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Leon retired last year. In the twenty four years since I moved on in Lutheran education, from teaching at the elementary level, to high school counseling, then to Concordia University, I've often thought about him and what he taught me as one of his “rookies” – a term borrowed from him that I still apply to all beginning teachers at any level.

I was one of those people that Synodical placement directors refer to as an “immobile” – my then-fiancée had already received her Call to another near suburban Chicago Lutheran school, so Dr. Jungemann kept me on the short-notice list for another school in the area. I worked my usual summer job at minimum wage, waiting for the call about the Call. Summer wore on, the wedding date approached and, finally, a couple of days before I was supposed to make the long drive to take that long walk, Leon was on the phone. Would I be interested in coming in for an interview for a fifth grade teaching position?

Sure.

The interview in his small office didn’t take long. I think I answered everything the right way. The one thing that I do recall about that was, having been something of a student activist where the whole synodical controversy was concerned in those early 1970’s (thereby earning my first opportunity to see the inside of the President’s office here at his, uh, invitation along with the rest of the student government officers) I asked where the congregation stood on those matters. Leon’s reply? “Ah, that stuff isn’t worth a hill of beans around here because we’re too busy to worry about it,” a piece of advice I’ve tried to remember ever since.

So, I headed off to northern Wisconsin to my wife’s hometown for the wedding, all of my earthly possessions (which amounted to less than what I now haul back and forth to my daughter’s college twice a year) in a rental truck, to be forever joined with hers. When one speaks of a solid foundation for a marriage, it may also refer to all of that stuff in the basement, forever sealing the bond based on the fact that neither partner really wants to go through all of it.
We were at the rehearsal the “morning of.” I was preoccupied with struggling to remember my part of the vows that somehow I’d been talked into memorizing instead of letting Pastor Ted Laesch do the “repeat after me” thing. Sometime during that time frame, my soon-to-be-mother-in-law disappeared. Not to be confused with a stroke of Divine Providence, she just went back to the house to get the set of brand new altar candles that someone had forgotten. When she got back to the church, she quickly reported that someone named “Leon” had been on the phone at the house with the news that The Holy Spirit and the Board of Parish Education had made a quick decision. Her future son-in-law was employed! Timing is everything.

It was understood that rookies were to be on the receiving end of certain initiations at the annual late-summer faculty retreat which sometimes included but were not limited to a long walk off a short pier at the lakeside retreat center – or so legend has it. Somehow I managed to avoid that, but being a newlywed was an inescapable topic for ribbing.

I learned a lot about teaching that first year but, more importantly, I learned what makes a good Lutheran school work is the people. Leon knew all of the “old-timers” in the congregation, every one of the 250 students’ names, something about their parents, insisted that we do home visits before the start of the year and that we were regular in our involvement in the congregation as well as the school. Leon trusted his teachers to do the right thing – but to DO it. When problems arose with students or parents, one never wanted to hear the words, “Why didn’t you tell me?” from him.

I don’t think I ever worked as hard, but it was fun. Genuinely fun. Even the late hours grading papers, scoring achievement test scores by hand (using those templates with the little holes over the right answers), being on the Outdoor Education staff in May for a 24/7 real but exhausting growth experience with eighth graders, coaching, youth group, getting to know the families of students and becoming one of the other “family”, the faculty, staff and pastors. A significant part of that was all of the inside jokes, and Leon’s particularly unique pranks both at school (waiting until the eighth grade teacher was in the men’s room to have a fire drill) and at faculty get-togethers (empty beer cans...
hidden where the hosts wouldn't find them for months – even years; finding a way to reverse the order of letters in any household Christmas decoration that said “NOEL”) and some payback (faculty members shoveling snow onto his front porch in a pile four feet deep in the dead of night in order to prompt a snow day which he famously refused to declare and so on and so on.)

As I look back on it, I think that one guiding philosophy was that we should take everything seriously but ourselves. My favorite story and most exemplary of him was that in filling a vacancy at second grade my wife, Lynne, was the recipient of the Call. Delivery of the documents was a special occasion as we lived only a few blocks from Leon’s house. He brought the envelope over in person on his bicycle, semi-galloping up the front sidewalk, flapping his arms, announcing that the Holy Spirit had an important message for her. Irreverent? Maybe, but I wouldn’t want it any other way. Unique? Absolutely, because behind the fun was genuine joy in the teaching ministry that came out in his personality and style.

There was plenty of further evidence to support all of this – just about everyone who taught at St. Paul during those years has a Leon Story to tell: some fit to print; others, well, they just defy explanation – you had to be there.

When the Call came from Good Shepherd Lutheran School to be their principal, I’m sure there was some considerable sorting out of prayers at the Throne on that one. We were relieved to hear that he returned it and decided to remain at St. Paul. But then, they Called him again – this time he accepted and made the move to the Land Beyond the Tollway, to the frontier of Chicago suburbia.

Well, they’ve never just closed the doors in hopeless resignation at any school I’ve served after I’ve taken a Call elsewhere and St. Paul wasn’t an exception in Leon’s case after his departure either. The history, tradition and ministry continues with some different faces in the classrooms and the principal’s office but always, always with able people whom God empowers to do his work there, among them more “rookies” who’ve stuck around or who really learned the business there and earned their stripes to be able to serve in other places. We still bump into each other occasionally as he and his wife have come back for special events.

We couldn’t make it to the retirement dinner for Leon at Good

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Shepherd as we had a niece graduating from high school in Wisconsin the same day and, as I’m sure he’d agree, family comes first. I’m sure there were lots of Leon Stories that afternoon from St. Paul and Good Shepherd combined, and I’m sorry we missed them as well as a chance to see some former colleagues who’ve also moved on.

Retirement dinners, old stories, reunions and the shared history of people who serve together in a Lutheran school are the important ways in which the rewards of this business are passed along as a cultural understanding to younger people who are just starting out. I trust that the reader has had many similar opportunities and that knowing and serving with one as unique as my mentor and first principal, Leon, has been part of that—a blessing and a privilege.

Enjoy your well-earned retirement, Leon. Be strong and courageous and enjoy God’s blessings. Our best to Leilia and the boys.

Oh, one more thing. I’ve only used Leon’s first name here to protect whatever innocence he has left. If you’ve known someone named “Leon” in Lutheran education maybe from, say, Frankenmuth, MI... with a crew cut... chances are you know who I’m writing about; if you don’t, I hope you know someone like him during your ministry. *LEJ*
The reader may agree or disagree, but it seems to me that when a news story breaks, it takes only about twenty-four hours for it to become polarized. The exception to this, perhaps, might be predicting the landfall of hurricanes, but even with that advance knowledge, it didn’t take long for the finger-pointing and dissembling to begin even as Katrina’s victims attempted to pull the shreds of their lives together. Over a year later, things are still not much past the original level of devastation in terms of property and the lives of many of the people involved. The blame-game continues right along with the despair and frustration.

Have we lost the ability to critically examine both sides of a question? More importantly, when did the importance of the process of doing just that become, in itself, a contentious matter?

Last year’s agony of Terri Schiavo, her husband and her family is an example. Those who opposed removal of her feeding tube in order to end her ordeal were castigated by some as less than compassionate. Those who supported keeping her alive were viewed as the more “devout”. Can one be realistically compassionate and still be devout? Many families of faithful Christians, presumably many included among the readership, have had to make the awful, heart-wrenching end of life decisions including removal of life support to a loved one. On the other hand, can one be ever-hopeful that a comatose person will have some undeterminable “quality of life” that should not be summarily ended without being viewed as an extremist?

I know at least three people diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease and have met several more in the last sixth months or so. The answers to more effective treatment of this and other irreversible, debilitating diseases may lie in research involving humanly derived stem cells. One side says, “Get on with it; many lives are at stake and the available cell lines are never going to become human beings.” The other side says, “Don’t tamper with cellular structures that have the promise of the regeneration
of human beings.” Conduct research and save lives; preserve life potential in any form. The discussion continues, each new advance being evaluated almost immediately in the media as to what reaction it will bring from each side of the issue, usually reduced to a few sentences with little in the way of contextual understanding.

Sure to be a continuing issue is the matter of immigrants to the U.S., especially those who are undocumented. While there certainly must legal necessities in entering any country from another the focus has immediately shifted to the reality that, well, there are just a lot of people already here who have made a home for themselves in America. Deporting undocumented parents of children born in the U.S. and who are citizens by birthright appears to be cold but there are people lining up behind that stance. Or, as one Midwestern community has done, it seems to be the right of the majority residents to make it clear that illegal immigrants aren’t at all welcome and that they don’t want them in the community, an opinion extending right down to not allowing them to fly the flag of their country of origin outside a place of business. On the other hand, according to a series of articles in this weekend’s Chicago Tribune (2006), the incidence of industrial accidents among immigrants is high, given the nature of the work and the willingness of immigrants to take on these jobs, but when the injuries happen, individuals frequently go without proper care for fear of exposing their illegal status and suffer permanent, sometimes fatal, consequences. The weight of providing public services, education and health care to those who are not American citizens is a reality but the human stories don’t show in the statistics. How does one keep the individual in view while asserting the right of a nation to control its borders? The extreme positions on the matter don’t seem to offer much hope of a solution any time soon at least from what I can determine.

“I believe that God made me and all creatures.” While this is most certainly true, there is an unmistakable visual veracity to the fact that shoe sizes of my children average about a size larger than mine and two sizes larger than their grandparents. They’re taller too. I am consistently surprised at the physical size of the young people walking these halls. Women who are six feet tall and more are not uncommon. I stand six feet tall myself – an inch taller than my father was - but in a crowd of undergraduate men, I’m usually the shortest guy there. And it’s not just the athletes: we’ve got some really tall musicians and pre-seminary students. Argue as a Creationist, from the standpoint of Intelligent Design
or evolution by one definition or another, but something’s going on here.

Whoa! That’s a good place to stop because there are so many other divisive issues that I could name here that this would quickly get beyond the scope of this piece. It’s also a good place to stop because by now I’ve likely pushed some buttons, piqued some reaction, raised some blood pressure, hackles...or suspicions and no matter how I qualify the use of the term “evolution” – or immigration, or end of life decisions, even the nation’s response to natural disasters just the use of the particular words can quickly shut down a conversation no matter how carefully these are defined and qualified. That, I would suggest is, in itself, sufficient justification of my point. The very fact that two sides of an issue are identified as such in the extreme can be sufficient cause for potential castigation by those who espouse one viewpoint or the other.

And, of course, this entire spectrum of debate is nothing new. As an interested reader of American politics, biography and history way back in the mid-Twentieth Century it becomes clear to me that, while the issues, personalities and media technology change, the tenacity of debate and the claims to moral certitude on one side or the other on various issues have always been just as intense: current talk-radio and other pundits have nothing on the likes of Detroit-based radio priest Father Coughlin in the 1930’s who started out as a voice of hope in the midst of the Depression and who subsequently self-destructed by veering into thinly veiled support of fascism and anti-Semitism (Manchester, 1974). We Americans seem to be on an ideological yo-yo ranging from stoic self-determination and not taking direction very well to being utterly guileless and easily led. We can be a dog-goned stubborn bunch of people but, on a brighter note, therein lies a unique quality of our way of life, often misunderstood from afar.

As long as I’m out here on a limb jumping up and down, I’ll add one more thought. Maybe being right or wrong, right or left won’t ever help us find the way through any of the contentious matters that seem to divide America, that bother our national conscience and fill the airwaves, print and cable with sometimes clamorous debate. Perhaps the most disturbing sign of “secularism” as an ideology is that matters that are con-

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sidered debates of a moral, religious or values-related nature have been
downgraded to the status of being seemingly in need of the approval of
human institutions in order to be valid. The Ten Commandments will
always be the Ten Commandments regardless of whether they are dis-
played in public places or not and God doesn’t require any nation’s con-
stitution in order to make his Law plain. The world and all of us are
already under it and we see its effect on a daily basis. Putting the Law
alone on public display won’t save anyone although the debate continues
as if it could. The whole contentious process has become the litmus test
of political candidates and court appointments: “religious correctness”
seems to have replaced “political correctness” but the means by which it
is achieved seems to be no less power-driven: the political action money
in the “red” states is the same color as it is in the “blue” ones.
Interestingly, what seem to be conspicuously absent are public displays
of the Gospel.

As I’ve suggested previously, (2001), we certainly recognize that
“God has already established his Kingdom...democracy is not its tem-
poral equivalent as there will always be aspects of the latter that are not
Christian in their derivation – we live with them, but are not defined by
them.” The very idea that a “secular” world will somehow, someday
collapse to exist defies logic: Even theocracies must exist in a world where
their relationships with other nations will be on a secular, law-governed
basis (which, come to think of it, seems to be at the heart of our politi-
cal, cultural and religious “our apples vs. their oranges” attempts to
define our relationships with some nations in the Middle East). Our chil-
dren and their children will inherit the same tensions, the same level of
debate and will endure the downturns, enjoy the upswings and carry out
lives in which they are part of the conscience of their communities and
nation in these or similar ethical matters. That’s essential to the
American experience and character.

Well, many of your children (your former students) show up in insti-
tutions like this one each autumn and as we continue the task that you
have thus far so ably advanced, one element becomes clear but with a bit
of a twist to it. Teaching at the university level involves moving students
from well-practiced strategies of coming up with the correct answer,
though essential, to coming up with the next Good Question. The stu-
dents who are really very good at that (we like to call them intelligent)
will be those who are already well on their way to becoming the next
generation of thinkers about and doers of the Christian faith. Many stu-
dents arrive at this Concordia already “indoctrinated” - in the best sense of the word - through Lutheran early childhood, elementary and secondary education. (Give yourselves a hand while thanking God for the opportunity for ministry. Yes they bring it to college with them.) So that groundwork is laid. Our job around here, then, is to help them to live and think “in doctrine” in order to move into adulthood even more firmly rooted in their Christian faith and even more willing to let God use them as the instruments of its articulation, especially to those who have never heard it - even those of their classmates while they’re here. It helps immensely if they can first consider in doing so what it might be like to be without the Word - two fundamentally opposing ideas at the same time - and then to seek God’s wisdom first in sharing it.

That sense of being “in the middle” can be defined two ways: either as vacillating, lukewarm and noncommittal, or as “centered.” I am interested in the second of these as first, I am confident of Him in whom we are quite solidly anchored and, second, that the entire matter is consistent with the notion of paradox which is at the historical and doctrinal heart of what it means to be Lutheran.

**An Invitation:**

All of that is leading up to this: I’d like to present you, the readership - Lutheran teacher at any level, DCE or university professor with a challenge and invitation to authorship. Rather than continue or further contribute to the conflict, perhaps we could begin a conversation with some questions that might serve to redefine the questions:

How best shall we prepare children, adolescents and young adults to become the reflective conscience of the Church and society while being adept at skillful Christian witness, even debate?

How can the teachers and parish educators of congregations, schools and universities of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod become a proactive source of “in the world” ethical responses and leadership that is faithful to Who and Whose we are that is not “of the world”?

How can a system of education from Pre-K through graduate school take on the collective identity as source of “forceful integrity” and produce a generation of wise young people who are well prepared to live out their Calling as baptized people of God in their vocations and understand the balance - the centeredness - that their faith provides in midst of divisions which will surely grow in complexity? And that com-

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ing from a church body that, let's face it, has something of a reputation for being divisive in itself?

The editorial staff of Lutheran Education Journal invites articles and essays on this topic. Optimally, and depending on the volume of response, we will devote significant space to the discussion throughout the next volume of Lutheran Education Journal. Interested parties will find guidelines for authors on the last page of this issue or may contact me at John.Zillman@CUChicago.edu.

I look forward to your response. LEJ

References:
A redefinition of educational leadership by recent research concludes the role of principals is changing. With this knowledge, school leaders must learn to apply current leadership principles, including transformational and servant leadership, to balance community and academic expectations. Understanding the need for change in their leadership behavior will also affect their school community. Building capacity for change in this environment is a critical area of emphasis. This study addresses the views of teachers and principals on successful leadership in Lutheran elementary schools. Through a national survey, data was gathered to examine Lutheran teachers’ and administrators’ views regarding visionary, management, and servant leadership skills and their importance in leading a successful Lutheran school ministry.

Introduction

The history of frontier living is characterized by the notion of moving from a comfortable place to an uncertain future filled with possibilities. Living life on the frontier meant seeking opportunities to move beyond the normalcy of everyday living. Frontiersmen were interested in achieving and conquering something others had only dreamed about and were fearful of getting too close to. They blazed a trail where there had not previously been a path with an unquenchable excitement.

The same can be said of leadership in Lutheran education. Leaders on the frontier of Lutheran school leadership are blazing a path toward previously unseen expectations, without experience or educational background in either role. They know what is behind us, around us, and now look forward to the future of leadership. They lead a community who trust that God will bless their efforts. They seek to define the need for a systems change knowing everything is not as has always appeared, because their future is not sure. Their duty is to help members of the community move beyond a transitory instability to more solid foundation of growth for the future with trust as a cornerstone among all members of the community.
Desiring changing by members of the community is a block on which this movement builds. In the study described in this article, the beliefs of current teachers and administrators are used to define what is desired in school communities. Learning from fellow frontiersman is important. By studying the beliefs of current teachers and administrators on a national scale, momentum can be created to seek the future of leadership in Lutheran schools.

**Toward Transformational Leadership**

Traditional managerial leadership places a high importance on task accomplishment with people regarded as tools to accomplish tasks needing to be done (Northouse, 2004). This type of leadership involves producing order and consistency across the board in managing the organization. Managerial leadership has remained as status quo in educational leadership while in other areas of education, such as classroom instruction, teachers serve more often as facilitators in their classrooms (Fullan, 2001). Education beliefs have changed from teacher-directed to inquiry-based and student-directed learning. Transformational leadership seeks to produce a similar change (Northouse, 2004). In this frontier culture, everyone within the school community is a learner. How open administrators and teachers are to accepting transformational leadership rather than traditional managerial leadership, and ultimately their future, is what is at stake (DuFour, 1998).

Transformational leaders move beyond managerial leadership and focus on casting visions for the educational and organizational future of their schools (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). They seek to create a climate for change, knowing schools are idiosyncratic organizations. Vision, mission, and values are the binding key principals of leadership to create great schools, utilizing the best resources available (Fullan, 2001).

Lashway (2002) concludes that transformational leaders must learn to build consensus for what is best for their school based on core values and a vision created by members of the school community. But how do these leaders create vision while dealing with everything else the data-driven assessment era encompasses? Leaders at the cusp of this leadership movement recognize that data-driven assessment is transitory and move toward learning communities where teachers and children will all be involved in learning and exhibit a greater dependence upon each other (DuFour, 1998).

Michael Fullan (1997) states the biggest challenge in changing leadership in schools is to encourage administrators to move toward creating a
compelling vision while rallying the school community. Often teachers and administrators are forced to change because a requirement. Visionary leaders seek opportunities for people to want to change by enlarging their personal and organizational capacity (Elmore, 2000). Members of the community look to the administrator's guidance and direction in moving forward for the educational and spiritual benefit of all members of the community. The delicate balancing act for principals to seek opportunities to push forward is what Kouzes and Posner call "challenging the process" and "enabling others to act" (2002, p. 22).

Great leaders in this forward thinking ministry create opportunities for community members to believe and act on their school’s mission because they trust their leaders deeply rooted values. Great organizations survive and thrive because of these deep roots (Maxwell, 1993). The research of Kaplan and Taylor (2000) and Senge, et al (2000) found that interpersonal skills and the motivational presence of leaders to be effective building blocks of consensus rather than conformity.

Through their research, Kouzes and Posner (2002) identified five building block practices leaders followed when provided the opportunity to nurture personal leadership. The five practices are: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. When principals have built these practices into their leadership and share, through action, their application, they better prepare schools for change. This application aids in moving from a managerially-led school to a transformational community because transformational leadership parallels the five practices by Kouzes and Posner.

Stueber (2000a) examined leadership styles, visionary leadership, spiritual leadership, and servant leadership through interviewing different members of Lutheran school communities, including subordinate and non-subordinate members of community. From his research, Stueber concluded that leadership is not a what, but a how. Leaders do. They enable others to act and move them “in a direction that is genuinely in their real, long-term best interests” (Stueber, 2000b, p. 277).

Relationship building is paramount in building a positive future for organizations. Research by Leithwood and Riehl (2003) and Lashway (2002) conclude that basic leadership practices in building relationships...
are generalizable to any context. The idiosyncratic tendencies of schools provide opportunities for leadership that is relevant to the community and an extension of the community's personality based on shared goals. Through casting vision and defining direction, transformational leaders build personal and organizational capacity for change for the school they serve (Elmore, 2000).

Servant Leadership

Among the close connections within the Lutheran school community, spiritual leadership is of the utmost importance as well as academic and institutional leadership. Of unique interest for the leader of Lutheran schools is understanding servant leadership, a phrase popularized by Robert Greenleaf in his essay The Servant as Leader (1970). Servant leadership is simply defined as identity-based leadership providing opportunities to help and support others within an organization while guiding and leading the organization (Fryar, 2001). Greenleaf (1970) and Spears (1998) identify the heart of servant leadership as thinking of the needs of others while emphasizing the choice to serve while leading (Spears, 2005). Servant leaders commit to the same principles as visionary and transformational leaders. Additionally, they understand the importance of listening, seek healing, have foresight, and they are able to persuade and conceptualize. They are empathetic, aware of their position and its relationship to others, good stewards, committed to the growth of people, and community builders (Spears, n.d.).

Identity-based relationships are at the forefront of servant leadership, because servant leaders place an emphasis on individuals developing their gifts for use within the organization or ministry (Fryar, 2001). They emphasize the needs of the people. Power is used for persuasion and building community and consensus rather than coercion and authoritarian rule that creates bitter feelings and distrust. Servant leaders are trusted based on their actions. They see their actions coming from their understanding of the organization's core values rather than personal beliefs (Spears, 1998).

Smith, Maehr, and Midgley (1992) found asking the opinion of teachers and administrators is important in assessing and planning for future success of an organization. We peer into the future just as pioneers did centuries ago. We have primitive tools for understanding the leadership future of schools. In the future we will fully be capable of using the tools of transformational and servant leadership and understanding their importance in leadership of Lutheran schools. For now,
we must show how these tools begin to foster a stronger relationship among all members of the school community.

**Methodology**

The survey intends to provide an opportunity for Lutheran administrators and elementary teachers across the United States to state leadership characteristics they believe are displayed in successful Lutheran school administrators. The target population for this survey was members of the Lutheran Education Association (LEA) administrators’ and elementary teachers’ networks, LEADnet and ETnet list serves. Participants in the study come from various backgrounds including position, experience, gender, geographical district, and education.

The survey consists of statements regarding the participant’s view of different characteristics associated with transformational, managerial, and servant leaders. The first section of the survey collects nominal factors used to identify preferences by individual groups. The second section asks participants to rate managerial and transformational phrases according to what they believe successful Lutheran elementary administrators carry out in their ministry. It is important to note that respondents could not rate the paired phrases identically. Forcing a higher rating provided the researcher with a more desired preference of leadership behavior based upon the response. The third section of the survey is a Likert scale to address beliefs regarding servant leadership behaviors.

An initial for participation regarding current beliefs among Lutheran teachers and administrators was sent to all members of the LEA’s elementary teachers’ and administrators’ list serves. One hundred thirty-one participants returned their surveys. Among the 131 respondents there were 74 teachers, 49 administrators, and 8 who teach and administrate. Among the participants, 53 were male and 78 were females. Only responses from participants who were solely teachers or administrators were analyzed. T-test, uni-variable correlations using post-hoc Sheffe tests, and one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests were taken into account to help understand how the two groups, teachers and administrators, and subgroups within the nominal variables are significantly different. Statistical methodology utilized in correlating the data was used to 0.05 significance.

**Results**

There is a statistically significant difference between teachers and administrators in their views of transformational leadership, F (2,103) = 4.13, p < .05. Post-hoc Scheffe tests indicate administrators (M = 40.11)
rated transformational statements significantly higher compared to teachers (M = 37.95). For this reason, it is important to state that administrators have stronger feelings than teachers regarding the importance of transformational leadership over managerial leadership.

Beyond looking at position in ministry, another statistically significant difference is between levels of education: bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree. With equal variance assumed, teachers earning a higher level of education more strongly preferred servant leadership behaviors than those of a lesser level of education, t (52) = .45, p > .05. Along with education, "years in ministry" is a significant factor in correlating transformational leadership preferences. A positive correlational relationship (r = .294) sheds light on an interesting finding. Combined, teachers and administrators data reveal a statistically significant relationship between years in ministry and transformational leadership. There is no such statistical significance between administrators' beliefs about servant leadership. Yet, certain variables such as age and years in ministry are a factor in the viewpoints among participants in this study.

Taken at face value, the most surprising result is that both teachers and administrators prefer transformational over managerial leadership behaviors on a general basis. While participants did not know which statements were transformational or managerial, they still selected higher agreement with transformational statements. From analysis of the data, support is drawn that statistically Lutheran elementary teachers and principals generally agree regarding the importance of transformational leadership behaviors in Lutheran schools.

In analyzing specific questions in the survey, it is discovered that teachers (M = 4.32) and administrators (M = 4.41) value formal and informal contact with the entire school community. Having core values and beliefs that allow for individual implementation (M = 4.17 [teachers] and M = 4.39 [administrators]), and the ability to be an effective listener (M = 4.29 [teachers] and M = 4.32 [administrators]) are strongly valued as well. In this case, allowing for individual implementation means curricular standards are set and individual teachers are allowed to implement teaching strategies to achieve this standard. The preceding transformational leadership skills follow in the same order for both teachers and administrators.

Least valued by both groups are formal contact only with subordinates (M = 2.25 [teachers] and M = 2.49 [administrators]),
trol over all aspects of the school (M = 2.50 [teachers] = and 2.31 [administrators]), and effective speaker (M = 2.57 [teachers] and M = 2.47 [administrators]). While these were not in the same order among teachers and administrators, teachers and principals agreed these were the least preferable in what successful Lutheran principals execute in their ministry.

The biggest variance between a paired set of statements was the issue of how staff meeting time is spent. Staff meeting time spent on community building activities (M = 4.17) was preferred to time spent on policies and procedures (M = 2.83) by both teachers and administrators. In contrast, the smallest difference in the viewpoints of teachers and administrators was between leads from understanding the situation (M = 3.91 [teachers] and M = 3.89 [administrators]), effective listener (M = 4.29 [teachers] and M = 4.32 [administrators]), and effective speaker (M = 3.56 [teachers] and M = 3.55 [administrators]). For a detailed listing of means for each question in the paired sets, refer to Table 1 at the end of this section. In Table 1 transformational statements have a “t” in front of the number and managerial statements have an “m” in front of them.

The behaviors associated with servant leadership were statistically rated higher (M = 4.40) than the statements associated with transformational (M = 3.88) or managerial leadership (M = 3.03). Both teachers (M = 4.65) and administrators (M = 4.71) believe the most important part of servant leadership is listening intently to what others say. Teachers believe that fostering a community spirit is second most important while administrators believe it is striving to understand others. In each of these statements, there is greater agreement among teachers and administrators...
Table 2
Servant Leadership Characteristics

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Table 1
Transformational and Managerial Leadership Statement Means

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Limitations of Study

This study is limited principally because of the amount of participants completing the survey. In the 2004-2005 school year there were over 1000 elementary schools with an average of nine teachers per school in the LCMS (Department of Congregational Services, 2004). While not all teachers in the LCMS are members of LEA, the study provides a glimpse at members of the largest professional organization of Lutheran teachers and administrators. Future studies could include random sampling of the entire population of Lutheran teachers. Another sampling method could be utilized to provide responses from a greater variety of teaching professionals. This sampling could include teachers of different grade levels including early childhood and secondary education, Commissioned and non-Commissioned teachers. These would provide generalizable conclusions to be made from research involving teachers with different experiences in Lutheran school early childhood centers and high schools. Future research could also include a qualitative research study of transformational and servant leadership behaviors as viewed by all members of a single Lutheran school community including pastor, school board, students, parents, teachers and staff of a particular school.

In addition, the following questions could be addressed. How do transformational, managerial and servant leadership characteristics affect teacher satisfaction? Is there a correlation between any of these types of leadership and overall teacher satisfaction and turnover rates? To what degree are the results of this study a utopian view versus what is actually happening in leadership in Lutheran schools? At schools where the principal leadership style is strictly managerial or transformational, how is teacher tenure at these schools affected by the particular leadership style of the administrator?

Discussion and Conclusions

The frontier culture of educational leadership is a “systems change” arriving in the middle of another movement. Without a full arsenal of tools to implement it successfully because of data-driven assessment, this movement waits for its place in educational history. The transformational leadership movement moves beyond data-driven assessment and
its strong outside influence to create an inward culture of dependence and school community-based learning. The survey illustrates what teachers and administrators believe successful Lutheran administrators accomplish in their ministry.

Starting Point

In the survey, teachers and principals selected how they believe successful principals behave in their ministry. Openly communicating about this important topic gets to heart of the school's mission, vision, and values, making these, along with developed standards, living and breathing documents. With forthright and honest discussion a culture of created where challenges are faced with a community effort and strong leadership is essential to growth.

Transformational leaders facilitate discussions to understand situations, build relationships, and focus on the future. These possibilities are only feasible for leaders who see beyond what needs to be done today and are allowed to focus their efforts toward the future. This requires schools to free administrators to vision laying the groundwork for the future. One question that kept coming back to me as the researcher was, “even though this is what teachers and administrators want, is this what is happening?” As individual schools start to seek transformational leadership behaviors in their principal, they must ask a similar question. “Is this what our school is expecting from its principal right now?” This question is followed with, “what do we have to change regarding leadership? Is it our expectation of leadership or expectation of our leader?”

This discussion about leadership and its influence from an organizational viewpoint is hard to begin. It starts small and grows, eventually pervading everything that happens. That is its intent and why it works. As the breadth of discussion grows so does the number of people involved. This discussion forms what Collins (2001) called the Hedgehog Concept. He found that in corporations making the leap from good to great it took at least four years to develop it. It is the core values, academic and spiritual, guiding all decisions made about policy, pedagogy, and practice.

Igniting the Spark

While understanding leadership from an institutional viewpoint is important, the heart of transformational leadership is people. From personal experience, I was the new teacher who needed a transformational leader. I graduated from Concordia and needed guidance on policies and procedures of the local school community, but had a wealth of lessons,
pedagogy and theory I was eager to share. I feel that a transformational leader would have allowed me to blossom more as a professional because teaching can become comfortable and on autopilot. Managerial leaders allow this comfortable life with all its comforts to continue. They are enablers. Managerial leaders make the decisions and others follow them. Life on the frontier might be too hard to deal with on a constant basis. While there is often talk of change, and even grumbling after the faculty meeting, it's really a comfortable life. Teachers in these schools have grown up in an educational environment and now teach in the same culture because that's how success used to be defined.

True leadership is transformational. It gets to heart of what is important in each Lutheran school and provides opportunities to lead others in a direction that is generally in their best interest (Stueber, 2000). From the survey results, transformational leadership appears to be what teachers and principals want. They want to be led in ways that focus the heart of their ministry. Transformational leaders ignite passion in teachers and students they serve. They lead great schools because they are characterized by personal modesty and professional will in their transformational leadership behaviors. They put the needs of the organization and its core values above all else. Servant leaders understand situations, listen to, and plan for future ministry opportunities. Members of the community want their leader to engage others to catch the spark where momentum has been created.

Capacity for Change

To ensure the future of Lutheran schools, the emphasis of school leadership should not be what I can accomplish and prove, but what we are all about and can do together. It is bringing passion to your ministry. Passion often means change, and in schools with transformational leaders, trust must first be earned. Then leaders move forward building capacity for change. Without this capacity built, schools will remain managerial organizations.

Relationships make or break change. Members of the school community who see energy generated for change want to be part of the excitement. Transformational leaders provide opportunities for all members of the community to grow and build their relationship with the school. Principals help their professional staff accomplish this by empowering teachers as leaders. How powerful it would be to have grade level departments discuss and work through issues to achieve consensus through discussion. They could then share and utilize this idea to build
school-wide communication with transformational leaders facilitating these discussions with all who come into contact with the school in a centralized way.

There are certainly times when leadership involves making decisions, and school community input cannot be ascertained for each decision. Yet, leaders espousing transformational leadership commit themselves to moving beyond status quo into recognizing how their school community makes a difference (Fullan, 2001). These leaders want all members of the school community to be respected, knowing all decisions are related to the school's mission. I believe the teachers and principals rated the statement regarding formal and informal contact with the entire school community highly. With personal contact comes a feeling of belonging to something bigger than could be accomplished alone. For the success of all Lutheran schools, school communities must foster a relationship-based ministry.

**Relationships**

With an overwhelming voice of preference for transformational leadership, teachers and administrators chose an evolving school leadership model oriented toward interactions with members of the school community. The most stable members of the school community are teachers. As the data from the survey indicates, years in ministry influences how teachers feel about the importance of transformational leadership.

Teachers and administrators who stay in a ministry area for an extended period of time are able to see better the underlying importance of leaders who effectively move the organization's ministry forward. They see their principal's job less to provide them with managerial guidance. Rather they see his or her responsibility as an organizational transformer. The principal's job is to fuse together the ministries of the teachers, school and churches through support, encouragement, and providing opportunities for them to grow together. This is done through behaviors as indicated by transformational leadership statements in the survey.

The reason teachers continue in their ministry is a passion, above all, about freely teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The future service ministry of teaching in Lutheran schools relies on the ability to build synergy within staffs and school communities around this common passion. For future Lutheran principals, focus must continue to remain on this central truth and incorporate it into the ministry.
Servant Leadership

In this survey, teachers and administrators regarded servant leadership statements higher than other statements. While servant leadership characteristics are part of transformational leadership, they extend the leader into areas not addressed solely by transformational leadership, because the underlying assumption of servant leadership is the model of Jesus Christ. He is the pinnacle of servant leadership whose example is shown in the behaviors associated with this movement. An example of Jesus’ servant leadership is when He washed His disciples’ feet on Maundy Thursday (John 13:1-7, New International Version). Even though Jesus was their leader, He came to serve others. Servant leaders lead by example because their relationship with the school community is based upon meeting not only the academic but also the spiritual needs of the school community. They see their ministry as a relationship built with spiritual needs serving as a faith-based backbone in all ministry efforts with the community.

Among other things, the work of the principal includes planning for the future. In the data from the servant leaders section of the survey, planning for the future based on the past was not rated as highly as other characteristics. I believe this is because there is confusion between understanding the past and being so tied to it that the organization cannot move forward. In the past, members of the church sponsoring the school comprised the greatest percentage of students. This is not true anymore. Ministering to unchurched children is one of the greatest ministry opportunities for the church that exists (Barna, 2003). Understanding that past, its application, and intertwining it to push forward for future planning is of the utmost importance. The theology, beliefs, and faith of Lutheran schools have not changed. Pedagogy and teaching practice have changed and allow Lutheran schools to still teach the Gospel while providing opportunities for organizational and professional growth.

The past cannot be a crutch. Leaders can learn from the past and ought to embrace the past for the perspective it brings in planning for the future. Without this keen understanding, many members of the school community who have been a part of that community may be
turned off by change, and a relationship will need to be mended because of an initial misunderstanding. To build relationships, new administrators must work within the existing framework of the school to emphasize their commitment to Christian education. Through time, and as relationships are built, servant leaders begin to transform the school.

From this sample population, especially the viewpoints of teachers, it becomes apparent that since servant leadership is so highly valued, principals need to be cognizant of its importance. With widespread differences in the data regarding the use of self-reflection and persuasion, leaders need to recognize these characteristics’ importance in the view of teachers. While the use of persuasion and power seems to be contrary to other servant leadership characteristics, it must be utilized for effective ministry to take place. Servant leadership always goes back to the servant first and then leader, second. It is an attitude toward relationships and how to conduct these relationships based on a spiritual belief. Understanding and using persuasion, from a servant leader’s view, means to build trust with people first, and aids overall effectiveness allowing administrators to continue their purpose within the school’s mission, vision, and values. It is imperative administrators are aware of the proper use of power to create a positive climate for change. They are important to encourage as teachers and administrators develop in all characteristics of servant leadership and incorporate them in their ministry.

Conclusion

Frontier leadership is a new understanding of leadership in Lutheran schools. Just as the frontiersmen found land that was not what they expected it to be when they arrived, school leaders are being challenged with a changing responsibility for student learning, causing different reactions among teachers and administrators. How to proceed is an area of excitement for leaders on the edge of the frontier is scary. This shift in expectations means more than managing a school. Visionary leaders leverage and plan for the future while encouraging the school community to recognize its place in helping students and teachers learn about the evolving world around them. These leaders recognize the future of educational leadership and the importance of transformational and servant leadership to provide spiritual and academic direction for the school they serve.

Relationships and beliefs about the frontier landscape for leadership in Lutheran schools are an important area of continued research to move beyond the current climate of educational leadership. From the
survey results, we see foremost that participants in the study had definite opinions about the type of leadership they preferred. In every pair, transformational leadership behaviors were chosen over managerial leadership behaviors. From the data, it seems that with more years of ministry, participants indicated an even greater preference for transformational leadership regardless of any other nominal factor. Additionally, all participants stated greater belief in the importance of servant leadership over any other type of leadership. The frontier culture of Lutheran educational leadership seeks to strengthen a spiritual and academic organization filled with growth and learning. It is transformational and servant leadership behaviors that Lutheran school leaders will continue use to provide a glimpse into a future filled with success as teachers and administrators faithfully serve in their ministry. LEJ

References


Kaplan, K. & Taylor, M. J. (2000). District approaches to developing and...


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Often in our lives, we bottle things up inside. We think people cannot see our issues if we hide them deep within; however, various triggers raise those same issues to the surface and even without words people can see that we are drained, exhausted and not ourselves.

Last April, I placed a call to my father's cardiologist. I was periodically experiencing tightness in my chest that I had never felt before, my heart literally ached. It was as if someone was lightly squeezing my heart. Something was wrong and I feared the worst.

The pace of my life was reckless, despite the fact that I have a vocation that is usually perceived as non-demanding, a college professor. I was teaching in the classroom 12 hours a week and had taught the courses in the past so the preparation time was minimal. However, through choices I made and a multitude of invitations I had accepted to serve, I had packed my calendar to the hilt. In many respects, as I reflect back on those months, I picture myself as a broken vessel, leaking miserably as God desired to fill me up to do His will. Unfortunately, because I was mixing His will up with mine, I was not the least bit effective, and I could barely keep up.

At the doctor's office, I went through the full battery of tests which included an echocardiogram, followed by the infamous stress test. The doctor, upon my return visit to the office, shared the results - no heart complications at all. Then he, asked about the pace of my life. I admitted that it was beyond that which it should be, and he gently and humbly encouraged me to slow down.

Although my pace did not change overnight, I began to reflect on my physician's words. Was I moving at an unhealthy pace? Is it possible, that the pain in my heart was simply the result of the way I was living my life? My wife had been lovingly telling me to slow down for many years. However, in my arrogance and as a result of my sinful pride, I failed to listen to her admonishments. Begrudgingly, I began to think...
about taking steps to slow down, but any attempts met with minimal success. Then, God answered a prayer that was never lifted up by me, but knowing my wife, it was probably the answer to a prayer she had offered on my behalf.

Catherine, a former student, re-entered my life with a simple explanation for her emergence. She stated that “God led her here.” The first step was taken. Those were odd words to hear from anyone, let alone a former student, someone I had molded and I simply filed them away in the deep recess of my brain. We had been discussing by telephone, the possibility of her returning to the university she had graduated from five years earlier to teach a dance class which is her area of expertise. During our first face-to-face meeting she spoke those words above. Periodically, after that we would meet as I began to share with her the various projects I was involved in at the university. It has become my custom to, whenever possible and weather permitting, to have walk/talk meetings with colleagues or students. On occasion, Catherine and I would walk around the university and talk, step two. The one project that I spoke of that connected with her immediately involved a teaching method termed “academic service learning.” She was unfamiliar with pedagogy and I had recently discovered it while authoring a grant aimed at embedding it into our institutional curriculum.

Academic service learning is a teaching method that extends beyond the boundaries of the traditional classroom by engaging students in service directly with and in God’s diverse and interconnected world. The pedagogy of academic service learning involves four phases; preparation, action, reflection and celebration. Through these processes, partnerships evolve and are nurtured between the community and students as they work together to determine both the assets and needs of the community. This allows more than a mere give and take experience, as the community and students walk side by side; journeying together in service and learning with each other.

I will explain the quotation given above in a moment, but for now suffice it to say that academic service learning is a teaching method that both of us gravitated toward. At our very core, we knew this is what would bring life to the learning process. It aligned perfectly well with the faith-based mission of the university which is centered in the Gospel and seeks to “equip men and women to serve and lead.” In fact, I was recently charged by the president of the university to draft a vision paper lifting up the pedagogy. I was struggling with how to begin the
process and had not taken the first step to begin it.

Although, I knew that Catherine had been involved in free lance writing, it was during those walk/talks that I learned of her love for writing and passion for service to others. As I reflect back on how our relationship was formed, it was truly a divine process that began step by step. From the outset, she asked me questions. She listened, truly listened, to my responses to those questions. She spoke minimally but her presence and non-verbal communications were clear. She offered up her gift of writing and said that if she could be helpful in anyway with the vision paper, she would be more that willing to assist. Slam! A door shut in my mind; actually, several doors. The first door slammed as I thought to myself, "I don't need your help. I can do this on my own." Slam! A second door shut as I contemplated unspoken agendas. "What's in it for you," are the words that rolled around in my mind. Slam! A third and final door shut. I knew I could not compensate her for assisting with the vision paper. Why would she do it? I wouldn't freely give of my time...

It took a leap of faith for me to open up and share my burdens; specifically, the "burden" of the drafting the vision paper but many and various other "burdens" were shared as our relationship grew. The vast majority of the "burdens" I have come to appreciate were the result of my arrogance in assuming that I was to be the "lone ranger" in completing task assigned. From a worldly perspective, this relationship did not make sense to me. However, at another level...a much deeper one...a spiritual one...I knew to that God had brought us together for His purpose. He has called each of us for a purpose and I have been searching for His purpose in my life for quite sometime. In fact, I have joked often with people that if He would simply deliver His purpose for my life on a 3 x 5 card then I would do it. God knows me better than I know myself and did not reveal His purpose for me that way. He desires our relationship with Him to be faith-based and He placed a vocational partner, Catherine, in my life to walk with me by faith step by step.

As we began to walk together step by step we set our course for completing the vision paper. It helped me to have a goal in sight. As I reflect back on our journey, I am so very thankful to have had someone along as we ventured hand in hand; however, thankful is not the word I would have used at that time. For me, it was a painstakingly slow process. I am not a writer by training and I thought we were nearly complete as I shut my eyes (a technique encourage by Catherine) and wrote from the heart. I was pretty satisfied with the results, then step three,
step four, etc. Ten revisions and two months later the vision paper was
finally complete. The quotation given previously is an excerpt from the
document. Many things were lifted up for us during this journey and our
desire is to pass them along to you...

During our journey, Catherine, gently and humbly identified areas of
my life that I should consider pruning, at first I was hesitant. My pride
and arrogance reared its ugly head. She encouraged me to think about,
and assess my gifts so that I would use them to His glory. Again, it took
a leap of faith for me to share with her in this way but the fruit of our
collective labors is being realized as we align with His will. The greatest
lesson that I have derived from our relationship is that we are not called
to live independently. God placed us in communities and it is our rela­
tionship within these communities, centered on Him, that promotes our
wellness and wholeness.

Wellness and wholeness are two constructs that I have been called to
promote. In fact, I profess a two-fold vocational mission which reads:

1. To equip and encourage individuals to make a personal behavior
change relative to a dimension of wellness.

2. To cultivate communities of wellness and wholeness.

I am appropriately humbled to confess, that I have increasingly come
to appreciate that living one’s vocational mission must be done step by
step and hand in hand. The worldly message often promoted is to “quit
this” and “start that” and we have treated people like the old fashioned
light switch, which was either “off” or “on”. I have come to realize in
my own life and the life of others that most people do not successfully
change behaviors in that manner. Now, with the invention of the “dim­
mer switch”, it is incumbent upon us to realize that individuals need to
step through the stages of change until the change they desire to make is
embedded into their lifestyle. Additionally, I have come to appreciate
that we are not in this alone. Our English word "community" was derived
from the Latin word "communis", meaning "fellowship". As Christians, we
should relish fellowship opportunities as we are reminded in the Gospel
of Matthew “For where two or three come together in my name, there
am I with them” (Mt. 18:20). Identifying the communities we belong to
and nurturing the members of those communities is critical. The para­
digm shift, “Fit to Serve,” lifted up here came about through a journey
that took place step by step, hand in hand. It is through this process that
we desire to journey with you.

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Becoming Dependent

We are taught to become increasingly independent throughout our life. When a baby cries parents rush to the side to fill the need. When a diaper is soiled, even a little, it is changed. These practices continue through the first few months and then the process of becoming independent begins. The space between feedings is increased. The soiled diaper remains on the soft tender behind a bit longer and the journey to independence continues. For some children it begins more rapidly as they are rushed off to day care at an early age. Perhaps dropped off as early as 6 a.m. and picked up again at 6 p.m. Granted the infant child is being cared for so they aren't independent but the parents aren't the primary caretakers as they lead the independent lives they were encouraged to adopt.

Eventually the child enters school and with each passing year, is taught to be increasingly independent. I can relate to this quite well. In first and second grade, our bathrooms were in the classroom. Literally, at the back of the room, I can still see the miniature size sink and commode (mind you not miniature at the time) with the signs boys and girls on the outside of the doors. In third grade, we were taught to be independent as we ventured out into the hall to relieve our bladders. As we progressed in our educational training, the bathrooms became increasingly farther away and we began to establish our independent homes in the form of a locker that we utilized between classes.

High school hastens our quest to become independent. We choose our own classes. We choose what sports, clubs, and activities to participate in. We choose our friends much to our parents chagrin at times.

After high school, some begin to work immediately and break from the family home to become fully independent as the parents breathe a sigh of relief and hope they can make it. Some go to college where the “freedoms” experienced far exceed any perceived boundaries that constrained them during their high school years.

As the march to independence progresses, I reflect on the following question. Is this how God intended human beings to develop or is this a worldly process that has evolved as we moved out of the garden and into the jungle? I raise this question because I sensed this morning that
the human development program that is in place in our western culture is not what God intended. In our western culture, we strive for independence; however, that is not how we were designed. We were designed to be dependent.

I ask the reader to pause for a moment and let that phrase sink in. “We were designed to be dependent.”

Having written this and upon reflection in the Word, I am raising this matter again because in some way you are linked with me and others (some you don’t know) on this journey. The work has become. Prayer is needed. The empowering presence of the Holy Spirit must fill our community sail. Why pray? Great question. Let me respond by quoting a passage from a devotional I read this morning.

“The Body of Christ” is supposed to be a community of people who walk with God in a balanced spiritual life of prayer and work. Prayer always leads to work, and work always grows out of prayer. When the two are combined, inexplicable things happen. When prayer and work go together, the results exceed the plan of common sense. The church that prays and works lives on the plane of the supernatural.

The Western church may be compared to a little boy trying to fly a kite on a windless day. He runs furiously up and down the sidewalk, pulling his little kite behind him, and as long as he runs, the kite flies. The moment the little fellow stops, the kite plunges to the ground. His problem? The wind is not blowing. The Western church, with its members burned out from endless programs, seminars, classes, committee meetings, planning sessions, and organizational flow charts, is much like that boy. We are often trying to carry the church and its programs by our own efforts. The wind of the Spirit is not blowing.

What the church desperately needs is a new wind of the Spirit; but when the Spirit comes, we must not stop working or consider our work less important. The Spirit fills our work and lifts it up, far beyond the world of human expectations and limitations, doing “immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” (Eph 3:20).

Why Pray? At forty, I am beginning to see for the first time that “dependence” was His plan long ago. How did I arrive at this conclusion? The story would take too long to tell in its entirety. However, I am going to attempt to highlight. My hope is that the Spirit living in the Christian’s heart molds these words such that the receiver would move toward becoming increasingly dependent on the one, Jesus Christ, that
promises abundant life for those of us, myself included, that have been living a life of existence in the race of life at a pace that is abundant life threatening.

Additionally, it is my hope that you will join me in prayer as we collectively seek God's guidance, resting in the grace bestowed upon us by His Son and empowered by the Spirit in our walk together step by step and hand in hand. LEJ

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"Education is the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit or evoke knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, and sensibilities." (Cremin, L., 1974)

There can be no mental development without interest... You may endeavor to excite interest by means of birch rods, or you may coax it by the incitement of pleasurable activity. But without interest there will be no progress. You cannot merely teach your subject, you must lead the student in such a way that there will be an internal drive toward self-development when the external strictures of formal education are taken off.

Cursed be the dullard, who destroys wonder...

Culture is activity of thought, and receptiveness to beauty and humane feeling. Scraps of information have nothing to do with it. A merely well-informed man is the most useless bore on God's earth. What we should aim at producing is men who possess both culture and expert knowledge in some special direction. This expert knowledge will give them the ground to start from, and their culture will lead them as deep as philosophy and as high as art. We have to remember that... valuable intellectual development is self-development, and that it mostly takes place between the ages of sixteen and thirty...

In training a child to activity of thought, above all things we must beware of what I will call 'inert ideas'—that is to say, ideas that are merely received into the mind without being utilized, or tested, or thrown into fresh combinations... In the history of education, the most striking phenomenon is that schools of learning, which at one epoch are alive with a ferment of genius, in succeeding generation exhibit merely pedantry and routine...

Let us now ask how in our system of education we are to guard against this mental dry rot. We enunciate two education commandments: "Do not teach too many subjects" and, again, "What you teach, teach thoroughly." (Whitehead, 1929).
Putting the Issue Into a Context

The Lite beer argument pitting less filling against more flavor became a cultural cliché a number of years ago. A similar educational dichotomy might be more facts versus better thinking. American education has disagreed on what it means to be educated for the past 100 years. The current argument was initiated by the Committee of Ten in the 1890’s as a response to the rapid growth of secondary schools, though in many respects it dates back at least to the ancient Greeks. As summarized by David J. Ferrero in an Educational Leadership article this February, (2005),

...education’s fiercest and most intractable conflicts have stemmed from differences in philosophy. Take the 100 Years War between progressives and traditionalists. To oversimplify an already oversimplified dichotomy, progressives incline toward pedagogical approaches that start with student interests and emphasize hands-on engagement with the physical and social environments, whereas traditionalists tend to start with pre-existing canons of inquiry and knowledge and emphasize ideas and concepts mediated through words and symbols.

The society struggles with this bi-polar educational agenda, one end supporting a progressive view calling for schools to prepare children for life in a changing culture, while at the other extreme seeks to require a traditional – even a perennial – content based curriculum by which to measure success on high-stakes tests.

The social studies debate has also been impacted. In 1994, the NCSS developed an integrated K-12 set of social studies standards around ten themes supporting a social studies perspective that had evolved over the past 75 years. These standards are divided into three developmental levels; early, middle, and high school; are content integrated; concept based; and have performance expectations. They focus upon how students consider and arrive at conclusions and make decisions using content from the social science disciplines. While some have used the NCSS standards in developing their own, many state standards are more factually based. This tendency toward more traditional fact-oriented standards has been accelerated by NCLB legislation and the high-stakes assessments developed to measure and compare this factual knowledge. Still, there exists no single national consensus toward a specific set of standards as to what students must learn regarding the social studies. It has become a heated political battle not even resembling an informed civic debate.

Further, as most states still seem committed to support their 10th
Amendment prerogative to manage their own educational establishment, they have developed standards that reflect local control and generally want to keep it that way.

Still, when it comes to the current outcomes the "A" often seems to represent Assessment rather than Achievement. The key element regarding standards is most often the test score and the focus is upon the content knowledge needed to make that score. It represents a view that learning equates with how many facts one knows as opposed to how clearly one understands or can solve problems. These contrasting views of learning as factual knowledge versus deeper thinking continue a battle that doesn't need to be fought. My intent here is to deny neither purpose, but to rather consider the function each perspective plays. Because the content position is easier to assess and what the majority of people seem to expect, it receives strong support: after all, it was the experience of most adult Americans. They went to schools reflecting a knowledge based perspective and the number of facts learned was the goal. I can support that notion as well as do scholars including Lynn Chaney, Diane Ravitch, and most specifically, E.D. Hirsch and the cultural literacy movement spawned by his writings, but within a broader perspective.

**Teaching as Integrating**

Again, my point is not to challenge the importance of either view nor its validity but to support the inclusion of both perspectives in curriculum planning. There seems to be too much evidence not to integrate both, my assertion being best described as *more facts through better thinking*. To that end, integration is a key understanding to be embraced in social studies instruction, and further, more than integrating just the content of the social sciences into the social studies. It is that, but it is also integrating content from the arts and sciences, plus values and attitudes and faith, this last as an essential, based upon what we know about the socialization process in schools, the engagement of students and the role of motivation along with family and community involvement in education. Finally we can't fail to address cultural issues ranging from diversity to poverty. This is true integration, emphasizing the capital "I."

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standing, but also releases creativity. Understanding implies we are integrating the curriculum into the student’s day to day life, which makes it truly authentic. The educational landscape is littered with attempted reforms, marking efforts that focused on only part of the question of - what is to be integrated - and they failed because they did not engage the “big picture” nor did they integrate the many needs and purposes of learning in the social studies curriculum.

The late Ernest Boyer (1995) in “The Basic School” calls for four priorities for the school to succeed:

1. School as Community
2. Coherent Curriculum
3. Climate for learning
4. Commitment to character (virtue and purpose)

In a similar fashion “All Students Reaching the Top,” the 2004 report from Learning Point (formerly the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory [NCREL]), underscores the dimensions of the issue as it supports learning for all through comprehensive strategies which address:

1. community influences (family, community, peers, mentors, after-school activities, and culture)
2. school-based strategies (building trust, study groups, and supplemental activities)
3. classroom-based strategies (teaching for knowledge, comprehension, understanding, and connections)

In other words, it does take “the whole village” – community, school, and church. All of these factors impact each other and only by integrating all of the important aspects will “no child left behind” occur. J. B. Brooks (2004) discusses teaching for meaning, discussing how students conceptualize their learning by suggesting the importance of seeing “beyond the lesson.”

Addressing this broader definition of integration can also be easily viewed through the lens of the conceptual model for preparing teachers at Concordia – Saint Paul, centered upon teachers as decision makers. It contends that teachers make scores of significant decisions in the classroom each day and that these, obviously, impact learning. The Concordia – St. Paul model divides these decisions into four categories or perspectives as candidates need to consider these when planning and imple-
menting instruction: 1) developmental appropriateness; 2) sufficient content knowledge; 3) a variety of instructional strategies; and finally, 4) teacher values and dispositions. When teachers make appropriate decisions reflecting these four perspectives, better learning will occur. While this article’s focus is primarily upon the knowledge perspective, the remaining aspects must also be integrated. Teachers realize they do not operate in an academic vacuum devoid of other variables or factors: attitudes, student maturity, and teaching strategies are all factors of learning. Thus what I would propose is that the organization of curriculum, integrating all of these factors in a useful manner, understandable by parents and students and manageable by teachers, school leaders and the entire community is a desirable approach.

Teaching for Understanding: It’s the Concept

"Cognitive change and new learning involve building increasingly inclusive and robust concepts" (Bruner, 1973) in “Beyond the Information Given”.

By the early 1960’s, curriculum theorists Jerome Bruner and Hilda Taba were supporting what is often called the structure of knowledge. These theorists viewed learning from a context of the importance of understanding. This structure identified three levels: facts, concepts, and generalizations. They viewed understanding as conceptual development built upon facts allowing students to make generalizations.

Current brain research is providing an understanding that the brain handles understanding of concepts differently than facts. Concepts seem to develop at a deeper level, are retained, and can then be used to build more complex concepts allowing students to make generalizations and other applications as well as to be recalled on demand in, for example, a test situation. In consideration of their observations I would suggest the following model that integrates a variety of factors to allow for higher order thinking and understanding.

The level of integration in such lessons should be visible in planned academic decisions, which support meeting instructional objectives. To accomplish this goal the curriculum is best organized as concepts to be learned. This does not infer a reduced role for learning facts, but rather that the facts taught are determined by the concepts to be learned. Brain research suggests that facts taught outside of a conceptual context are seldom retained in long term memory unless maintained in an active format. I would contend that if the chief learning goal is higher level thinking, i.e., applications, synthesis, and problem solving, according to

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Bloom, we need to think in terms of concepts to be learned. Learning is about finding meaning and understanding within a context. Some even argue that the goal of education is the intellectual mastery of the modern world. Now that would be real understanding. Further, if this mastery is to be measured, assessment needs to challenge students to make useful generalizations which reflect clear understandings of these concepts based upon the facts used to build them. The inability to make these generalizations demonstrates that neither the content nor the thinking skills have been learned. A central tenet is that one does not teach concepts without using facts nor does one elevate facts above trivia without attending to concept development. The questions are where to start? How to proceed?

William Schmidt, research coordinator for the TIMSS 1996 study, stated that American education covers far more content than other industrialized nations, but it lacks depth of treatment. The starting point must be to teach concepts that are real to the student.

Support for this approach is not new. Psychology has suggested for some time that the learner is more than a receptor or mere reactor. The behavioral paradigm, which viewed learning as filling the brain with data, does not describe what brain research tells us about the brain or about learning, nor did it address the many factors depicted in a more field based view of learning and educational psychology. Brain-based studies of learning are suggesting that we learn based upon our interests, experiences, and reflection. If one wants a skill, one needs to practice the thinking related to that skill. If one wants knowledge and understanding one needs the capacity of reflective thinking. This extends even to the importance of good sleep patterns during which the brain sorts out the daily experiences. The brain does its own wiring in response to many factors that we usually divide into genetic and environmental categories. Further, and importantly, this learning is built upon conceptual understandings. The facts meet at interconnected conceptual nodes or intersections. In essence we build and test our conceptual understandings or frameworks upon evidence and experience. It is where we seek to make sense out of it all. These concepts are the categories or labels we apply to phenomena that share characteristics or attributes. They simplify and aid us in mak-
ing sense of our world. Finally they allow us to make generalizations about life with statements about relationships among the concepts and the decisions we make using them.

This is where the curriculum argument may be most keenly observed. I would suggest this fact vs. thinking debate is valid, but should not fragment or dictate the learning process. Learning must be seen from the individual’s participatory perspective, which certainly includes putting the learning to some test for coherence and correspondence with the views of others. In other words, once the concept is constructed it only resembles “subjective truth,” based upon the learner’s processing of the facts or data. This view must also now be questioned in the light of what others say using more objective standards. We may teach, but they learn and to ignore that reality is fatal to the entire undertaking. But, good learning for me must go beyond the subjective to where the integration of other views is equally important. In fact that is the joy of being human: to question, challenge, and create new perspectives and insights, even to discover the truth of the ages – even to consider faith and the metaphysical mysteries of creation and salvation. This, more than anything else, moves humans beyond mere existence and that may be at the heart of our very sense of being human and understanding whose we are in a theological sense.

The point, therefore, is planning for instruction which is all about integration, integration that is more than just content. Integration that is even more than strategies, readiness, and attitudes. Integration of learning that is built around life, and how brains build understanding. The terms “authentic instruction” and “authentic assessment,” were originally suggested by Newmann (1993) as labels to describe this process. Another term could well be “real learning” or even the phrase, “education for life.” The key need is to look at the whole picture, the interaction of learner with the instruction. In many ways social studies is a very logical place to begin. The 1992 NCSS definition provides a brief but powerful beginning, “Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence.” The clue is to remember that schools in a democracy have both a private and a public function or interest, to maintain and improve the individual and to sustain the culture.

Planning for Instruction and Assessment

Is it authentic? In other words, do students really need to know this? How can I plan a curriculum that makes sense to a variety of audiences,
especially to the students who need to be motivated and supported, which is developmentally appropriate, and can be accurately assessed? What is the plan? This is not a new question. Johann Herbart (1776-1841) called for teaching, in Prussian military schools that was more than mere memorization, encouraged meaning, and would contribute to intelligent behavior as part of the development of personal character. He called for this acquisition of meaning through a five step lesson plan years before Dewey or Hunter contributed to the field. His steps included:

1. Recitation or review of current knowledge.
2. The presentation of the new material to be learned
3. An opportunity to compare and understand the new learning
4. Defining or generalizing the new material
5. An application of this new learning, which could be another way to define authentic assessment.

He called for the material to have relevance and meaning to the students. Additionally, he wanted students to contrast and work with the information so that it was tested and seen to be useful, a well integrated approach.

Wormeli (2002) describes a process he calls chunking that leads to learning in a meaningful way providing an opportunity to move beyond randomness to long-term memory. His view is built not only on experience in middle school teaching, but on brain research that continues to emerge including the phenomenal growth taking place between ten and fourteen years of age. One of his major concerns is how to get the brain's attention for it has already become selective in what it will attend to, in other words, it is beginning to look more like an adult brain. Jensen (1998) also writes of the learning context and the acquisition of understanding. He makes a powerful statement about rest and the role of sleep in learning suggested by brain activity during sleep that organizes the days learning. McTighe and Wiggins (2004) address understanding as **Big Ideas** in “Understanding by Design” which makes a strong case for real instructional planning. Their proposal is for backward design process, based upon essential questions about what students need to know or be able to do.

This path has led me to suggest that teachers start their planning with the concept that they want to teach. A concept is defined as a mental construct that frames a set of examples sharing common attributes;
some would call it a category or it could be seen as phenomena which can be broad or narrow, concrete or abstract. Facts are what are used to build the concept. There are facts about a historical event or figure that we can use to build a concept using that event or person and these are used to create meanings. It is the difference between memorizing the date of a battle and using it to understanding the struggle, its causes, and its outcomes. Once this conceptual level is gained it is part of our understanding and can be used to make decisions or generalizations.

Generalizations are decisions or judgments based upon the relationships between the concepts. They can be very complex or fairly simple. Using them demonstrates what we call understanding. We can teach these concepts inductively or deductively but, once the concept is learned, the student is able to make decisions, assessments, and comparisons using it, the better the concept the clearer the generalizations.

My current version is to encourage a five step integrated learning plan, outlined below, that could be called OPERA, although I have added the last A under some protest, (even though it does make for an interesting acronym since I feel the lesson response, R, is perhaps assessment enough for most purposes and I have always liked shorter lists). Still it does make teaching sound more like an artistic performance. Further, this model assumes that one clearly knows the objective and standard before one begins to plan the instructional experience, but again that is a personal prerogative and claims no research support. The real goal is that you plan it from an integrated platform that includes the perspectives outlined above and involves the student at a significant level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>PERCENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening/Introduction</td>
<td>5% to 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20% to 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploration</td>
<td>20% to 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response/Acts of Creativity</td>
<td>20% to 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment/Wrap Up, Conclusion</td>
<td>5% to 20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Define concepts/make generalizations)

The emphasis in the chart is to integrate content, motivational factors, relevance, learning theory, and as many of the factors as possible into the planning. The outline simply labels the activities.

A second feature is to highlight more exploration and response in the lesson with a critical and more sharply focused eye upon the presen-
tation aspect of the lesson, the new material to be learned. A view that supports Bloom's notion of higher order thinking, creating a lesson that seeks more analysis, synthesis, evaluation or problem solving. When assignments require students to classify or summarize they are doing analysis and synthesis as they are when they compare and contrast. Further, when you get students to provide explanations or develop metaphors they are showing the ability to do synthesis. Solving problems and testing hypotheses are ways of generalizing and showing evaluative skills. They are learning concepts that provide meaning and finding a place in the student's useful or long term memory.

The Current Task
The creative act is how to integrate all of these concerns? The goal is to move beyond a question of traditional or progressive framework to a conceptual understanding of what our students need to know. A truly integrated and authentic curriculum that makes sense to students as well as to their parents and the wider community are important, in an OPERA like lesson plan with a focus upon teaching the concepts in which students can see meaning. As the Teacher Education Model at Concordia - St. Paul suggests, that is the teacher's work: we are decision makers who plan instruction so that students can learn. It is an approach that not only is conceptually based, but actually assesses the student's ability to use skills and knowledge, asking them what they really think and can do. In closing, I leave you with some reminders and a planning worksheet with an example of a lesson idea to help you design a conceptual plan, but that is your work and I wish you and those you teach rich learning and blessings.

Newmann's (1993) Authentic Instruction

Authentic Achievement
1. Students construct meaning and produce knowledge;
2. Students use disciplined inquiry to construct meaning;
3. Students aim their work toward production of discourse, products, and performances that have value or meaning beyond success in school

Persistent Maladies:
1. Often the work students do does not allow them to use their minds well.
2. The work has no intrinsic meaning or value to students beyond achieving success in school.
Standards of Authentic Instruction:

I Thou shalt teach that which is of deepest value.
II Thou shalt teach with rigor.
III Thou shalt uphold standards of excellence.
IV Thou shalt not kill time.
V Remember the disciplines and keep them holy.
VI Remember that children are whole people, not deficient adults.
VII Thou shalt not try to make one standard fit all.
VIII Thou shalt not treat the mind of a child as though it were receptacle.
IX Honor what children bring to the text.
X Thou shalt honor the student’s search for holistic knowledge.

These commandments should help us to imagine schools in which:

• Active learning means mentally active, not busy;
• Strong disciplinary pillars that foster knowledge integration;
• The value of both depth and coverage;
• Ability grouping when of genuine value;
• Assessment about progress toward personal excellence, LEJ

References


5.1.3.1 Describe the relationship between plants and animals in a local ecosystem.

(Standard from SS Curriculum guide by CPH, 5th grade level).
The Little Bread Store: A Parable for Urban Lutheran Schools

by Richard K. Schnake

Prologue (An Orphan Rescued)

Something strange has been happening here in Milwaukee. While most of us on the LUMIN board have used the word miracle frequently this past year, amazing might be more reasonable and just as accurate. We are amazed because the Lord has worked a success out of what should have become a failure. Here is a thumbnail sketch of that strange and amazing story, with a new parable written in celebration. “The Little Bread Store” is a story about the changing of a city, and a parable about Lutheran education and our IV: Identity, Vision, and Mission.

For a generation we have watched the lanterns of our urban Lutheran schools dim, as many of you have watched in other American cities, as enrollments decline and as proud congregations in the middle of our city sadly close the doors of their Christian Day Schools. The names here read like the litany of fallen comrades at a reunion of combat veterans: St. Stephen, Ebenezer, Holy Ghost, Oklahoma Avenue, Bethlehem, Bethany, Walther Memorial. Then last summer, we saw something new: a struggling church closed its doors with its struggling school still open, and essentially orphaned. When Nazareth Lutheran Church voted to dissolve itself as a congregation the fate of the school was unresolved, it’s uncertain future, and that of the 22 children still enrolled, left up to District. Rescued by an emergency partnership that held up quite well, it was reborn as Concordia University School and never actually closed. We began the 2005-06 school year with 72 children, ending with 70 and eight proud graduates.

This is a parable about the nature and purpose of Lutheran schools as Christ-centered centers of learning. It is not a rationale for LUMIN — Lutheran Urban Mission Initiative — nor a model of the LUMIN school. (Those may follow as appropriate.) It was first delivered to the modest little group of 8th graders mentioned above, as the closure of
their graduation sermon, and thus I wanted it sharp and focused, not too clever and not too cluttered. So here it is, including my final words to our first graduates, a new parable about Lutheran urban schools.

The Little Bread Store

The City
Once there was a bustling old City teeming with people; and in the busiest part of that city, in the most populous and crowded neighborhood of all, there were 4 little Bread Stores. They weren’t deli’s or bakeries they were just bread stores. And they were busy. They baked good bread and lots of it. It was healthy and it was tasty, and people loved it. They made no sausage or cheese, no pastry or desserts, just bread. Thick golden crust or sesame seed, caraway rye and cracked wheat, and oatmeal loaves and 7-grain rounds. They baked the bread in all shapes and sizes, big loaves or mini-loaves, fat and round, thick square loaves, or long and thin. They baked and sold bread, lots of it. And they fed that neighborhood, thousands and thousands of their neighbors.

After awhile however, the city began to change. As folks got older, some of their children stayed and raised their families, but some left for the country, or for warmer or cooler places. The same was true for the grandchildren, some stayed but many left. With houses for sale and apartments for rent, new people moved in, hoping for a better life. They came from different places, other neighborhoods, other cities, even other countries.

The Crisis
Many of the shops and businesses and small factories changed too. Some went out of business, some moved, some changed into different businesses, and some managed to stay open. But all together this meant fewer and fewer good jobs were available even though there were at least as many people as before. They still needed to eat, and while some new people no longer wanted bread, most still did. There were differences however: some wanted different kinds of breads; and many did not have jobs, or lower-paying jobs at the new businesses. Many still liked the breads those 4 bread-stores made, although not all could afford it. Some wanted cheaper bread, and softer bread, and sweeter bread. And after awhile the bread stores were selling less of their good baker’s bread. So naturally they began baking less, and now they needed fewer workers; and before too long the families who owned the 4 bread stores had to decide what to do.
Distress & Decisions

One said, “Maybe things will turn around and maybe they won’t. But we don’t know if we want to find out. We don’t want to stay open down here in the city too long, either losing money, or losing customers who move and new neighbors we don’t understand, or folks who want our bread but don’t want to pay what’s fair, or don’t like our bread.” So that family gave their workers the bad news, and they closed up their store.

One said, “Maybe things will turn around and maybe they won’t. But we don’t know if we want to find out. We don’t want to stay open here in the city too long, losing money and losing customers who move, and new neighbors we don’t understand, or folks who want our bread but don’t want to pay what’s fair, or don’t like our bread, or can’t pay.” And so one day they cleaned out that store and took all their equipment and baking supplies, and moved into a new store in a village outside of the city.

One said, “Maybe things will turn around and maybe they won’t. But one thing that’s clear is that many of the new neighbors don’t want as much bread, or as many kinds as we bake. They want snacks and desserts and pastries.” And so they began to offer more and more sweet things like cake and pie and cookies and glazed donuts; and fewer and fewer breads. After a while they added candy and soda and ice cream, and only baked bread once or twice a week unless they forgot, which happened more and more. But if it was sweet, you could get it there.

And one family said, “Maybe things will turn around and maybe they won’t. But we want to stay and will try to stay and hope we don’t give up. Our faithful workers want to stay, and there are still as many people as ever, and people do need bread. We want to keep baking bread for our neighbors. Maybe we can add a flat bread, and pocket bread, and dark rye, but we’re sticking with bread and we’re sticking with people. We don’t want to leave, we don’t want to close, and we don’t want to change. We’re going to stay open if we possibly can.”

Identity, Vision, & Mission

So they kept baking bread, the good old breads they had always baked and some new breads that new neighbors began asking for. They added Syrian flat bread, a pocket bread from Turkey, a new sweet potato bread from Botswana, and a black Russian Rye. And they stayed there and they stayed open and they kept baking bread; and the people of the neighborhood kept buying their bread, and thanked them for staying open.
To capture what happened to those four little bread stores and the impact on that neighborhood, we really need to focus on the neighbors in the story:

One store closed, and there was no bread;
One store moved, and there was no bread;
One store changed, and very soon, there was no bread; but
One stayed open, and there was bread.
The I.V.M. of that store was kept, though not without sacrifice, and not without struggles.

But the one that closed, lost it’s Vision. The one that moved, lost it’s Mission. And the one that changed, lost it’s Identity: it really wasn’t a bread store any more.

To the graduates

And that brings us back to Concordia University School, our school, your school. CUS has faithfully kept, though not without struggles and not without sacrifice, it’s I.V.M. So when you think back to your 8th grade year, I want you to remember; you can be proud but also grateful, that you graduated from the Little Bread Store that Stayed Open. Jesus said, “I am the Bread of Life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” Amen.

Epilogue (To the Rest of Us)

Fellow Lutheran teachers, this is a story about Christ-centered schools embracing their role as bread stores in cities of hungry people, especially children. A Christian school that’s fulfilling its Nature and Purpose, is clear on its “IVM”’s. The clear identity of an effective Lutheran school is to be a learning center proclaiming the Christian world-view and the Christ-centered curriculum. Its vision is to celebrate with its students the joy of being saved and to make them life-long learners who love the Lord. Its mission is to bring that Gospel joy and the love of Jesus to as many children in its community as possible, as many as the Lord Himself sends us.

“The Little Bread Store” is a parable about Lutheran schools in the city, and keeping them open. It’s about our nature and purpose, not so much about how to keep Lutheran schools open but why. How to keep them open is another question, in some ways perhaps, the harder one. But make no mistake: if we can’t answer why, then there is no particular reason to answer how. LEJ

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“What Jesus Meant,” Garry Wills, (Viking, 2006)

What Jesus Meant” was on my reading list before I realized that “The da Vinci Code” was supposed to be a blockbuster of summer 2006. There is nothing in his book that even hints that Garry Wills published it to capitalize on the film’s release, and I certainly did not read it to explore the film’s premise about the big Jesus secret. I read it along with other recent books on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe that I intend to use this fall. The combination may seem random, but viewing Jesus over against his far-removed followers helped in understanding European Christianity’s faltering efforts to keep relevant the insights of the founder. Important segments of the Christian movement then and now, according to Wills, missed what Jesus intended, while Europe’s Christians in Michael Burleigh’s “Earthly Powers” seemed far too immersed in their times to have noticed. Burleigh’s lengthy survey is not the subject here, but one cannot escape the impression while reading it that Christianity’s decline was partly the result of Christians being all too willing to identify the Kingdom of God with attractive contemporary causes. For example, some were enthusiastically socialist Christians, some were nationalistic Christians, others associated the faith with authority and stability, others identified it with progress and commercial success, others ministered to the urban masses as missionaries, and still others fought in culture wars of their day. During World War I, Christians everywhere confidently proclaimed God was with them and against their enemies. Is it any wonder then that, because Jesus’ followers were so ubiquitously partisan, so many Europeans in the twentieth century came to view Christianity as irrelevant? Even more significantly, can Christians fruitfully interact in a world so distant from ancient Palestine in the way Jesus meant without being co-opted by the moment?

Jesus the radical meets historians, the pope, and other sinners

If one reads Wills seeking a sensationalized view of Jesus, the reader
will be disappointed. The only mildly sensational aspect of the book is Wills’ sympathy for Judas. The book is a sincere Christian’s pursuit of faith seeking understanding of Jesus’ short life and true intentions as the gospels disclose. Wills himself described it as devotional. There are no footnotes or references requiring anything more than a churchgoer’s familiarity with the matter to grasp. Wills, a classics scholar, has also rephrased gospel texts into what one can easily recognize as the casual voice of everyday conversation in order to convey what he calls their “rough-hewn majesty” and “almost brutal linguistic earthiness.”Jesus and the evangelists were not stylists, and the Greek they used was clumsy. According to Wills, Jesus learned this work-a-day variety of Greek, and Hebrew, from the Essenes – one group being from Qumran, widely known as the “librarians of the Dead Sea Scrolls.” His active association with the Essenes also gives Wills reason to claim that Jesus was not married. If he had identified himself with the Pharisees, it would have been more likely that he would have married. But John the Baptist and the Essenes were so caught up in an unfolding “eschatological drama,” and prized discipline, self-introspection, and celibacy too highly for Jesus to have found marriage compatible with his urgent vocation. It is also hard to imagine Jesus living the marital routine, let alone imagining Mary Magdalene winning an argument with her husband.

Similarly, if one takes up the book in hopes of reading a biography of Jesus, the reader will be disappointed. In fact Wills rejects the idea that historians can write Jesus’ biography in the usual sense of the word – a reasonably dispassionate account of a historical figure’s life and deeds. Wills explicitly criticized the Jesus Seminar, a group in a long line of scholars who have sought to find the historical Jesus. According to the website of its sponsoring body, the seminar was organized under the auspices of the Westar Institute to renew the quest of the historical Jesus and to report the results of its research to more than a handful of gospel specialists. At its inception in 1985, thirty scholars took up the challenge. Eventually more than two hundred professionally trained specialists joined the group.

At the heart of the seminar’s efforts was the sifting of the gospels to find what Jesus really said. This they determined by a vote after hearing debate on the authenticity of each gospel passage attributed to Jesus. The seminar published the results of this investigation in 1993 under the provocative title “The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus” – the fifth being The Gospel of Thomas discovered in
1945 in a Coptic translation as part of the so-called Nag Hammadi Library. The body of “The Five Gospels” is a new, often jarring, translation by Robert Funk and Roy Hoover of them with the so-judged authentic words of Jesus in red, probable ones in pink, problematic ones in blue, and inauthentic ones in black. The results of this winnowing are that, “eighty-two percent of the words ascribed to Jesus in the gospels were not actually spoken by him.” For example, the only so-judged authentic word of Jesus in The Lord’s Prayer is “Father.” And, there are no authentic words of Jesus in the gospel of John, only one probably authentic phrase, a quip worthy of Rodney Dangerfield, “A prophet gets no respect on his own turf.”

Two questions immediately arise. What sort of Jesus is left? And, how could the gospel writers get things so wrong?

The answer to the first, according to the seminar, is that Jesus was a “laconic sage” “like the cowboy hero of the American West exemplified by Gary Cooper... slow to speech, a person of few words.” The seminar also postulated that:

- Jesus does not as a rule initiate dialogue or debate, nor does he offer to cure people.
- Jesus rarely makes pronouncements or speaks about himself in the first person.
- Jesus makes no claims to be the Anointed, the messiah.

The answer to the second question is more complex, but boils down to the fact that the apostles got things dreadfully wrong. For example, they played fast and loose with context, moved Jesus’ words around too freely, they expanded on his words, they smoothed out difficult sayings, they put words in his mouth, they subsequently re-interpreted what Jesus said to reflect their growing belief that he was the Christ, they simply did not get what he was saying, and/or didn’t remember things properly. In short, they were much like modern-day students who seemingly drink in the wisdom of the ages, and yet produce such curiosities when writing as “Yassir Arafat was a famous Russian general” or “Gandhi won India’s independence by being passive aggressive.”

Wills does not doubt that Jesus perplexed his contemporaries including his immediate circle, but dismissed the search for the historical Jesus as destined to failure as an attempt to find “New York City at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean.” No scholar or seminar can thresh Jesus’ his-
tory from the faith of the early Christian circle as wheat from tares, because all we have of Jesus in the gospels is the Jesus of faith. If you reject the faith, there is no reason to trust anything the gospels say. The Jesus of the gospels is the Jesus preached, who is the Jesus resurrected. Belief in his continuing activity in the members of his mystical body is the basis of Christian belief in the gospels. If that is unbelievable to anyone, then why should that person bother with him?"

This is not to say that Jesus is only a mythical figure or that he was not a historically real person, it is rather the case that the sources we have that disclose Jesus are unlike other kinds of historical documents. The gospels are a seamless cloak of the faith of the first Christians and the action of Jesus, so woven that to unravel one from the other will result in a pile of fuzz. But if we cannot know the historical Jesus, Wills still would not have us despair, because one can read the gospels and understand what Jesus meant. The meaning of Jesus, then, is a revelation of the unique and loving interaction between God and creation that is grasped, not a history to be analyzed.

So what did Jesus mean? Although a Catholic and dependent on Catholic commentators for his inspiration, Wills believes that Jesus meant something other than the contemporary Catholic Church, or, for that matter, what too many clerical establishments profess in his name. Jesus was a radical critic whose targets were religious authorities and their so-called holiness code or purity code. Jesus accepted the people they rejected as unclean — women (with whom Jesus conversed publicly, such as the woman at the well, and healed, such as the women with uncontrolled menstrual bleeding), lepers, collaborators with Rome, married men, those who did not wash before dinner, the poor, and so on. Even his crucifixion was his final putting on of uncleanliness because being convicted of blasphemy, being publicly naked, being executed, and being a corpse all made him polluted for the observant. "Jesus’ circle was also remarkably egalitarian, having neither hierarchy nor special membership requirements other than voluntary belief. It was an egalitarianism that continued into the early Christian movement — no priesthood or evidence of the special authority of the apostles and their suc-
cessors here. Indeed, Jesus especially attacked the temple priesthood and their sacrificial system, the very things “the pope, like his predecessors, is returning to,” with their “paraphernalia of priesthood, separation from the laity, consecration of places and things, [and] distance from the ‘unclean’ life of those not privileged by consecration.” Most significantly, Wills interprets Jesus’ death not as an atoning sacrifice to a demanding god, a Catholic doctrine at least as old as medieval times, but the climax of a rescue.

If we talk of it as a rescue, the power from which mankind has to be rescued is not God but the forces at work against God – all the accumulated sins that cripple human freedom. In the New Testament, this legacy of evil is personified as Satan. When Jesus, going to his death, says it is the enemy’s time, and the dominion of darkness (Lk 22.53), he is certainly not saying God is the dark power. Satan is. It is the struggle with the human capacity for evil that Jesus wages in the name of humanity. Human freedom and perversity have led the sheep astray, have condemned the prodigal son to his own degradation, and only the Shepherd and Father can send for this rescue. Similarly, when Jesus wept over Jerusalem that was about to kill him as it killed the prophets (Mt. 23.27), he was not suggesting that God killed the prophets. It was the enemy of God who did. It was Satan.

Sounds as if a reformation is overdue. Thoughtful readers, however, will find ample condemnation of Protestantism’s own exclusionary codes – a subject ideal for lively discussions among clergy and laity.

In brief, “Jesus was an extremist, a radical, but can any but radicals claim his name?”

“My reign is not of this present order” so put away those “WWJD” bracelets

“What Jesus Meant” is not about the politics of Jesus. Wills explicitly rejected the notion that Jesus’ radicalism is transferable to politics. Jesus was not interested in politics because his time horizon was not tomorrow but eternity. So when it comes to political decision-making, approximating “What would Jesus do?” (WWJD) is an extraordinarily wrong-headed test for political correctness. No Christian can draw on Jesus as a role model, because Jesus is not like us

He has higher rights and powers [than we]...[and] an authority as arbitrary as God’s in the Book of Job. He is a divine mystery walking among men. The only way we can directly imitate him is to act as if we were gods ourselves – yet that is the very thing he forbids.

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He tells us to act as the last, not be the first, as least, not the greatest."

When Christians identify Jesus' ministry with a program of political action, they yield to a temptation akin to Satan's first temptation of Jesus in the Wilderness: 'If you are in fact God's Son, tell this stone to become bread.' Why? Because a religion that limits itself to assuaging earthly hunger seals off the greater promise of God's reign, his justice...that is a judgment. He says, instead, 'Happy those hungering and thirsting for God's judgment - they will be satisfied' (Mt. 5.6)." Jesus did not come to change the world, at least not in the way that would make "heavenly aspirations unnecessary" or "occlude[e] broader horizons" available only in an encounter with God."

Confronted on the one hand with demands for radical inclusion in our religious faith and warned against a simultaneous establishment of a Jesus regime, what then is a Christian citizen to do?

Martin Luther understood the tensions of a righteous Christian simultaneously suspended between the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms made by humans, tensions that resulted from his understanding that governments need to act in ways that are unchristian toward goals that are mere vanities in the sweep of eternity. Such a mundane goal is, often, keeping a lid on seething hatreds threatening to erupt in violence so that the people who are mere strangers to its own government can carry on their miserable lives a little longer. It is for that reason I confess my sympathies for Pontus Pilate. But it is not enough to taut Luther's "Two Kingdom" doctrine as a cut-and-dried prescription to the dilemma, at least not in the way that many commentators already have. It is an impoverished interpretation of the Two Kingdom doctrine to associate Luther's condoning of the bloody repression of the religious revolutionaries of the Peasants' War of 1525-6 and his manifest skepticism about the justice of politics with a hard-edged indifference toward how the powerful use power. Clearly there have been times when Christians have had a redeeming insight into injustice that secular society lacked. One good example coming from my recent readings is from turn-of-the-nineteenth-century Great Britain when evangelical Anglicans, Methodists, Quakers, and politicians such as the conservative member of Parliament William Wilberforce worked a sea change in contemporary attitudes on slavery and the slave trade. They did so by forming the first privately organized citizen action committee to lobby the government and alert the public to the sin of turning African slave labor into refined sugar.

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After nearly forty years of often frustrating, yet peaceful politicking, Parliament ended slavery in 1833. This is certainly a fine example of what Luther had in mind when he wrote in “Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed:” “On behalf of others…[the Christian] may and should seek vengeance, justice, protection, and help, and do so as much as he can to achieve it.”

A better understanding of Luther’s Two Kingdom doctrine resides in the Christian citizen appreciating the tensions living in the two kingdoms without retreating from action or seeking to merge them. A sober appreciation of life in the city of man, to use St. Augustine’s term for the political sphere, involves recognition of its inherent imperfection. No policy can remediate imperfection. No position is free of someone’s self interest. No one can speak for Jesus. To think otherwise is sin, or as Reinhold Niebuhr put it: “The tendency to equate our politics with our Christian convictions causes politics to generate idolatry.”

On the other hand, living “in a deeper dimension than the realm on which political struggle takes place” is no license to “flee the world of political contention into a realm of mystic eternity or moralistic illusion.” Niebuhr called this understanding of Luther’s Two Kingdoms “Christian Realism.” This fuller expression of implications present in Luther’s Two Kingdoms should give no Christian supreme comfort or confidence because so many have thought “God is with us” when God was elsewhere. The Christian citizen is no different than Bartimaeus, the blind beggar of Jericho who stood shouting so that Jesus would hear him and help him (Mark 10.46-52). Bartimaeus’ desire was to stop Jesus long enough to regain his sight. Pray that we will be so blessed as to have Jesus pass by, and stop long enough to give us an insight into where he is going and to follow.

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Endnotes
i. Michael Burleigh, “Earthly Powers: The Clash of Religion and Politics in Europe from the French Revolution to the Great War” (Harper Collins, 2005), 530 pages. Burleigh wrote the book to refute the come notion that faith steadily lost out to a hostile secular outlook, while illustrating the creative responses Christians made to the challenges of modern life and its problems.
ii. Garry Wills, “What Jesus Meant” (Viking, 2006), 100-4. Wills is Professor of History Emeritus at Northwestern University.
iii. Wills, “A Note on Translation,” xiii.
iv. Wills, 9-10.
v. The Westar Institute, “Jesus Seminar Description”


xi. Wills, xxvi.

xii. Wills, xxvi.

xiii. Wills, 112.

xiv. Wills, 48-52.

xv. Wills, 132.

xvi. Wills, 119-120.

xvii. Wills, 58.

xviii. Wills, xvii.

xix. Wills, 12-4.


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Book Review: The Politically Incorrect Guide to Darwinism and Intelligent Design
by Paul A. Zimmerman

“The Politically Incorrect Guide to Darwinism and Intelligent Design”

Recent years have witnessed the rise of a new and powerful challenge to the theory of evolution. Advances in micro-biology and biochemistry have led to the realization that living organisms are far too complicated for their origin to be explained by Darwin’s concept of evolution. Impressive evidence has been uncovered showing that the constituents of living cells in many cases are so complex that they appear to have been designed by an intelligence, rather than having evolved by a gradual process.

The Intelligent Design concept, coupled with the increased realization that Darwinian evolution remains unproven has generated considerable controversy. Some state school boards have attempted to require that evolution be taught in public schools with the accompanying evidence that the theory faces serious difficulties. Conferences have been held to discuss Intelligent Design. Articles and books have been written on the subject. All this has been greeted with fierce opposition by confirmed evolutionists.

Science teachers both in Christian and public schools should welcome the recent publication of Jonathan Wells’ “Politically Incorrect Guide to Darwinism and Intelligent Design.” Wells is also the author of “Icons of Evolution” published in 2000. In that book he evaluated critically the classical “proofs” of evolution found in most biology texts. He is well qualified to write on the subject. Wells holds a doctorate in religious studies from Yale University and also a doctorate in molecular and cell biology from the University of California at Berkeley.

Jonathan Well’s latest book demonstrates that Darwinism is not a fact as is so often claimed. He also shows that the evidence for macroevolution is not strong enough to even qualify it as a theory. He then proceeds to sketch the concept of Intelligent Design, together with its implications for both science and theology. Wells also performs an
important service in relating how the exponents of evolution fiercely oppose any criticism of evolutionary theory even being mentioned in the public schools. He also points out that many evolutionists actively oppose Christianity. All of this is presented by the author in a fashion that the average reader can comprehend. Wells documents his book extremely well and also provides both web sites and book titles on the subject. It is a book well worth reading by the Lutheran teacher.

In the first chapter Wells points out that evolution today faces an enormous challenge in accounting for the origin of living organisms from non-living materials. He quotes Harvard biologist Marc W. Kirschner and Berkley biologist John C. Gerhart who in 2005 wrote: “Everything about evolution before the bacteria-like forms is sheer conjecture.” (p. 4) Even Darwin recognized this problem, but nevertheless stoutly held that natural selection was the only means by which variations that arose by chance were preserved and improved. He proposed that all living things are modified descendents of a common ancestor, and that unguided processes are sufficient to explain all features of living organisms.

Wells then proceeds to relate how the Intelligent Design movement has its roots in the publication of several books in the years between 1984 and 1992 and a meeting organized by Berkeley law professor Phillip Johnson near Monterey, California in 1993.

The reader may well ask, “Just what is Intelligent Design?” Wells answers the question by listing several distinctive characteristics of the concept. He states that “design” in this case refers to “a pattern produced by a mind that conceives and executes a plan. Any natural causes involved are guided by an intelligence.” (p. 7) The author also makes clear that Intelligent Design theory is not derived from the Biblical creation account. It stands on its own objective scientific evidence that points to a designer. But it does not attempt to identify that designer. However, Wells writes most proponents of Intelligent Design believe that “the designer is the God of the Bible.” (p. 8) Indeed one may well observe that Intelligent Design appears to fall within the realm of what theologians call “the natural knowledge of God.” To see design in nature, the work of an intelligence, is to do what the Apostle Paul refers to in Romans 1:20, “Since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood by what has been made, so that we are without excuse.”

Wells next moves to an analysis of the problems facing evolutionary
theory. He begins with the fossil record. Contrary to what is often claimed, the fossils do not present an unbroken record of a family tree from the first cell to man. Wells quotes an evolutionary biologist Henry Gee as writing in 1999:

No fossil is buried with its birth certificate. That and the scarcity of fossils means that it is effectively impossible to link fossils into chains of cause and effect in an valid way...To take a line of fossils and claim that they represent a lineage is not a scientific hypothesis that can be tested, but an assertion that carries the same validity as a bedtime story – amusing, perhaps even instructive, but not scientific. (p. 20)

Wells next examines the claims of a more recent approach to the study of evolution, called Molecular Phylogeny. Because experiments cannot be performed on organisms that lived ages ago and are with us only as fossils, biologists have turned to the study of the DNA, RNA, and proteins of living organisms. All living organisms from bacteria to humans contain these extremely complex chemical molecules that determine and control form and function. It is proposed that evolutionary relationships might be determined by discovering how two different living organisms might be related in respect to the DNA, RNA, and protein found in their cells. Wells reports that these molecular phylogeny studies have failed to produce the desire proofs. He quotes a December, 2005 report by biologist Antonis Rokas who analyzed fifty genes from 17 animal groups. Rokas reported that “different phylogenetic analyses can reach contradictory inferences with absolute support” and concluded that the evolutionary relationships among the phyla “remain unresolved.” (p. 43)

It is important to note the difference between “macro-evolution” and “micro-evolution.” Macro-evolution is basically the claim that all living forms today have evolved from the first living cell that itself somehow evolved from non-living inorganic material. Micro-evolution refers to changes within a species that result from mutations. Within a species a chance mutation or change in a gene is usually damaging and frequently fatal. However, some mutations may confer an advantage to the organism and thus are likely to be preserved in future generations. This is actually in harmony with the Genesis reference to the creation by God.
of the various "kinds" (The Hebrew word "min" is translated as "kind"). It indicates a grouping larger than species. Cf. Leviticus 11:13-19 where it is used to refer to a group as large as a family.) Change within the grouping of the "kind" is not ruled out by Genesis. Thus there is no conflict between micro-evolution and Genesis. But Wells points out that micro-evolutionary changes in genes have "not been seen as able to turn a reptile into a mammal, or convert a fish into an amphibian." (p. 57)

That would be macro-evolution.

In Chapter 6 Wells presents an analysis of the materialistic philosophy that is basic to evolutionary theory. He relates that in "The Origin of Species" Darwin repeatedly argues that his theory must be true, because creation is false. The theory of evolution asserts that everything originated by itself and developed by itself without any aid from a deity. Frequently evolutionists will openly admit this bias. Wells writes, "So it is not evidence that makes evolution a 'fact', but materialistic philosophy." (p. 69) In 1997 Harvard geneticist Richard C. Lewontin recalled how he and Carl Sagan had once defended Darwinism in a debate. He explained, "We take the side of science in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs...because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism." He continued, "That commitment is absolute, for we cannot allow a divine foot in the door." (p. 69)

In Chapter Nine, called "The Secret of Life", Wells describes the discovery by James Watson and Francis Crick of the molecule structure of DNA (deoxyribonucleic) This complex molecule encodes the genetic information that directs the formation of proteins, the building blocks of living cells. DNA is described as a duplex molecule with a helical winding structure in which two chains (or strands) are linked to one another through the specific pairing of chemical bases. These base sub-units function like a four letter alphabet. Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates once wrote: "DNA is like a computer program, but far more advanced than any software ever created." These DNA sequences are called genes. A typical gene is several hundred bases long. It is estimated that a minimum size living cell requires at least 250 genes. All this adds up to a structure so specific and so complex that, no matter hold old the universe may be, there is simply not enough time for these complex structures to have evolved by chance.

It was the complexity of DNA and other complex chemical structures in the living cells that caused Michael Behe, a biochemist at Lehigh University, to write a book titled "Darwin's Black Box, The Biochemical
Challenge to Evolution.” Published in 1999, Behe’s book is a brilliant exposition of the concept of Intelligent Design. Wells devotes a chapter to this classic. He tells how Behe describes complex tiny molecular engines in cells that are “irreducibly complex.” Behe maintains that these complex structures could not have been developed by Darwin’s theory of numerous, successive, slight modifications. Behe argues that if any one part of these complex little molecular engines were missing, the entire system would fail to operate; all the parts had to be there at the beginning. Thus Behe concludes, they show evidence of having been designed by an intelligent agent. They could not have developed by Darwin’s method.

The author cites several of Behe’s examples of irreducibly complex organs in the cell. Perhaps the most compelling is the Bacterial Flagellum. It is a thin filament. The intestinal bacterium E.Coli has from six to twelve of these filaments extending from its body. Wells writes:

When the flagella turn in one direction they bundle together to form a long, rapidly rotating whip that propels the organism through the surrounding liquid....At the base of each flagellum is a proton driven motor that can turn thousands of times a minute and reverse directions in a quarter turn. The motor’s drive shaft is attached to a rotor that turns within a stator, and the entire assembly is anchored in the cell wall by various bushings. (p. 113)

Behe notes that for the device to work, each of the several parts must be present. It could not have developed one piece at a time by chance. It shows definite signs of having been designed. Other examples of irreducibly complex systems are the light-sensing mechanism in our eyes and the human blood-clotting system. Behe maintains such organisms were the work of an intelligent designer, not the product of evolution.

The author has titled another chapter, “What a Wonderful World.” In it he shows how evidence from the study of the cosmos also leads to the conclusion that the entire universe has been wonderfully designed. He writes, “The fundamental constants of the universe seem remarkably fine-tuned for life. For example, if the strength of gravity were weaker by only one part in a trillion trillion trillion, the universe would have expanded so quickly after the Big Bang that no galaxies or planets would have formed. On the other hand, if gravity were stronger by only one part in a trillion trillion trillion, the universe would quickly have collapsed back on itself. Either way, we would not exist.” (p. 120) Other fine-tuned constants in the universe that point to Intelligent Design are the...
electromagnetic force, the ratio of the masses of protons and electrons, and the strong nuclear force that holds atomic nuclei together. Still other physical constants could be listed, but it all adds up to a world that is uniquely well designed for human life.

Jonathan Wells also brings the reader up to date on attempts by various state school boards to assure academic freedom in the teaching of biology in the public schools. In Kansas and Ohio there have been fierce battles staged by evolutionists to prevent the students from being told of the problems which Darwinism faces. The position taken is that evolution is a fact and that any attempt to point out its problems is simply creationism in disguise. Materialists insist that Intelligent Design should not even be mentioned to the students.

The ACLU has been particularly active in filing or threatening to file lawsuits against any school board that permits Intelligent Design theory to be introduced in the classroom. The infamous 2004-5 Dover, Pennsylvania school board case is described in detail. Wells quotes the local judge’s decrees: “Intelligent Design is not science and cannot be judged valid, accepted, scientific theory, as it has failed to publish in peer-review journals, engage in research and testing, and gain acceptance in the scientific community.” (p.155) What the judge failed to note was that scientific journals are typically controlled by materialistic minded evolutionists who usually will not accept articles promoting Intelligent Design. The judge also failed to accept the testimony given by several competent scientists who testified against Darwinism at the trial. This verdict and the stance of the ACLU have had a damping effect on the chances of Intelligent Design being introduced in public schools. Those who support and teach in church schools have one more reason to be thankful for their freedom to teach in accord with science and the Holy Scriptures.

Chapter 15 is titled “Darwinism’s War on Traditional Christianity.” There are those individuals who believe that a compromise in the struggle may be reached by saying that evolution may have been God’s method of creating the universe and its contents. However this so-called “theistic evolution” finds no warm embrace among dedicated evolutionists. The materialistic philosophy behind Darwinism is frequently in evidence. Wells quotes molecular biologist Jacques Monod as saying, “Because the mechanism of Darwinism is at last securely founded…man has to understand that he is a mere accident.” In 1977 Stephen Gould wrote, “Biology took away our status as paragons created in the image of God.” The virulently anti-Christian Richard Dawkins once said,
“Religion is one of the world’s great evils, comparable to the smallpox virus, but harder to eradicate.” (p. 172-3)

The book ends on a positive note. Jonathan Wells predicts a scientific revolution. He is confident that Intelligent Design will emerge victorious from the struggle. He points out that this new concept is already commanding world-wide attention. As an example he cites an August, 2005 conference in Prague where some seven hundred people from eighteen nations met to discuss “Darwin and Design.” Many other similar meetings have been held. The Discovery Institute, based in Seattle, has obtained over 600 signatures on a statement critical of Darwinism as an explanation for the origin of living organisms. This is a significant statistic, since identification with Intelligent Design has in several cases led to the loss of academic positions by those who have been bold enough to advocate the possibility of the new concept.

Even the Roman Catholic Church has developed an interest in Intelligent Design. Pope Benedict the XVI is a theologian who has long been a critic of materialism. Since Darwinism is so clearly materialistic, many expect him to oppose it. During the first week in September, 2006, Catholic scientists and philosophers met in Rome to discuss both Darwinism and Intelligent Design.

Wells believes the handwriting is on the wall. There is a Creator, an Intelligent Designer. He has left evidence of his handiwork. With King David in Psalm 8:3-4 we exclaim, “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set in place, What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?”

In closing we must recall that in the final analysis our belief in creation is a matter of faith. Hebrews 11:3 reminds us, “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made of what is visible.” But most importantly, as Lutheran educators we emphasize for our students the supreme importance of the Gospel. As the great Apostle wrote in Romans 5:11, “We rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.” LEJ
A top drawing feature of the average Lutheran high school is its small and safe environment. Most parents are relieved by the closed campus, attendance records, and friendly students. Going a little deeper, many even appreciate the opportunity for close relationships to develop with mentoring adults. It is in this latter sense that I wish to direct our attention. In terms of relationships, how safe is your Lutheran high school?

Allow me to share some assumptions. First, I believe that Lutheran high schools are extensions of the Church, and that the great purpose of the Church, in the words of C.S. Lewis, is “to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs.” Second, the Spirit does His drawing through means, namely Word and Sacrament. Lewis stressed especially the incarnate Word in God’s people. “He works on us in all sorts of ways. But above all, He works on us through each other. Men are mirrors, or carriers of Christ to other men. Usually it is those who know Him that bring Him to others.” Third, all of us, staff, parents, and students drag around a filthy, rotting, maggot sack flesh full of some pretty ugly, wicked, and frightening stuff. (My description is borrowed from Luther.) My final assumption is that all believers have God’s Spirit within them and He is busy sanctifying us into Christlike thinking, speaking, and acting.

Let me now rephrase the question: how safe is it for people (students, colleagues, parents) to share their good fight of the faith against the world, the devil, and the flesh in your Christian community? It can be extremely risky to share our vile side with another, perhaps especially in the church. Judgment, rejection, and even censure are possible responses to one who courageously confesses. To see another’s dirty laundry reminds us of our own old Adam and that is never fun to contemplate. The temptation is to run to safer topics, repair the bad situation, or refer to a counselor. I believe Christ calls us to be priests instead. But what exactly does the priesthood of all believers do?

For starters, a priest listens to a fellow, forgiven sin-
ner's confessions and struggles. Such people are approachable and discuss the uncomfortable. An air of humility and gentleness surrounds such people. They are aware of their own, vile, sinful flesh. (Heb. 5:2) They are probably not clinging to their own righteousness but to a foreign righteousness from Christ. They listen for good desires of the heart and for meager attempts to quench those desires with leaky wells (people, positions, performances, places, possessions). Far from being judgmental, they are eager to pronounce God's sweet forgiveness to another believer who is also "poor in spirit."

A priest prays to God for a fellow forgiven saint. James exhorts us "to confess your sins to one another and pray for one another." (James 5:16) The priest realizes that only God sanctifies; only God provides growth. Only the Spirit moves, disrupts, entices, breaks, heals. The priest is a very dependent son or daughter of God who leans on God's grace and power more than on his or her wisdom, experience, or understanding. And a priest wants, more than anything else, for the fellow forgiven saint "to be strengthened with might through the Holy Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in the heart through faith" (Eph. 3:17).

A priest wonders and marvels at what God might be up to in the life of another. A priest does not ultimately focus attention on sin or any psychological damage but on God. A priest knows that "the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or imagine." (Eph. 3:20) A priest remembers that David began by herding sheep, that Saul became Paul, and that big-mouthed, risk-taking Peter became leader of the Church. A priest waits on God to act in the life of another. The greatest growth might be detected not by graduation, but at the 20 year reunion. A priest knows that the Church is a community of people on a journey to God. He may or may not be used by God in the life of a particular individual and that is okay. God's glory and another's good matter more.

Finally, a priest speaks truth to a fellow forgiven saint. He declares that we are already secure and significant in Christ. Our sins have been forgiven and we've been called and equipped to advance His kingdom. A priest communicates that people are not their problems, sins, or wounds. "We are dearly loved children of God." (I Jn. 3:1) "There is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 8:1) And a priest communicates that the God who forgives us and accepts us is sovereignly controlling all that happens in our lives.

The Church, and therefore Lutheran high schools, "can be the safest
place on earth where all that is true...both the ugly and the beautiful...can be faced; to envision what the Spirit can do, to feel the pains of childbirth as we wait for Christ to be formed in each other...to touch each other with the power of the risen Christ that now lives in us.” “Involvement in a spiritual community...that is aroused and relating by the truth of the Gospel...has a profound effect upon a troubled person.” “The Safest Place on Earth,” Larry Crabb.

May God’s Holy Spirit form such safe, spiritual community among us for His glory. _LEJ_
With apologies to Albert Brooks and his latest feature film, let us explore the world of comedy and humor in our Lutheran educational system. Sounds like an “oxymoron, you say?” Maybe to some observers but not to those who are in the trenches of ministry in the congregation, school, home, or community. It all depends on what one is looking for...and where one looks.

When we understand that sharing the Gospel of the Lord is not our “job” but rather our “joy,” whole new opportunities of celebration and laughter open up to us. Remember the old quote of Garrison Keillor, “...For Lutherans, every day is Lent.” That captures one perception that some people have about us Lutherans...that we are the serious, no-nonsense types, that really do not get much fun out of living. It is like a guilt-ridden, pessimistic friend of mine who often says, “In case of an accident...I’m not surprised.”

My take on looking for humor in the Lutheran world is that when people take themselves too seriously, they forget about the joy that is already there (and theirs)...in the Lord. People who do not share a sense of humor have often times forgotten about God. Have you ever tried to play God? It’s really tough work. And the reality that needs to be remembered and shared is that we do not have to play God...He’s doing His job quite well, thank you.

Looking for humor does not start by learning how to tell jokes, or by making fun of people, or by trying to “laugh your troubles away.” At least, that never works for me. Instead, looking and finding humor in our world begins by knowing that we are living on “this side” of the Resurrection, that Christ has died for us and has redeemed us and made us free...to live, to rejoice, to laugh, to serve others, and to celebrate joy in our lives. And by being grabbed by the Spirit as we continue to look for and find that Joy in Jesus is what motivates us to want to tell others about the Lord...so that others can experience that joy as well.
Having trouble finding that joy in your life? Where are you looking? If you're like I am, I do not find joy in all of life. How can you when we are blasted by Katrina's and tsunamis, by cancer and cataracts, by worries, woes and wars. And don't attempt to find humor and joy in the 10 O'clock news report or the front page of the Tribune...it just “ain't gonna happen.” Or for us Chicagoans, certainly don't try to find it in the baseball standings of the National League. For you see, too many of us are “Looking for love (and joy) in all the wrong places,” to quote that quasi-Lutheran hymn.

Looking for humor? Great. Keep looking. Through our Baptism we are assured that we are marked for life by Water and the Word. That's the start of real joy. Then let me suggest that we laugh at ourselves a little more (no, a lot more), especially in our classrooms, at staff meetings, in the pulpit and pew, and certainly at home. After some hearty and healthy laughs at ourselves, let me suggest that we search the Scriptures and look for all of that Joy that just oozes out of God's Word. Do a concordance study of the word “joy.” Wow...joy is all over the place and it is not only “Joy to the World” but also “Joy throughout the World”, because the Lord is there in the midst of us.

And then look and listen to all the children in our lives, whatever their age. Listen and learn as they struggle and also as they share their joy. The ringmaster in the circus has it right when he proclaims, “Ladies and gentlemen, children of ALL ages, welcome to the greatest show on earth”. And our greatest show on earth is to show the earth the Joy that we have in the Lord of heaven and earth. Talk about looking for, and finding humor ... it's all around us.

As we listen to little children at work and play, we hear holy hilarity so often, don't we? If you don't, let me suggest that you try to listen more closely to their words and responses and their ability to forgive each other. Recently, the story was told of a little guy during a children's message who was asked what his favorite Bible passage is. He thought a moment and then proudly shouted out: “The Word became fresh and dwells among us.” And how right he is. The Word, Christ becoming flesh for us, now continues to be fresh in each of us as we tell this refreshing story to those around us.

Looking for humor? Look no further. The Lord has given humor and joy to us as a gift. And the Lord says to each of us, “lighten up,” by seeing Christ as the light of the world, to shine forth, and to bring this joy to all people. Some folks might even be motivated to say that this is

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“ABLazing Grace,” in the Lord.

So, light-hearted people of God, lighten up. Laugh at yourself, and give other people permission to laugh.

Looking for comedy and humor in the Lutheran world? Look no further than the mirror in front of you, and then realize that Holy Hilarity is contagious. Let’s pray for an epidemic. LEJ
In his book "Management by Proverbs: Applying Timeless Wisdom in the Workplace," Michael Zigarelli notes how imperative it is for leaders to be able to work with people. While intended for leaders in the business world, his words apply to leaders of schools as well.

He writes, “Want to be a great leader? Want to succeed in your career? The word is out: your interpersonal skills are critical. At work, in the home, at church, around the neighborhood and just about every place else, these skills can make or break your ability to get things done.”

As Zigarelli notes, the advice that follows is not new. It is, though, too often overlooked. Among his reminders are the following:

**Listen actively.** Principals are busy people. They often don’t have time to listen. They have a long list of things they must get done. Yet, they have to make time to be effective listeners. That means making eye contact with the speaker, having a body posture that shows attentiveness, asking the right questions, summarizing the points made by the speaker, and then taking appropriate action.

**Make people feel important.** One of the basic needs of humans is to receive positive feedback for their efforts. Receiving genuine compliments has a way of energizing the recipient. The act of showing appreciation also helps the principal better realize the importance of those with whom he works.

**Don’t complain.** Zigarelli notes that eighty percent of the people won’t care, and the other twenty percent think you deserve what you’re getting. It’s been noted by others that the squeaking wheel doesn’t always get the grease. Sometimes it gets replaced.

**Talk about the other person’s interests.** It’s hard for principals to detach themselves from school-related topics. That’s especially true when they speak with people who have a connection with the school. Principals often are in the position of dictating the subject of conversations. It’s important, though, for principals to allow people the
chance to talk about their own interests. Conversations on other topics help principals build new connections with people. They also help people view the principal as being more well-rounded.

*Remember names.* Take the time to learn and remember peoples’ names. It helps them feel important. As has been often said, a person’s name is the sweetest word that person hears.

*Make sacrifices for others.* When a principal goes out of the way to help others, those people will probably reciprocate. But even if they don’t, the time and effort spent are worth it. Principals are the servants of many, and that’s the way it should be.

*Talk about your own mistakes while raising theirs.* As Zigarelli points out, “If you want to get somebody to listen to you about mistakes they’ve made, start by identifying your own. Believe me; they’ll certainly listen to that. As you do, you’ll make it safer for them to own up to their faults.”

*Apologize.* A genuine “I’m sorry” is good for both sides. It breaks down barriers. It gets things back on track.

*Never, ever gossip.* Principals need to be above gossip and rumors. A sound piece of advice is, “If what you say is something you wouldn’t write down, then don’t say it.” No one raises his reputation by lowering others. It’s important for staff, students, and parents to know they can trust the principal both when he speaks in public and in private.

*Don’t communicate when angry.* As the old saying goes, “Speak when you are angry and you’ll make the best speech you’ll ever regret.” The way a principal handles frustration is often modeled by the students and staff members who witness it.

*Use self-deprecating humor.* We live in a world of self-promotion. It serves as a refreshing change when people are willing to acknowledge their flaws. It makes them more credible and more likeable. Each principal has a vast warehouse of personal experiences from which to draw as a source for self-deprecating humor.

*Focus on your similarities.* Human beings have far more in common with each other than they are usually willing to acknowledge. An effective way to overcome differences of opinion is to recognize and articulate similarities. People are more likely to be influenced by those with whom they feel common bonds.

*Don’t assume you’re right.* Unwillingness to listen to an opposing point of view deprives us of the chance to learn, it makes us appear stubborn,
and it makes others less willing to acknowledge that they too may be wrong. Some troubles come about as a result of wanting our own way. Others come as a result of being allowed to have it.

It's not enough for principals to be merely knowledgeable. A school and its students, staff, and parents need a leader who uses people skills deftly and consistently. To paraphrase St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 13, “I may be able to speak well in public, have an advanced degree, and be in a position of authority, but if I can’t work with people in ways that reflect the love of God, I am no more than a noisy gong or a clanging bell.”

References