which was not found in common use in these Lutheran schools was formal group counseling, where students who share a common characteristic or issue meet with a
counseling professional on a regular basis for therapeutic purposes. This is to be distinguished from classroom instructional groups, which as mentioned earlier, are used extensively in Lutheran schools to cover topics similar to those found in the public school counseling curriculum. Therapeutic group counseling was only used only in those Missouri District schools which had the services of a professional counselor, and then only sparingly, and most commonly to assist students dealing with parent loss through death or divorce.

The schools in the study were generally careful to identify as “counselors” only those individuals with appropriate credentials e.g. certification or professional course work. In the sole exception, the individual involved worked under the supervision of other staff members with appropriate counseling credentials thereby meeting the intent of the ASCA guidelines (American School Counseling Association, 2003b).

The teachers and administrators in the study sample also made extensive use of what is known as “consulting” in the jargon of school counselors. Counselors frequently discuss specific student issues with parents, teachers or school administrators when those individuals have a direct interest in helping the student. The teachers and administrators in the study sample reported frequent interactions among staff members and between staff members and parents when seeking to develop a plan for action to assist a student. Many of these conversations occurred in group discussions, especially as less experienced teachers sought to find ways to work with individual students. Principals and teachers also reported that there were regular consultations occurring between the principal and his or her teachers as they worked as a team to help move students ahead through individual crises.

These “consultations” were generally less formal than might usually be found when a professional counselor consults with a parent, teacher or administrator. In being less formal, there was much less presumption of confidentiality and much more of a collegial sharing as faculty members and administrators worked together in program planning and problem resolution. However, these conversations seemed to serve the same functional purpose as the more formal consultations in schools with
professional counselors, and they seemed to derive the same result.

When looking at the activities of the various schools according to the criteria of programs that are comprehensive and developmental in scope and nature, Lutheran schools also fared well. The schools in this study seemed to meet criteria for comprehensive programs by offering appropriate services to all students, not just those with specifically identified problems. Many of the topics discussed in religion classes, health classes, social studies classes and the like functioned to teach students necessary skills in a proactive anticipatory manner as is done in a comprehensive developmental program.

The only area which consistently fell outside of guidelines for a comprehensive developmental school counseling model was in services related to vocational information and guidance. Like many public schools, vocational curriculum for the youngest students in Lutheran schools was centered in a “community helpers” approach to instructing students in the types of activities associated with various occupations. But, as students moved into upper grades, most of the schools in the sample restricted their vocational discussion to the areas involved in profession church work. All seemed to take a special interest in exposing students to options available in church work, especially the ministry of pastors and teachers. This is not to say that other vocational guidance was entirely absent, in fact several excellent examples were discovered which encouraged students to explore a wide variety of careers (in addition to church work) while simultaneously participating in some sort of self-exploration. But in general, specific programs or practices intended to equip upper grade students with the skills needed for obtaining information about careers and educational options were generally absent or of low priority.

The role of the pastor in school counseling was also a topic of special interest in this study. In discussing the counseling role of the parish pastor, teachers and administrators consistently indicated that they referred students and/or their families to pastors for two general reasons: death and bereavement issues and struggles in a family related to marital discord. This is consistent with the training that is required of all pastors during their seminary training. Other complex issues were sometimes discussed with the pastor as a sort of “sounding board” but were generally directed to the principal for further referral to outside professionals. Contrary to common opinion, the pastors associated these schools did not function as “crisis counselors.”
This study also sought program characteristics that might be unique to Lutheran schools in particular. When discussing the so-called "Lutheran aspects" of their work with students, three characteristics seemed to be consistent across all schools. The first was the use of the school and church community as a way of bringing the support of the Body of Christ to a student and his or her family in time of crisis. Teachers and principals consistently mentioned that when a student was in crisis, it was an opportunity for the community of believers to offer support for the individual and his or her family. This message was consistently communicated to both those giving and receiving assistance.

Counselors in public settings are routinely charged with teaching students the principles and practices of good mental health and effective problem solving. A related topic in these Lutheran schools was specific instruction in the intentional use of prayer as an effective tool for dealing with challenging personal issues. The teachers and administrators expressed firm and consistent belief that prayer is not just a ceremonial expression of concern. When talking about a host of different difficulties, one of the first reactions of teachers and principals in these Lutheran schools is to pray privately and to pray with their students about the problems, expressing the firm belief that God hears our prayers and will act out of love for us.

The third "Lutheran" belief that was clearly communicated by almost all focus group and interview participants relates to the counselor's task of helping students discover which ethical and moral principles can be used to guide one's decision making. In Lutheran schools, this was consistently expressed as reliance on Scripture as the inspired Word of God and the norm and authority for decisions in all areas of life. This was true in guiding students and families in making important decisions or when explaining school discipline. The Word of God is consistently pointed to as the ultimate moral authority and guide for our lives.

Differences Between Schools With Counselors and Those Without

When looking at the results of this study, it becomes apparent that most Lutheran elementary schools operate effectively without the services of a professionally trained school counselor. However, school principals who did not have personal experience in working with a school counselor expressed a different view of what a school counselor would add to their school program. Individuals who had not worked with professional school counselors had a view of counseling much more involved in the therapeutic relationship between counselor and student than is
currently common or practical. These principals indicated a hopeful belief that a counselor might help them by intervening in some way with their most troublesome or troubled students.

However, principals who have had personal experience working with a school counselor felt that the greatest benefit that the counselor brought to a school was in the consultative services that the counselor could offer to teachers and administrators. Great benefit was seen in having someone with whom to discuss problems and develop informed opinions about some planned activity or program. The teachers in the study who had worked in schools with counselors also expressed the belief that students appreciated having an individual “on their side.”

As in the case in any differentiated group, some of these programs were more complex and highly organized, and others less so, but only rarely did a response from a teacher or principal give some hint that the legitimate comprehensive developmental needs of students may not be appropriately attended to. Teachers and principals gave clear evidence that they understand their work with students as a mission to which they were called by God. Because of this, their care for their students’ needs is holistic in nature and as such, the boundaries between classroom academics and counseling activities are blurred and in fact, frequently overlap.

Conclusions and Recommendations
Experimental Question and Hypothesis

The experimental question for this study asked “How do Lutheran elementary schools, who apparently function for the most part without school counselors, address the common developmental needs of the students who attend their schools?” A three-part hypothesis was advanced to answer the question. Each part is evaluated separately, as follows:

I. It is likely that existing school counseling programs operate from a theoretical framework that predates the comprehensive developmental model and that views school counseling from a responsive, crisis-oriented basis.

This hypothesis was not supported by the results of the study. Programs in Lutheran schools which seek to meet the common developmental needs of students were generally up to date and operating from a framework that anticipated student developmental needs while maintaining adequate sensitivity to respond to crises as they occurred. There was a tendency of principals who did not currently have school counseling programs in their schools to talk about school counseling with an
emphasis on therapeutic, responsive, or crisis oriented services. This leads to the conclusion that while the programs in these schools were adequate to meet student needs, the understanding that some principals had of “school counseling” was so thoroughly grounded in the terminology of the old model of school counseling they did not understand the “counseling” value of the programs operating in their schools.

II. The results accurately capture what was hypothesized as the most important question addressed by the study, that is, ...(It appears that)...activities or procedures similar to those from the Missouri Model for Comprehensive Guidance (or other similar models) that are commonly included in the guidance curriculum in the public schools have found their way into various elements of the programming in Lutheran schools. In addition, the Lutheran schools’ commitment to a ministry dedicated to the whole person lend credence to the notion that significant developmental needs of their students will be addressed by various aspects of programs found in Lutheran schools, even in the absence of formal school counseling programs. The common developmental needs of the students may not actually be directly addressed in any of the schools’ so-called “counseling” programs but may be addressed by other programs or practices not considered to be part of the school’s “counseling” efforts, for example the school’s religion classes. It is conceivable that well-developed programs that speak to the developmental needs of students exist in many different locations, but that these activities have not yet been identified as “counseling programs” because of a different understanding of what the term “counseling” means.

The Lutheran schools participating in this study have demonstrated an awareness and sensitivity to the needs of students addressed in a comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling curriculum. Their holistic view of the student as a gifted child of God causes them to approach the student with an awareness that could be identified as “multi-domain” in the world of comprehensive guidance. These schools place particular emphasis on the Personal/Social, and Academic/Educational domains. Criticism is warranted when looking specifically at the Career/Vocational domain as these schools have a tendency to emphasize church vocations to the exclusion of broader, practical information and skill building.

There is a high degree of correspondence between the counseling curriculum in public schools and certain aspects of religious instruction in Lutheran schools. The great importance of the religion curriculum in
Lutheran schools means that the lessons which address significant student developmental needs also have great importance to students and teachers in the Lutheran school programs examined. This high degree of correspondence between religion classes and guidance curriculum is unrecognized by many teachers and principals and contributes to the erroneous judgment that Lutheran schools are not attentive to the “counseling needs” of their students. This is not to be construed to mean that the religion curriculum is merely a counseling curriculum. The religion curriculum is at the heart of everything a Lutheran school is and does and should not be minimized in that manner. However, it is important to recognize that, in addition to the spiritual education and daily contact with the Word of God provided by the religion curriculum, as an added benefit it also provides the opportunity for students and teachers to engage in direct instruction about important developmental topics commonly found in a counseling curriculum.

Research indicates that including a significant vocational component can increase students’ appreciation for the practical application of the things they learn and have a widespread positive effect on the learning outcomes of the school. In most of the Lutheran schools, this vocational education component is regarded as incidental to the academic curriculum and consequently is not given the attention that it deserves.

III. Because of the counseling function of the pastoral ministry, it is also likely that many Lutheran elementary schools rely on the expertise of the parish pastor in those crisis situations that demand immediate intervention.

The role of the parish pastor in the Lutheran elementary school turned out to have a fairly distinct de facto description in Lutheran schools. It is true that the pastor has a role in crisis counseling in schools, but he should not be considered the crisis counselor. Pastoral counseling is called for in these schools when there is a death in the student’s family or when there are significant marriage and family issues in a student’s life which have a negative impact on the student’s performance in school. Other crises, such as when conflict between students flares...
into a fight or when there are boyfriend/girlfriend issues between two students, tend to be handled by the classroom teacher and/or the school principal. Both teachers and principals seem to be cognizant of the limits of their counseling expertise and maintain informal, yet apparently effective referral strategies.

As previously cited, Borders and Drury list four core principles of comprehensive developmental guidance programs. These are:

1. It functions as an independent program, with its own curriculum, goals and mission.
2. Guidance is well-integrated into the rest of the school program.
3. Guidance programs and activities are based in developmental theory.
4. Guidance programs and activities seek to serve the needs of all students, not just those with special characteristics.

This research demonstrates that the participating Lutheran schools clearly met all but the first of the four criteria. Because Lutheran schools approach the developmental needs of their students in a holistic way, the first criteria, that of a completely independent program, would be out of place in a Lutheran school environment.

It is important to understand that the programs and practices in Lutheran schools described in this study frequently constitute practices and programs that have been in place for many years. In the case of the religion curriculum, it is something that has been at the heart of Lutheran schools from the very beginning. In that sense, it follows that in starting to use the comprehensive developmental model of school counseling, many public schools are only now beginning to address issues that have been addressed in Lutheran schools for decades. Thus, Lutheran schools can benefit from broadening their understanding of counseling to include a great deal of what they already do on an everyday basis. Once that relationship is understood, professional educators in Lutheran schools will learn that even those schools without certified counselors on staff can benefit from attending to the literature and research about comprehensive developmental school counseling.

Other Findings and Recommendations

In addition to evaluating the hypotheses of the study, further conclusions and associated recommendations are warranted.

First, the Guidance Standards found in the Manual for National
Lutheran School Accreditation are out of date and should be revised to reflect an up-to-date model of guidance and counseling theory. The comprehensive developmental model would be an excellent theoretical base for such standards.

Rewriting NLSA guidance standards would benefit Lutheran schools in two ways. First, they would promote a better understanding of the duties of a school counselor and the benefits that elementary school guidance counselors can bring to a school. Second, the comprehensive developmental model could serve as a new organizing principle to help school personnel see the interrelationship between existing elements of school programming such as the religion curriculum and the educational, personal and vocational needs of students. A rewrite of the standards could also draw needed attention to the absence of intentional instruction in broad based career and vocational planning skills.

Rewriting NLSA standards would also encourage Lutheran elementary schools to do a more specific evaluation of this important component of their school’s program during the accreditation process and to remain highly intentional in addressing student developmental needs through proactive programs and activities.

Second, it appears that many principals and teachers in schools without the services of a school counselor have a distorted view of the role of a school counselor. A good number of principals and teachers view school counseling from the old crisis-response model. That view tends to be dominated by a misplaced understanding of the school counselors as school therapists. It also places much too much emphasis on the counselor’s role in crisis intervention. When teachers and principals do not have an accurate view of what school counselors do, it is hard for them to accurately evaluate whether or not the students in their school could benefit from the services of a counselor. Discrepancies between the results of principal surveys and interviews indicates that some do not understand the “counseling” benefit accrued to their students by programs in their schools. To simplify, they do not understand that a great deal of what is going on in their schools is commonly considered to be school counseling. This means that there could also be occasional confusion regarding the practices and goals of a given program.

Making more teachers and principals aware of what school counselors do could be mistaken as a “job creation” program for school counselors and so should be approached carefully. Professional conferences and workshops for teachers and principals offer the best forum
for increasing understanding of the job of a school counselor. Judging from the support received from the Missouri District office and the schools involved in this project, it should be possible to develop workshops and presentations to make this happen.

Third, Lutheran schools do an excellent job of promoting church vocations to their students, but these frequently are the only vocations that receive specific attention in the classroom. Lutheran elementary schools with counselors have found that the counselor adds a significant vocational education component to the school curriculum. Schools without counselors should take a careful look to see that they also make the effort to include structured career education experiences in their school programs. Many schools include a variety of “electives” for their students in the upper grades. These are courses of a shorter duration that would fit well with the tasks of introducing students to different careers, to finding out how their personal values fit into the world of work and for teaching them to use the many tools available in career education.

Since career/vocational education is not currently well developed in many Lutheran schools, the opportunity exists to use workshops and conferences for presentation of the basic tools, methods and goals of career education to better equip teachers for this important task.

Fourth, one important result of this study is something that was not found. The study did not find widespread use of unqualified individuals who were identified as “counselors” to the school community. Principals demonstrated an awareness of the need for professionally trained individuals and showed creativity in finding individuals whose preparation was appropriate to meet the needs of their students.

Recommendations for Further Research

There are three topics related to Lutheran elementary school guidance and counseling which warrant further research. It is the conclusion of this study that Lutheran schools in the Missouri District of the LCMS are engaged in significant, consistent and ongoing activities designed to meet the general, cross-domain developmental needs of their students. It is now appropriate to begin to look at criteria that might differentiate superior programs from those that are less effective. Identification of effective programs that are well integrated into the culture of a Lutheran school would benefit all schools through the sharing of Lutheran school guidance methods.

Another question of significant interest was frequently asked in the
time immediately after the interviews and focus groups were completed, specifically, “How do schools know when, or if, they need a counselor?” Many school administrators and teachers would find it useful to have a set of indicators that might trigger a program evaluation process causing a school to investigate the need for the services of a professional school counselor. As our society moves toward a time when even the definition of “family” is subject to change, Lutheran schools can be sure that they will be challenged to minister to ever more complex needs on the part of their students. Since paying for the school counselor's position has been shown to be largely an issue of prioritizing in funding, criteria that could function in a school’s self-study and evaluation process would be very useful.

Finally, the role of the pastor in the life of a Lutheran school has likely never been subjected to rigorous study. Pastors have a great deal of training which is very useful in the life of a school, but their role in a school is also frequently the subject of misunderstanding which can result in a lack of effective cooperation between church and school. A descriptive study to determine the varieties of current practices in pastoral counseling relative to schools would be helpful in giving pastors and principals the vocabulary to discuss options available to them.

The Lutheran schools which participated in this study engage in intentional, significant, and consistent activities designed to meet those needs of their students that would normally be handled by school counselors in a public school setting. Lutheran schools maintain a holistic approach to their students fostered by religious beliefs that create an overall awareness of student needs. Most teachers and principals give significant evidence of taking a comprehensive developmental approach to meeting the needs of their students which is demonstrated in the programs and practices of these schools. LEJ

References:


Bernard Tonjes is a 1970 graduate of Concordia, Seward, NE to which he has recently accepted a Call to teach in the Department of Education Department and to serve as Director of Field Experiences. He completed the MA in Education at California State University, Los Angeles in 1982 and the Ph.D. in Educational Foundations at St. Louis University in 2005. In his most recent position, he has served as Director of Guidance and Lutheran High School of St. Charles, St. Peters, MO.

Individuals interested in obtaining a copy of the dissertation upon which this article is based may contact him at btonjes@lbvc.org.
So how did we actually get here, we Christian teachers in the public school? Was it just by random chance that a position was open about the time we began to explore the idea of working in the public school? Was it just by chance that we knew somebody who knew somebody who put in a good word for us? Was it just by chance that we stayed in a position long enough for someone to see our potential and make a recommendation? Whatever our personal reasons and particular situations, we came to realize that there was a bigger picture, a larger plan to our placement – and yes, God has put us – in public education.

We know it is for the children. We believe we can model Christian values and virtues. Many children lack patient and caring adults in their lives; they lack the example of Godly lifestyles. We also validate children who demonstrate Christian faith and beliefs.

*Dona:* For instance, one boy brought his Bible to a testing appointment I had arranged with him. When I asked him if that was a usual thing for him to have in school, he replied that he kept it in his locker. I asked him if he believed it. He said that he did. “I do too,” I answered. I’m confident that it encouraged him to know that at least one adult in his school is a Christian and trusts the Word.

*Lynne:* I’ve had instances when the name of Jesus has been brought up in class. Some students will say “Who’s Jesus?” and will have the opportunity to hear an explanation. Often these kinds of opportunities arise during Advent, Christmas or Easter. Students can hear about the Christmas story, about Christ and why God sent him. Discussions can be guided so that much witnessing can take place. As we stop to reflect, we realize there are many of these God-orchestrated conversations.

*D:* One Sunday at church, I realized one of my students was sitting across the aisle from me. After the service, my husband and I stepped over and introduced ourselves. A couple of weeks passed, and I wondered if the boy and his family had returned but hesitated to bring the question up to him. One morning as we walked back to his homeroom...
after our appointment, he commented, “We came back to church”. I expressed my pleasure and support for this. I trust my encouragement made a difference.

L: Last year during an introductory social studies lesson in first grade when I was explaining that social studies is learning about the world and its people, a student said, “This might be a hard question: Are we real?” It was natural to allow students to discuss this and for several children to talk about Creation and say “Yes, we are real because God made us.” Just last week during an earth science lesson, I asked the class, “Do we have control over the weather?” “No!” When I asked, “Does anyone have control over the weather” I got one of those shouting responses from a bunch of kids: “God does!”

D: Monday morning, I was late for a small group appointment in a homeroom. Since my children were already settled into a writing assignment, I put aside my usual instruction and slipped into a little chair beside a first grade girl. She was writing about what she had done over the weekend. I noticed the word “church” in her sentence. So I asked “What do you like about church?” She answered, “I sing in the children’s choir”. Of course I was interested in knowing about any song she was learning. She couldn’t remember much of “I’m walkin’ in authority…” but not to worry. The next day I received the complete text of the song, from her family. It was a song about having confidence in who we are because of Christ and His value in our lives.

L: I remember in my Teaching the Faith course at Concordia, River Forest, Dr. Ken Heinitz admonished us to “speak about the Resurrection every day” when we became teachers. Although I cannot do this directly now in the public school as I did in the Lutheran school, I can guide a conversation around this central concept and let the students do the teaching.

These incidents remind us not to underestimate the impact of even small truth encounters. Even these short divine “appointments” are used as affirmations of trust and validations of Christian faith. We also know that it is our responsibility to lead all children into attitudes and behaviors that will serve them well as students and as adults. This is part of the common grace we extend to all.

Secondly, we are here for Christian colleagues. Scripture tells us that we are to “…do good to all…but especially to those of the household of faith, to those who belong to the family of God …to those of the
new creation.” (Gal. 6:10, 15). The second and sixth chapters of the New Testament book of Galatians and our own personal experiences tell us that we help strengthen their faith and Christian walk by: extending grace; sharing in the struggle of the Christian life; encouraging their hearts; uniting them; standing together for what is right; listening; saying we will pray; being available and lending our presence; coming alongside in school-related tasks; being an example of kindheartedness; extending help and support in specific times of personal or family crisis; giving a hug; asking questions to express interest; sharing Scripture; sending a card with a spiritual or Biblical message; leading each other away from delusions and falsehoods, and into the truth of Christ; living in peace and thankfulness (Rom. 12:18); affirming right living and wisdom choices; demonstrating Christian virtues among ourselves; setting aside denominational differences and uniting on the essentials of the Christian faith.

In John 13:35, Jesus speaks to His disciples at the last supper, the Passover meal: “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” His new command was for us to love one another as He loved us. We are here in the public school to demonstrate sacrificial unity with other Christian teachers so that our unbelieving colleagues will see God’s love.

L: After a death in my family, I experienced an outpouring of compassion and love from colleagues at my school. It gave me the opportunity to say, “I thank God for all of you and for putting me in this place to work.”

We are also in the public school to show the goodness of God to all, as situations permit. The Apostle Paul in his letter to Titus and to the Christians at Colossi teaches us many principles. A reading of these two letters reveals that we are to make Christ attractive by how we do our jobs and by living in such a way that we are not despised. Also, we are to respect authority and to draw respect to ourselves by our gospel message clearly, as the opportunity is provided to us. “Make the most of every opportunity,” says Paul in Colossians 4:5. He continues by encouraging us to learn how to “…walk wisely among outsiders… and know how to answer everyone.” (Col. 4:6). We can walk wisely among our colleagues by avoiding slander, living peaceably, being considerate, showing humility to all, avoiding foolish arguments and quarrels, and by extending kindness to others who are confused, rebellious, or deceived — since we ourselves “…were once outside the truth.” (Titus 2:3-5).

We know that even the smallest silent prayer of any believer is heard at the throne of God.
L: One morning my teaching assistant and I were having a prayer in our room before the school day began. The media specialist walked in on us, and with tears in her eyes said “What a wonderful way to start the day.”

D: A new colleague who was a Christian thought there were no other believers teaching in the building. I assured her we were spread throughout the building, quietly doing our jobs. The two of us began a prayer notebook that was passed between us as the need arose. She and her husband were seeking wisdom regarding a move to (another state) with their young family. I had a son in the military. They had a good adjustment in their move, and my son graduated from language school with great success.

Many opportunities arise through other colleagues that provide ways for us to give to needy families, provide instruction for struggling students, and to come alongside grieving faculty members.

Finally, we are here in the public school for our own personal faith walk. We began with Him by faith, and we walk with him in faith. God takes faint-hearted and fearful believers and creates confident and secure followers. We know that even the smallest silent prayer of any believer is heard at the throne of God. We also know and accept his grace for all our days, but especially for the bad ones, believing each one is a gift with a new beginning. To listen to the Spirit and to “walk in His way” is our daily prayer. We also learn to articulate our faith and to stand alone, if necessary, on issues that may influence others against God, His Word, and His will. We ask Him to open our eyes to situations around us that demonstrate His working.

So, how did we get here and why do we stay, we teachers in public education? We came by His providential plan, by various routes. We stay for the children, for our Christian colleagues, for all in general who work around us, and for our own faith walk. We look behind us and are thankful for His faithful leading and provision. We grow in our belief of His sovereign work in our lives every day. It is He who will continue to orchestrate events, arrange conversations, give protection, and change lives by his grace. That is why we Christian teachers are in the public square – the public school. LEJ

Lynne Zilkman (Concordia, River Forest B.A., 1976; M.A. Reading Instruction, 1994) and Dona Davidkizar (Concordia, River Forest, M.A. Reading Specialist, 2000) teach in a Chicago, IL area public elementary school. Prior to this Lynne taught for most of her 16 years in Lutheran Schools at St. Paul, Melrose Park, IL. Dona’s teaching has been devoted entirely to children in the public schools.
Promoting Early Learning Success
by Susan Lewis

"I know the plans I have for you," announces the Lord. "I want you to enjoy success. I do not plan to harm you. I will give you hope for the years to come (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV).

A Story All Too Familiar

Emily was in 3rd grade. She came into the room slowly, her eyes averting away from the resource specialist. She was new to the Lutheran school this year. When asked to read a passage from her grade-level reading book, she did so slowly in a quiet, small voice with frequent stops and starts to sound out unknown words. After Emily completed the task, she let out an audible sigh, exhausted from reading aloud. When asked specific questions about what she just read, Emily remained quiet and shrugged her shoulders. Spelling was also not one of her strengths. Her writing consisted of brief sentences with limited vocabulary and poorly formed letters. Her frequent ear infections as a preschooler may have slowed her down and contributed to these deficits. She was struggling in academics and beginning to feel sad about school.

Unfortunately, Emily’s story is not an uncommon one; the prevalence rate for children ages 6 to 21 years with a specific learning disability has increased by 18% in the last fifteen years (US Office of Special Education Programs, 2004). (Children with learning disabilities make up about half of all special education identified students.)

There are other children like Emily who experience difficulty with challenging curriculum in the early grades. Some have similar language and auditory processing delays like her. This may be due to poor language models, too much video, ear infections, or allergies. Some have delays in fine-motor or visual-motor skills. They may have lacked the opportunity to work with crayons, paper, clay, paints, blocks, or because a large portion of their free time is spent on “screen time” (television viewing and playing video games). Other children just develop more slowly. Some are also at risk of learning difficulties due to socio-economic factors such as inadequate medical care, single parent families, nutrition, or births to young mothers.
The Problem

Early learning failure comes at a high human and societal cost. Students who repeatedly experience difficulties leading to feelings of incompetence may come to consider themselves stupid and bring their behavior into line accordingly (Bandura et al., 1999). Dr. Sally Shaywitz of Yale Center for the Study of Learning and Attention refers to the Matthew effect from the biblical reference of “Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.” (Matt.13:12 NIV). While data does not show that poor readers do not become poorer readers, research data does provide strong evidence that children who were poor readers in the early school years remained poor readers. The Education Commission of the States 2005 underscores these negative consequences with the following “Reading/Literacy Quick Facts:”

- Children who fall behind in first grade have a one in eight chance of ever catching up to grade level without extraordinary efforts.
- Seventy-four percent of children who are poor readers in 3rd grade remain poor readers in 9th grade.
- Academic success, as defined by high school graduation can be predicted with reasonable accuracy by knowing someone’s reading skill at the end of 3rd grade. A person who is not at least a modestly skilled reader by that time is unlikely to graduate from high school.
- Children with low early literacy are more likely to drop out of school and turn to crime.

Hope for the Future

In 2000 the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) published findings of 30-years of exhaustive, duplicated research studies on successful literacy and reading instruction. Key early indicators were identified for those children that are at risk for developing reading difficulties. The key indicators, which are observable in 5-to 6-year olds, can help identify which children are in need of preventive measures, or early intervention. Past NICHD research studies also exposed the components for effective and efficient early literacy and reading instruction. Well-trained teachers can help 85 to 95 percent of poor readers in kindergarten and first grade and raise their reading skills to average levels. (Lyon 1998). While the last 30 years have focused on
literacy and reading instruction, today national research is also intensely studying the integral components of successful numeracy and math instruction.

Over the years, a body of research and instructional practice continues to build a case for how more children may be successful in the early years of school. The current focus of the NICHD Early Learning and School Readiness Program is "to identify early interactions with adults and peers, the early childhood education teaching methods and curricula, and comprehensive early childhood interventions that support learning and development, specifically in domains that prepare children from diverse backgrounds." Developmentally appropriate, quality preschool experiences, motor development and parent training programs have demonstrated success in reducing early learning failure. (Sornson, Preventing Learning Problems) As the positive consequence of the "Matthew effect" takes hold; students who believe they are good at academics and learning in general have a tendency to be more successful throughout their school career (Torgeson, 1998).

One School District’s Success Story

While some public school districts have continued to observe high rates of reading failure and increasing rates of special education identification, other school districts have focused on program or system changes to reduce early learning failure. During the 1992-1993 school year faculty of Michigan’s Northville Public Schools, guided by Robert Sornson, then Executive Director of Special Services, began early intervention training. The State of Michigan’s total special education identification rate averaged 10.8% of its student population compared to Northville’s 10.2%. Over the next four years, the State of Michigan’s average for total special education identification increased steadily to 11.6% while during the same period of time Northville’s rate decreased to 8.8%. During the 1996-1997 school year Northville Public Schools began a pilot Instructional Support Team approach on one of its five school campuses. Northville Public Schools defined Instructional Support as a dynamic process of collaboration and team support which
includes:

- Helping all children to be emotionally, socially and academically successful within the classroom setting.
- Assisting teachers in developing and implementing strategies and techniques that will help at-risk children in their classrooms.

Over the next three years, Northville’s rate continued to drop to 8.0% compared to the State of Michigan average which steadily increased to 12.5%. During the 1999-2000 school year Northville Public Schools began full implementation of the Instructional Support Team process in all five of its elementary schools. During the next five school years Northville’s rate consistently decreased to 5.65% for the 2003-2004 school year. Conversely, the State of Michigan’s average continued to increase to 14.2% during that same period.

Beyond the concept of Instructional Support Teams, Northville’s program provides a well-rounded approach with supports in early literacy and numeracy, a quality preschool experience, behavior supports and training for teachers, a commitment to professional development for staff, motor skill development (gross motor, visual motor, fine motor), visual memory training, parent support and training, as well as the use of amplified soundfields within the classrooms.

**Embracing Children**

Lutheran schools have a rich heritage of Christian education. Initially, the children being educated were those of congregational members. In more recent years Lutheran schools in a Christ-like manner have expanded their student population to embrace those children who are not necessarily connected by membership to the sponsoring Lutheran congregation(s), but live within their surrounding community. These are children whose parents (or guardians), for many and various reasons, have chosen their local Lutheran school to partner in their child’s education. Lutheran education focuses on nurturing the whole child. Of primary importance to the Lutheran educator is a child’s faith development. “Jesus Time” or religion class is a prominent portion of the day with Christian principles intertwined and lived throughout the day within the curriculum and discipline practices of Lutheran schools.

Just as diverse learners populate the public school systems in the United States, diverse learners are also found among the Lutheran school population. While the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997 mandates that all children in the United
States, including those with disabilities, have a right to a “free appropriate public education,” access to this “free appropriate public education” has eroded in recent years for non-public school children. Public school districts are still required to seek out those with special needs through a “Child Find” process and to provide for all children including those attending non-public schools within their district. However, the “rights” of the non-public school student who is found eligible to receive special education services has been compromised in many school districts across the nation.

Providing for the education of all children in its boundaries is a noble and worthwhile cause. Remediating or providing technology to compensate for a disability is an extremely expensive endeavor. The federal government pledged to fund the costs of IDEA by 40% leaving the larger portion of the costs up to the individual states to fund. The federal government has not yet achieved their stated goal having funded only 17% of the costs generated by IDEA. It is no wonder that public school services to children attending non-public schools have been minimized. This situation has led to difficult choices at times for children with special learning needs attending a private school such as a Lutheran school. Few Lutheran schools have access to a special educator on their school staff. This means that in most cases if a student attending a Lutheran school has been identified through the public school district’s Child Find process as eligible for special education, the student must access those services through the public school. As the severity of the disability increases, the greater the need for extraordinary efforts and time of specialized staff committed to right the educational course for the student. Many times children attending Lutheran schools who have been found eligible to receive public school special education services have no choice but to attend their public school full-time to receive optimum services. While these children were welcomed to come to the Lutheran school with its front doors wide open, they are, at times, slipping out the “back door” and missing the opportunity to experience the Christ-centered educational setting provided by Lutheran schools. Ideally, Lutheran schools will be able to find the necessary funds to secure the services of specialists. However, if they are unable, it is possible to accentuate the strengths that exist within the Lutheran education system to do a better job accommodating for the needs of these children.

Making Good Better and Better Best

It was Jesus who said, “Let the little children come to me, and do
not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matt. 19:14 NIV).

Lutheran churches exist in all fifty of the United States and beyond. Parents and children alike attend weekly worship and bible study within these congregations. Lutheran congregations continue to help establish Lutheran schools in their community. While a few Lutheran elementary schools may be closing their doors, new early childhood centers and high schools have been established in recent years.

Lutheran churches and schools offer a loving support system to assist parents in nurturing their children in a Christ-centered setting. Some congregations are more cognizant of this fact than others and are proactive in their approach to planning for this support system. In striving for excellence, the Lutheran system promotes quality school programs at all education levels, from early childhood to post-graduate, utilizing current best practices in educational and brain research. As Lutheran schools expand their reach to embrace children within their communities, on-going examination of programs being offered is fundamentally important.

Questions for Schools Committed to Promoting Early Learning Success to Consider

(Ramey & Ramey, 2004). Following are questions identified as discussion points while transforming Michigan’s Northville Public Schools to a “Model of Early Learning Success.”

- Do we consciously work to establish relationships with students and parents?
- Do we use a consistent approach to behavior management?
- Do students feel emotionally and physically safe in our school?
- Do we establish procedures/routines for behavior, instruction, and transitions in our school?
- Do we regularly assess what students know and can do (curriculum-based assessment) so that we can effectively design instruction?
- Do we adjust instruction to meet the needs of all students (differentiation)?
• Do we use a variety of learning materials and instructional techniques that allow students to spend much of their time at an appropriate instructional level?
• Do we create daily opportunities for each student to do something exceptionally well?
• Do we have a well-established support structure to help teachers with challenging students?
• Do we provide extra learning opportunities for students to develop essential skills? (Literacy, Numeracy, Sensory-Motor and Behavior Skills.)
• Do we connect with parents to help them develop the behavior skills needed to create calm, happy homes, and organizational skills to help their children become successful learners?
• Do the educators in this school engage in continuous school improvement and continuous professional learning? (Sornson, 2005)

Given the strength of Lutheran schools and the success that Northville Public Schools experienced in decreasing the percentage of children being referred for special services through a preventive, early intervention, and instructional support approach; it would be beneficial for Lutheran schools to consider these questions in depth. Through prevention, early intervention as well as the instructional support provided by specialists; the potential exists to circumvent the loss of children who are at risk of developing learning difficulties from leaving the Christ-centered educational setting their Lutheran school provides.

"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” (Proverbs 22:6 NIV). LEJ

References


Education Commission of the States. (2005). Reading/Literacy Quick
Facts. Available at: http://www.ecs.org/


Sornson, R. (2005), The Use of Instructional Support Teams as part of an Early Learning Success Initiative in the Northville Public Schools. n.p.


---

*Susan Lewis currently serves as a director for Lutheran Special Education Ministries (LSEM), a national organization with its Chicago-area offices located at Concordia University, River Forest. Lewis earned a Bachelor's degree in elementary education from Concordia University, River Forest, and a Master's degree in Special Education from California State University - Sacramento. She may be reached at 708-209-3344 or slewis@luthsepd.org.*
During 30 years as a principal (1969-1985) and district director (1986-1999) in Lutheran schools, I had the opportunity to observe myself and my colleagues in a number of ethically challenging situations. It seemed to me that at times we all acted in some rather irrational ways trying to work through our problems. I was curious to find out what might be influencing our actions. In the early 1990’s I returned to postgraduate study after more than twenty years. In completing a unit of study in my Masters course, I had the opportunity to interview three experienced Lutheran principals. Some of their comments regarding why they acted as they did got me thinking. In 1999 I started a research-based Doctor of Education program at Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia. That gave me the opportunity to look more closely at the way that principals address ethical dilemmas.

Educational administration provides individuals with power over others. The possible good that might occur in people’s lives through personal decisions and actions is the source of high hopes and great dreams. The harm such decisions and acts could cause turns those dreams into nightmares. For Lutheran school principals with any sense of concern for others, every decision is laden with significance, and some decisions present themselves as ethical challenges. My study addressed the question: What values influence the reflection of Australian Lutheran secondary school principals as they address ethical dilemmas in their work?

Setting

The Lutheran schooling endeavour in Australia has a history of over 160 years, dating back to the first settlement of German Lutheran migrants at Klemzig in 1838. That history can be roughly divided into two waves, the first eighty years from 1838 to around 1910 where the foundations were laid and the traditions set, and the second wave beginning in the late 1940’s and continuing to the present.

Between these waves was a trough related to the two major wars that pitted Germany against the British Empire, America and their allies.
During World War One, for example, the forty-nine Lutheran primary schools in South Australia were closed by government decree (Hauser, 2003). In the Second World War, a number of incidents involving the persecution of fourth and fifth generation Australian Lutherans of German descent caused significant pain and anxiety. There were incidences of books and family correspondence in German being burned by soldiers, of members of congregations in South Australia and Queensland being interned, of church buildings being vandalized and of church members being ostracized. The stories of these events have been retold throughout the intervening years. Such acts by government authorities and members of the Australian community led to the development of distrust of Government authority and isolation from the wider community. However, there also developed among many Lutherans the desire for wider acceptance as Australians. In the middle of the twentieth century, few would have expected that acceptance to come about through the attraction of middle class Australians to Lutheran schools.

Over eighty percent of current Lutheran schools have been started within the last forty years, with roughly half that number opening in the last twenty years. During this period, the growth rate of enrollments has never fallen below 4% per year, and in some years has reached over 7%. This wave of growth has yet to crest. This growth has had several effects. It has put a severe strain on the human resources of the Lutheran church, substantially altered the client base, and changed the way church members thought about their schools.

A substantial number of the teachers recruited to serve in Lutheran secondary schools have come from other Christian denominations, or have no Christian background. In the year 2000 only 39% of secondary teachers were members of the Lutheran church. Few of the Lutheran teachers and even fewer of the non-Lutherans have had formal education in Biblical or theological studies. Because a key expectation of the Lutheran church is that all activity in its schools will be informed by the Biblical account and the Lutheran confessions, the fact that a substantial proportion of educators in its schools know little of these matters is a cause for concern to the church. At the same time, some of the teachers serving in the schools both resent and resist efforts by the church to increase their knowledge and understanding. The matter is not yet resolved, and remains an issue of concern for all parties. Most often it is the principal who must address this issue within the school.
The student population has also undergone a significant demographic change. Since the beginning of the period, the number of Lutheran students in Lutheran secondary schools has grown only slightly. The majority of the growth has been from students from other denominational backgrounds or with no significant Christian identity. In the year 2000, 76% of the students were not from Lutheran backgrounds. They and their families often start Lutheran secondary education with little knowledge of the Bible, little experience of the type of worship practiced by the Lutheran church and no knowledge of the Lutheran church's history or doctrines. Since the schools expect that they will study Christian teachings, will attend chapel worship services and will act and interact within the framework of church doctrine, it is to be expected that misunderstandings, misinterpretations of behavior, tension and concern will arise during their secondary years. It is the principal who most often will have to address the difficult and contentious issues that arise from these matters.

There is in the church an expectation that principals will be operating with a world view informed by the ethical principles embedded in Lutheran theology. A key principle is that of Christian love (Bonhoeffer, 1966; Childs, 1992; Jersild, 1990; Lazareth, 2001). The essence of this principle is that human acts need to reflect the love of Christ to all people affected by them. To help principals to develop such understanding, the Lutheran church has adopted a policy that states all principals must be members of the Lutheran Church of Australia, and all must study Lutheran theology (Lutheran Church of Australia, 1992; Lutheran Church of Australia, 1997). While some principals have studied aspects of Lutheran theology, many do not have an in depth knowledge of the ethical implications. The rapid expansion of the school system has made the policy impossible to fully implement. Both the expectations and the policy assume that studying Lutheran theology and being a worshipping member of the Lutheran church will lead to the development of an ethical perspective informed by Biblical knowledge and applied Lutheran theology. It is further assumed that having such a perspective will influence the professional actions of Lutheran educators in an appropriate way. The assumptions had never been tested by any form of research.

The Study

The research subjects selected for the study were all drawn from the membership of Lutheran secondary school principals in Australia. Since the research question asked about the value assumptions, it became nec-
necessary to generate data that would capture the interaction between the actor (in this case Lutheran secondary school principal), and the actor's self. In effect I was trying to capture the reflection that Butler suggests links individually constructed knowledge to actions (Butler, 1996). Thus a strong case existed for the use of in depth interviews that allowed the subjects to reflect out loud on the chain of events that occurred when they were confronted by a difficult ethical dilemma. The use of a past event had the potential to call up the significant others, reference groups, perspectives, beliefs and information that might give access to the components of the moral guide (Charon, 2001). The nature of the question moved the focus of the study away from the action and placed it squarely in the reflective area. In the end I interviewed three principals using a modified method of blind sampling that ensured a spread of gender and experience.

The principals were invited to select a situation they encountered in the year 2000 which caused them concern and sleepless nights because it was difficult to decide what to do. All made these selections prior to an interview with me. In the interview the principals were invited to take up their presentation of the event, and to tell it as they experienced it. My job was to keep the conversation flowing, and to provide feedback to the principal about comments of particular interest or which seemed to require expansion in order to more fully understand the issue. Each case was quite different. One involved the exclusion of a student, the second addressed a conflict between two members of teaching staff and the third concerned a dispute between workers in the school administration office.

In the analysis I made use of a form of membership categorization to isolate the values held by the principals. Baker (1997) makes the point:

Membership categorization is a pervasive resource for sense-making through utterances. Tracing members' use of these categories and devices in any settings, including interview settings is a means of showing how identities, social relationships and even institutions are produced (Baker, p. 132).

With Silverman, Baker holds that such analysis is a way of directly gaining access to a cultural universe and its content of moral assumptions posited by Silverman (1993). She states, "These categories are in a sense the speakers' 'puppets', which they can dress up in different ways and make behave in various ways" Use of membership categorization provided a window into the values being assigned in the narrative, and had
the potential to reveal sources of those values. (Baker, p.143)

The analysis allowed me to identify the effect that deeply held values had on the reflection of principals as they worked through the dilemmas.

**Findings**

The three cases presented in the accounts of the principals are each a kind of camera obscura providing a reflection of the reality of the inner world of the account givers. We can see the reflections and we can use analytical devices to bring the image of this inner world into some kind of focus. However, we need to be very aware of the possibility to distort the image by imposing our own lenses, and of the fact that we are not seeing the full reality. For those reasons, the findings of this study are stated cautiously and tentatively, and would require substantial additional research before any significant conclusions could be formulated. That said, there are a number of interesting and useful observations that can be made from the study. These are presented in the form of descriptive statements.

1. There is evidence in the accounts to suggest that the way principals perceive dilemmas is the result of a filtering process where some facts are not fully considered prior to action.

2. There is evidence in the accounts to suggest that the filtering process is more strongly influenced by sub-rational (emotionally based) and trans-rational (belief based) values than by rational values.

3. There is evidence in the accounts that each principal has a world view that is at least partially shaped by values implicit in the Christian tradition.

The trans-rational values that challenged them and drove them and even blinkered the principals were grounded in their faith and the meaning that their faith had given to their professional life and their professional activity. They did not speak about theory. They spoke from their hearts.

**Implications of the findings**

Given our strong commitment to the use of theology as a tool for understanding the human condition, it is interesting to note that the principals made no mention of theological precepts in their accounts. The accounts contain no direct references to the formal theological precepts of Lutheranism. Yet the tensions of their dilemmas did involve the forces of sin and grace, of law and gospel and of forgiveness and condemnation. Instead the principals in the study referred to the example of
Christ, to agape love, as Childs (1992) defines it. This provided the point of reference most often stated. This is a strong indicator of the significance that the Biblical accounts might have for the principals who were interviewed. It calls attention to the fact that there is a dearth of literature in the Lutheran tradition that directly addresses a philosophy of Lutheran schooling or looks at the application of Lutheran ethics to the schooling process. Lutheran understandings of the world, the nature of the human beings that inhabit that world, the origins of that world and the purpose of those humans have not been drawn together in an accessible format that busy school principals can access.

In many ways the findings of this study are a few intriguing pieces of a jigsaw. They provide hints regarding the way principals reflect on their actions in what they see as ethical dilemmas, but they do not in any way provide a total picture. I am left with more questions now than when I began the research project several years ago. The partial knowledge is useful, but more knowledge and understanding of the reflective process in the development of Lutheran secondary school principals, and of the function of values in that process would be of even greater use. Only further research will be able to widen the scope of knowledge and understanding.

The use of trans-rational values for meaning making by the principals is an indication to the church that faith driven beliefs do influence the actions of principals, at least the ones in this study. While the findings indicate those values are present, they do not support a view that there is a theological reasoning operating. In all three accounts, the importance of “walking the talk,” of being an example of Christian behavior is spotlighted. The accounts suggest that the principals have an idealistic expectation that the way of Christ will be the way of life in the schools. However, the study shows that there are many difficulties in this expectation. Human sinfulness, weakness, circumstance and stubbornness are all operating in the day to day events. An important implication for the development of Lutheran principals is the need to provide more opportunities for principals to master the theological underpinning to their values, and find a balanced attitude toward those who are driven by differing values.

The importance of both family and community in the formation of values is suggested in the accounts. An implication for the church regarding the development of principals is the provision for principals to reflect with congregational and family groups as well as professional
groups. Consideration here might be to provide time and opportunity for such gathering. While this will occur naturally in the lives of some, the expectations inherent in the work of principals can sometimes militate against taking time to reflect on events with family and church members. Structured times for retreat with congregational and family members could help in this kind of reflection and development.

Implications for the educational development of principals for Lutheran schools also emerge from the findings. It is evident that the world view is strongly shaped by values, and that values act as a filter for the acquisition of knowledge, the taking in. In order to grow, individuals need to be encouraged to see events and experiences in new ways. This will require the development of situations that shake the filters or even question the filters. Such development will need to begin with critical reflection. Since the research demonstrates how powerfully the sub rational and trans-rational values impact on the functioning of some Lutheran principals, it would be useful for the Lutheran Church of Australia to find ways to help principals become more attuned to their own values and the impact these have on their professional lives. The techniques of Clinical Pastoral Education that the church uses in the development of its pastors might well be adapted to use in the development of the principals of its schools.

Finally, the Lutheran church should consider in what ways it could continue fostering a strong culture of Biblical and theological study and critical reflection for principals and potential principals. The current opportunities for study are limited and very dependent on the initiative of individuals. It may be important to encourage and support young educators who have the academic potential and the desire to broaden their educational experience beyond the boundaries of Australia.

The accounts of these principals clearly show how challenging the work of a principal can be. In the words of one, “I hope no one else has to go through this,” but of course, someone will go through the sleepless nights and anguish of trying to find the right thing to do. It is part of our human journey. LEJ

References


Ken Albinger is currently a member of the teaching staff of Australian Lutheran College. He is seconded to the School of Education of Australian Catholic University, where he coordinates a Lutheran strand for the preparation of teachers for Lutheran schools. Since 1973 he has served as a teacher, principal and district director for Lutheran schools in Australia. His Ed.D. was awarded by Griffith University, Brisbane in 2005. Previous articles have appeared in the Lutheran Theological Journal and the Australian Lutheran Education Yearbook.
Many have had the experience of coming upon some kind of religious program or televised worship service while flipping through the channels. If they pause to watch what is going on or listen to the message, it is not uncommon for them not only to see or hear some things they find familiar, but also encounter other things that — either because of the style of delivery or the words used to convey the message itself — just don’t sit right with them. They understand what the speaker is trying to say, and may recognize, and perhaps even agree with some of the presuppositions informing the speaker’s worldview, but it’s just not the way they would say it, and may at some points even seem wrong, in their opinion. That’s what it is like to read this book, the only one offered so far by Photon Publishing, an independent operation run by the author, John Darrell Carter, Ph.D.

According to the information provided on the back cover (and the Photon Publishing Web site), this is the author’s first publication “in Christian philosophy from a biblical perspective,” an interest he now has time to pursue since his retirement as a scientist who holds a doctorate “in the science of macromolecules.” No additional information is readily available about the various scientific positions he has held “in government, academia and industry,” but we do learn that he “became a Christian after reading C. S. Lewis’ ‘Mere Christianity’ while serving in the U.S. Army during the era of Vietnam.”

One does not have to get too far into the book to begin experiencing the mixed emotions or conflicted feelings alluded to above, giving it what, at first, could best be described as an enigmatic quality. After further review, however, what began to emerge was downright vexing. On the one hand, a Christian reader will surely be ready and willing to
space program, administered by NASA, operates on a philosophy of atheism where image takes precedence over substance. One can only wonder if NASA's unprecedented number of catastrophic failures over the last few decades is a result of that agency's humanistic philosophical approach to its mission. NASA is an organization that could do a good service to truth if it kept humanistic philosophy out of its science. But NASA's leaders have chosen the popular path, and secular humanistic scientists are so good at intimidation that there is little chance for change in that governmental agency.

One wonders, perhaps uncharitably, if Carter, at some point in his scientific career didn't seek, unsuccessfully, a job in the space agency. Regardless, there is a tone of grudge settling that runs throughout the book.

The work also has far too many mechanical/typographical errors and spelling errors to not be distracting, including repetitive passages where it appears that the less preferred version during composition was not deleted, quotes not closed, other punctuation problems, and both random and consistent ("Engles" for Frederick Engels) spelling problems, most of which would have been caught by an editor who was not also the author.

A book like this could have had some value as an introductory (through relatively elementary and superficial) overview of the history of several key figures in Western civilization. However, in light of the author's bias, through which he interprets almost every historical event and figure he describes (that humanism is the cause not only of every societal ill, but also every moral wrong that befalls fallen humanity), this effort is ultimately disappointing, at least to this reviewer. LEJ

H. Robert Hayes is Professor of Political Science at Concordia University, River Forest, IL. where, after serving for seventeen years as Dean of Students, he has returned full-time to the classroom and the teaching of courses in political science and philosophy.
A bout a half century ago C.S. Lewis wrote a book he called "The Screwtape Letters." He wrote it as a series of the letters from a high-ranking devil named Screwtape to his nephew, a lower-ranking devil. In the letters, Screwtape gives his nephew advice on how to persuade people on earth to fall away from God. The book helped millions of its readers to see that the things that threaten to disconnect us from our faith in God don't always come from obvious sources, but from subtleties that cause doubt and despair.

If a more current letter were written to give advice on how to pull principals away from their mission and faith, it might be like the following:

My Dear Nephew,

You'd be well advised to get your client, the principal, to take criticism personally. Even though he probably hears ten positive comments for every negative one, emphasize the negative comments. Let him be consumed by them. Try to make him bitter about remarks the students, their parents, the teachers, or the boards may make. Don't allow him the time to cherish the appreciative words of others. Keep him from noticing the genuine smiles of the kindergartners or the grateful words of a school parent.

There are few tangible ways for a principal to assess the results of his efforts at school. Use this to your advantage. Instill doubts about whether he's making a difference in the lives of his students and their families. Christians are constantly being reminded to be faithful to their calling and to be assured of God's presence. Convince him to be skeptical of that.

Keep reminding him of the financial woes of the school. Keep him worried about how the bills are going to be paid and whether or not enrollment figures will be sufficient.

Even though his God has gotten your client through a lot of crises in the past, convince your principal to forget those previous experiences and to treat each new challenge as something beyond God's control.
Don’t be alarmed that your client is still going through the motions of attending church each Sunday and participating in regular faculty devotions. Get him to believe that it’s simply part of his job. Do what you can to keep him from thinking that he needs things like church and devotions to be enriched. Don’t let him see how they can help sustain him through the stresses of his daily life. Make him see them as just more tasks in an already busy schedule.

I am amused, my dear nephew, at the old saying, “Idleness is the devil’s workshop.” If people only knew how happy it makes me to see principals work so hard and then feel guilty about enjoying a leisurely, restful Sunday. Keep your client too busy to smell the roses. Help him to find excuses for not taking a peaceful walk in the park. Few places on earth are as densely populated as school buildings. Your client is constantly around crowds of people. That’s good. It keeps him from the solitude he needs to quietly treasure the love of his God.

Regarding your client’s prayer life, it’s best if you can dissuade him from praying at all, but if he insists on praying, help him to get discouraged when his prayers aren’t answered the way he hopes. Coerce him into being prescriptive in his prayers, telling God how to solve his problems. Teach him to evaluate the value of each prayer by the immediate, apparent success it has. That should help to discourage him.

I’m pleased that your client is allowing some of his students to irritate him. Continue to use that to our benefit. Do what you can to make him view his students as enemies, not children of God. Make him obsess on the letter of the law, or in this case, the student handbook. Help him to see himself as the enforcer of the law, not the messenger of the Gospel.

At all cost make sure your client avoids laughter. Laughter does our side no good and should be discouraged. Fun is closely related. It is of little use to us.

I’m afraid that the principal understands too well that he influences people most powerfully by his example. Steer him away from that. Persuade him to believe that the anger he shows toward uncooperative students or parents is simply righteous indignation. Emotional outbursts are our friends. We don’t want those students to think that stressful situations can be handled in calm, caring ways.

This last matter, my dear nephew, is a delicate one. Your client seems to have a sincere humility about him. That’s dangerous. People will see
that and try to emulate it. Fortunately for us, humility is a tightrope walk. You can use it for our gain in either of two ways. First, you can get him to lean too far to the right and fall off the tightrope by blaming himself for every problem the school encounters. Make him guilt-ridden. Destroy his confidence and self-esteem.

The other extreme is to get him to lean too far the other way and become too enamored of himself. Let him believe that whatever successes the school has had are because of him. Make him overly proud so that he doesn’t think he needs to listen to the teachers, parents, and most importantly, God. Help him forget that he is a servant. Christians who understand their role as servants hurt our cause.

Principals have a powerful, loving, caring God to strengthen them. But the good news is that they’ve got a difficult ministry. With considerable effort on your part, they can be made disconsolate and dispirited.

Best wishes,
Your Uncle.  

LEJ
I’m on my way to New Orleans for a week of work and ministry. Earlier this morning our ministry team heard a sermon at the church that hosted us overnight in northern Mississippi. Their ministry of hospitality—week after week—is a true labor of love and generosity. Thanks, Lord! But the most powerful message my heart is taking away from the last twelve hours is the experience of venturing out in faith without knowing what this next week will bring.

Interstate 55 is a mere three miles from my house. But the part of the very same highway that I’m on today is more than 700 miles from my house, with another 300 miles to go before reaching our destination for the week. One part of it is incredibly familiar. And the part we’re traveling at the moment is completely unfamiliar, yet familiar at the same time. After all, an interstate is an interstate, right? Or is it?

Traveling and Learning

As we each lead children throughout the year in our classrooms, this interstate is, in a sense, a metaphor for what happens each week and each day. The travel is both familiar and new. The activities, centers, discussion, and experiences are both old and new at the same time. After a while teaching takes on a familiarity that says “I know how to do this. I’ve done it before.” And at the same time it unfolds into a dynamic novelty that also says “Wow! I never thought of it like this before. This child is challenging me to find new strategies, new answers, new questions, new activities, new experiences, and new ways of thinking about what teaching and learning are and ought to be.

What are your children traveling through right now? Are you exploring new pathways within the familiarity of the daily-ness of learning together? Are you infecting children with your own love of learning and your excitement of discovery?

The adventure of learning needs to be one that is shared between teacher and student. Children learn more from the process of learning than from the facts and
concepts they are accumulating. They are learning *how* to learn while they are deciding *what* to learn.

**Structure and Novelty**

One advantage of the familiarity of the interstate is the speed and efficiency with which we can travel to a new destination. That’s another metaphor for learning. The sameness of structure in the classroom provides the familiarity that allows the novelty of exploration to take place. Children need both: structure and novelty; predictability and change; reliability and adventure; sameness and newness.

Too much sameness breeds boredom. Too much novelty and change leads to insecurity and loss of confidence. Too much of anything is not a good idea.

**Learning and Serving**

My main reason for choosing to travel to New Orleans is a sense of the need for ministry to the families we will impact. I am going in order to be able to serve. In a sense, this too is a metaphor for a classroom. We travel into new topics and new ways of learning in order to serve our students. We explore new ideas because our calling is to encourage them, to help them learn. We serve. We encourage. We help. That’s exactly what I plan to do this week. That’s what I attempt to do every week with graduate and undergraduate students.

Others learn because they see us learning and want to share in the excitement. Others learn because we encourage their learning and walk alongside by learning with them. Still others learn because we help them by providing the materials and experiences that fuel their learning and keep them energized.

Helping and encouraging others to learn is a servant activity. We are not the resident experts who come to give information while others simply receive it. We are not the only source of information in the classroom. Rather, we each serve as a guide, a resource, a catalyst, an encourager. That’s ministry. *LEJ*
What do the following phrases have in common?

- Ministry in Teaching
- The Master's Touch
- Apples and Alleluias
- Touching Lives: Yesterday, Today and Forever
- The Carpenter's Tools
- Divine Design
- With Jesus I Reign
- Redeemed, Revived, Ready

As an educator in Lutheran ministry within the range of "rookie" through "emeritus," you may easily associate at least one of the above phrases with LEA's triennial Convocation. Since 1984, each of the eight themes has highlighted God's special call to serve through the ministry of Lutheran education. Numbers of participants have grown over the years from several hundred to several thousand. The scope of ministry has been enhanced as individuals from the United States and at least eight other countries have gathered to celebrate both the diversity of those we serve and all that we have in common as Christian servants. God's baptismal grace makes us joyful to serve together with one mission.

We are now just two years away from the next international gathering of Lutheran educators in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Mark your calendar for April 24-26, 2008. The theme for the next LEA Convocation will be "Fountains of Faith and Knowledge." We are reminded in these words about God's precious life-giving gift of love through the blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. We are called to "come to the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God," (Eph. 4:13) because we are cleansed by the living water that Jesus gives. "The water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:14).

Lutheran educators are the fountains that flow from the living water. The energy, direction, pattern and strength of each fountain varies from person to person.
The directions that the flowing waters take will be formed by the children, youth and adults whom we serve. Needs vary from day to day, conditions require our flexibility, and obstacles necessitate our changing course. However, the fountains that spring from the living waters of Jesus continue to flow strong. They are even stronger when we combine our resources and navigate the channels together. This is one key goal of the Convocation.

Are you ready to gather together in the baptismal waters with thousands of your colleagues in Christ? Are you prepared to be drenched in the cascade of fellowship, spiritual development, professional growth, and global insights that await you in Minneapolis? Watch for further information to be available in coming months. Let us know how you would like to be involved. We look forward to diving into the refreshing and renewing fountains of faith and knowledge with you and your staff in 2008. LEJ
A colleague of mine officiated an eighth grade girls' basketball game over the weekend. An irate parent, bothered over some of his calls, accosted him afterwards and asked for his full name and where he worked.

A recent parent conference replayed an all-too-familiar scene: mom and dad were furious and at their wits' end over their freshman daughter's poor grades. The daughter does whatever it takes to just get by. They begged for the teachers' help in turning their daughter around.

A colleague confronted another colleague in the school parking lot with a rage-filled tirade after being asked to trim his extracurricular program because it was interfering with the participating students' classroom performance and other extracurricular involvement.

There are probably many and varied dynamics at work in all those involved in the above incidents. Many books, conferences, and workshops could be formulated from similar examples and focus on societal changes to individual psychology. I want to suggest one common denominator, however, that rarely gets our attention.

We have a problem that surfaces quite often in our Lutheran high schools. More accurately, we have symptoms of a deep problem that rise to the foreground throughout a school year. The flesh of students believes that life is hidden in athletic prowess, academic achievements, or boyfriend/girlfriend relationships. The flesh of staff believes that life is hidden in successful programs, well-run classrooms, or sterling reputations. The flesh of parents believes that life is hidden in well-behaved children, public image, or cooperative teachers.

These beliefs are idolatrous. Like Martha, we become "anxious and distracted over many things" and forget that we need only One thing. (Luke 10:38-42) In our desperation and fear that we might lose the very thing we think we need, we lash out at those around us who threaten us, who block our goal. We become angry and
accuse teachers, administrators, parents, students, and more subtly, God.

We fret and it leads to evil: wrath, malice, slander. We become bound and blind and the more we discuss with others the trials and afflictions tormenting us, the more embedded we become in our idolatrous beliefs. We plot, we scheme, we manipulate. Many well-meaning people console us and give advice. But we need to hear Truth that will set us free.

“Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3:2-3).

We no longer need to clamor for this or for that. Our identity is firmly and safely anchored in heaven.

Lutheran schools have this liberating Truth. And we get to proclaim it daily to young people who are trying to “find their life.” The Good News is that Life has already found and called them.

The next time you find yourself listening to someone’s squabble down here, take a moment to repent of your own temptation to idolatry. Rest in your forgiveness won by Christ. And then speak the Truth in love that your neighbor needs to hear: “your life is now hidden with Christ in God.” LEJ
According to our good friend Noah Webster (did you know his wife could not get a word in edgewise?), “Habit” is defined as a “frequent repetition.” And the word “Holy” means “set apart to the service of God.” Put them both together and we have Holy Habits. Let us take a look at these Holy habits that are so important in our own faith lives.

Another term that helps us to consider how we live out our joy-filled lives in the Lord, is “Resurrection Routines.” Resurrection Routines, or Holy Habits, help us to focus on some basic behaviors that we have that enable us to center on Christ, the Lord of all of life.

Mark Buchanan, in his book “Your God Is Too Safe,” defines Holy Habits as “… the disciplines, the routines, by which we stay alive and focused on Christ. At first we choose them and carry them out; after a while, they are part of who we are. And they carry us.”

Holy Habits can train us to focus on God, instead of all of the other “stuff” that gets in the way, like schedules and lesson plans and meetings and disagreements and turf wars and our own egos, to name just a few. Holy Habits help to convince us that there is much, much more to life than who wins the World Series (spoken by a true Cubs fan) and why there is so much traffic today and how come everybody else’s kid is doing better than mine. Holy Habits are ways that God allows us to re-focus and to prioritize our lives, beginning at the Cross and the Empty Tomb. Holy Habits are not shrewd gimmicks for tracking an elusive deity. They are, rather, ways of tracking ourselves down in our elusiveness of either being still and knowing He is God or making every effort and knowing the same. They are ways of breaking and mending our own human ways. They are ways of fleeing boredom rather than God.

So, friends, what are some of your Holy Habits? And what other Holy Habits might we want to test out in the days and weeks ahead? When I’ve asked this question at various conferences, I’ve received these kinds of responses:
• Daily morning prayers.
• Playing reflective music.
• Walking each day with the Lord, for both physical and spiritual exercise.
• Having a place to study in my own home.
• Singing wherever I am.
• Regular worship each week.
• Personal reading of the Scriptures (and not just because I’m preparing for a class or an assignment.)
• Laughing as much as I can, especially at myself.
• Getting enough sleep, so I can handle the day’s challenges.
• Caring for people, one person at a time.
• Taking time out of my day for myself.
• Greeting each person I meet with a smile and “hello.”
• Doing something for someone else, intentionally, every day.
• Reminding myself at night that I am Baptized and forgiven, especially if I have had a horrible day.

And on and on and on.

What are some of your Holy Habits? One such Holy Habit could be to make a list of your Resurrection Routines and share them with others. How about listing them at your next staff meeting, or family discussion, or social function with your friends? This habit of sharing these choice behaviors might just become a Holy Habit in itself.

In our culture, the word “habit” has taken on too much of a negative connotation, as if it is a “bad” habit. Not so. Habits can be affirming, useful, necessary, as long as they are seen as means to an end and not ends in themselves. Holy Habits help us to focus on the Lord in our daily lives, help us to find the refreshment and energy through the Word and the Sacraments, enable us to serve other people, and provide great opportunities to celebrate life to the fullest. Let’s hear it for Holy Habits, and Resurrection Routines. Anything that we do to help remind us of our connection to the Lord and the fact that He continues to allow us to “practice the Resurrection”, is a great habit and routines that needs to be fostered, developed, and increased.

May each of us continue our Holy Habits and Resurrection Routines. In doing so, we will continue to be blessed, and we will continue to be blessings to so many others ...in the Holy and Resurrected name of Jesus. LEJ

Lutheran Education Journal • Volume 140, No. 4—Page 294
I am penning the words of this column on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. This juncture on the Christian calendar seems odd to a great many people. The call of Lent is one of discipline, sacrifice, and sober reflection on the sufferings of Jesus. How strange for a civilization that works all year to eradicate suffering and to heartily and lustfully celebrate life to move in another direction entirely (in fact, this evening — “Fat Tuesday” — will see more than its share of last minute flings and parties). We have never quite shaken off the advice of an 18th century philosopher to cultivate “the greatest happiness for the greatest number.” Indeed, there is nothing most of us would rather do than mass produce happiness. And yet, the Lenten Season bids Christians to “share in His suffering” (Romans 8). And so we carefully and deliberately meditate on the vanity of the world, the necessity of repentance, and the Passion of Christ.

Educators — especially Lutheran educators — know a thing or two about sacrifice, discipline, and suffering of course. From the sacrifice of time with our own families for the sake of our students; from engaging in a noble profession without great financial reward (and sometimes, respect); from frustration and disappointment when school budgets are deemed expendable; from so many other perspectives, we frequently think about our own self-sacrifice and difficulties.

However, Lent calls us to “share in His suffering.” That is the key. It is in the suffering of the Lord that we are reconciled to God; His sacrifice, not ours; His will, not ours; His life, not ours. That is the message of Lent as it is understood in the Church of the Reformation. Is salvation centered in our works and our sacrifices and our suffering, or in Christ and His suffering? It makes all the difference in the world for our faith. Ultimately, our suffering does not matter. We can deal with it if our lives are not centered in ourselves. But the suffering of Christ does matter for, “He was bruised for our iniquities... and with His stripes we are healed.” This understanding will
deliver us all our lives from every temptation to false martyrdom.

The formula for the Lenten Season is simply this: we share in the sufferings of Christ in order to share in His resurrection. All of us who live and work at Concordia University here in River Forest wish you a happy and joyous Easter celebration. **LEJ**