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When I should be walking.

In August of 2002, one of the sectional presentations at our Fall Faculty Seminar, Lois Klatt and Bill Duey of Concordia’s Human Performance Department put together an engaging hour for the information of the faculty on the benefits of moving – even if it’s just walking – as a boost to physical health. As a wrap-up to the presentation, each of us received a prescription-style plastic bottle with a pedometer within, complete with belt clip, these having been donated through the courtesy of Wheatridge Ministries. The final admonition in their presentation was that we should try to achieve a minimal 10,000 steps a day as way to increase wellness, overall health and the happiness it brings.

Well, I finally found my pedometer a couple of months ago in the lower reaches of a pocket of my golf bag where I had stashed it after a playing nine holes the day after the Duey/Klatt presentation now over a year ago. So much for attempting intentional, positive change.

If there were such a thing as an institutional pedometer, Concordia University, River Forest would have sent the digital display spinning wildly over that same time period. An obvious difference to the reader is here I sit writing this - in a sort of ongoing crash course in desktop publishing software - instead of Jon Barz, former LE editor now at the University of Dubuque and that we’re producing this issue under the masthead of an acting president and publisher, Manfred Boos and Ralph Reinke, respectively, upon the departure of Dr. George Heider from this campus in August 2003. More about that later.

It’s rather likely that the talk out there about what happened at (or to) Concordia, River Forest, in this last year is likely equal parts conjecture, some fact, surprise, some sadness and, I think, real hope for its
future. That these pages have been edited by a faculty member since 1865 and that it’s likely that the institution has gone through equally challenging times in 139 years since - some of which occurred in my own undergraduate days here in the mid-1970’s - it would seem to bode well for the long run: the truth remains that this place does not belong to us.

In the face of the seemingly unhealthy financial picture and the considerable unhappiness that we’ve endured in the last year, one might reasonably wonder what we were thinking when co-editor Bill Rietschel and I came up with the theme for the issue, “Health and Happiness in Ministry”?

Between the two of us, there are twenty-three successive years’ experience as Synodical Placement Director here at Concordia University. Chances are, if the you’re an RF alum of either of the last two decades of the Twentieth Century, either Bill or I signed your Call (and since I’m writing the editorial, I get to remind you that his would be the EARLIER of those decades...). In all of the thousands of hours of conversations with church work placement candidates a recurring theme arose, that is, there was always an issue or question as to whether a person was going to be happy in their first Call as a teacher, DCE or Deaconess. It was our duty to deliver the news that, no, there was no guarantee. Bill’s mantra was, “Deal with it”; my version was “It’s not a bed of roses, it’s a crown of thorns”. So far this isn’t sounding very happy or healthy.

That there are no guarantees of health or happiness in ministry does NOT negate the possibility that these can consistently occur. More importantly, it should provide all the more impetus for proactively seeking ways to incorporate healthy lifestyle habits and choices into what we model and live out in the places where we serve.

When the tough times come, when there are downturns, upheavals, challenging – even devastating – events that occur to us or within the lives students, parishioners or colleagues, people who are physically healthy will be better able to withstand the emotional, physical and spiritual rigors that these bring. That we are gifted, for the most part, with the capability of making the most of our physical selves whether in terms of fitness of mind or body, is perhaps a strong suggestion from our Creator that we ought to do so. That we may have considerable lag between present condition and optimal fitness is a reminder of the stewardship we have of our own selves – church workers who are physically, emotionally or spiritually exhausted make poor models, poor servants and, very likely, some poor decisions.
In order to help us in that, we’ve called upon Dr. Bill Ducey, Associate Professor of Human Performance to serve as an Associate Editor and regular contributor to these pages. Bill received his doctorate from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and has been at River Forest since 1999. In addition to teaching, he heads up the Human Performance Laboratory in collaboration with Dr. Lois Klatt, now faculty emeritus. His article concerning “Project Care” is a proactive effort to document the need for wellness intervention in very intentional ways.

Additionally in this issue, Vicki Boye provides us with an overall view of what has become a national health concern, that is, how many matters of health and wellness are related to lifestyle and that Lutheran Schools have a significant role as change agents in these.

Nathan Kretzmann articulates what we all know, that ministry of all types consumes enormous amounts of time and energy often at the expense of workers’ families. He sets an agenda for issues to be addressed at the parish level.

If you’ve ever wondered, as I have, why the days are so long but the years go by so fast, perhaps John Hirsch’s article will help – the quick technological fix just brings the problems to our attention faster – but there is an enduring steadiness of response from the Christian that acknowledges the pace of work while paying attention to the one who ultimately sets the pace for life.

In parallel fashion, David Ludwig presents a way of tuning in through the cultural static to the real joy that that the Christian life brings in ways that defy society’s stifling stereotypes.

Finally, David Abrahamson brings focus to the context in which all of the above can be brought to bear, the Lutheran school. He ponders the question of their worth in the temporal sense, leading us to an understanding of their enduring value in spite of change and challenge.

Finally, as a special word to inaugurate this volume, I think it only proper to acknowledge here the considerable contributions and support of Dr. George Heider whose duties as President of Concordia University, River Forest over the last eight years also encompassed serving as publisher of Lutheran Education.

While there will likely always be some debate about his departure from this campus, his contributions to the pages of this publication will always stand as succinctly supportive of Lutheran Christian education and he is to be commended for his commitment
to the editors in terms of the exercise of academic freedom. With his name on the masthead, Bill Rietschel and Jon Barz tackled some pithy questions of ministry, both the things that bind us together as well as courageously taking on some of the issues that have been divisive in actuality or potential. It is my intent to continue the journal in that direction.

In the wake of Dr. Heider’s departure, we look forward to the direction of Dr. Manfred Boos as Acting President and of Dr. Ralph Reinke as Publisher, part of his role as Chief Operating Officer. Theirs will be a regular voices in these pages.

So, whether you measure progress with pedometers, by the number of families your school or congregation reaches, or by the sometimes slow but steady growth of the minds, bodies and spirits in your care, may the Lord grant health, happiness and peace to you and to those whom you serve. — O. John Zillman

John Zillman, recently appointed co-editor of Lutheran Education, is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Concordia University, River Forest having most recently served in the capacity of Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. You may ask him if he knows the whereabouts of his pedometer at crfzillman@curf.edu
Introducing Project Care: A Collaborative Health Ministry Effort

William J. Duey

This issue of Lutheran Education is dedicated in part to health ministry. Therefore, it appears appropriate to introduce the journal’s readership to a newly formed organization, the Concordia University System’s Council for Physical Activity and Wellness (CUS-CPAW). As health care costs continue to rise while the health of the nation continues to decline, this health ministry will appropriately complement the teaching and preaching ministries that are so effectively performed throughout the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS). The triangular approach to ministry – preaching, teaching, and healing – closely aligns with the methodologies employed by Jesus as he began his ministry some 2000 years ago as he “…went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness among the people” (Matthew 4:23).

Mission

The specific mission of CUS-CPAW is to encourage all constituents served to live an abundant life in Christ by adopting and maintaining physically active lifestyles and making healthy lifestyle choices. The formation of this health ministry was initiated following the Concordia University System (CUS) Focus 2000 conference. The Focus 2000 conference gathered faculty who teach in the CUS (comprised of 10 nationally geographically disbursed universities and colleges of the LCMS) with the goal of encouraging collaborations at the university and department level. During the 90-minute department breakout session, the faculty who teach in the areas of Health, Physical Education, Exercise Science and

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Athletic Training, discussed a variety of ways in which we could collaborate. However, it was quickly realized that putting any meaningful plan into action would not be possible in the time provided. Therefore, it was agreed that the group’s primary goal would be to reconvene in one year during a two-day retreat to discuss, explore and strategize ways to collectively work to promote health and wellness at the respective institutions represented and the church at large. Having just convened the third annual meeting this past May, these health ministry efforts, by the grace of God, are beginning to take root.

Membership

The membership of CUS-CPAW includes doctorally trained researchers and educators in the areas of Health Education, Physical Education, Health Promotion, Exercise Psychology, Exercise Physiology and Biomechanics committed to collaboratively addressing the health and wellness needs of its respective institutions and the church at large. During the annual meetings, specific targets and goals began to be developed, which led to the development of Project CARE. The word CARE serves as an acronym (C = collaboration, A = advocacy, R = research, and E = education) for the specific processes the group have used and will use in the future to implement the resulting projects and programs to focus its health ministry efforts. In January of 2003, Wheat Ridge Ministries generously committed financial support to seed initial efforts as the group strives to accomplish a series of multi-tiered goals related to the following outlined processes.

Goals and Processes

A. Collaboration

The CUS Council for Physical Activity and Wellness will foster collaborations with LCMS and LCMS-related entities in order to promote the value of a physically active and healthy lifestyle among its constituencies.

B. Advocacy

The CUS Council for Physical Activity and Wellness will offer support to all LCMS and LCMS-related entities for worksite wellness programs with the goal of increasing the number of constituents that lead physically active lives and make healthy lifestyle choices.

C. Research

The CUS Council for Physical Activity and Wellness will conduct and utilize research to clarify the state of wellness in the LCMS with the goal of designing and providing appropriate interventions which encourage constituents to
lead physically active lives and make healthy lifestyle choices.

**D. Education**

The CUS Council for Physical Activity and Wellness will provide leadership in the development of educational programs and resources that meet the physical activity and health needs of all constituents.

**Need**

The need for a focused health ministry effort is great. In the early 1900’s, this country’s primary national health concern was infectious diseases like pneumonia and tuberculosis. Now the leading causes of death are chronic diseases, i.e. heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes and chronic lower respiratory disease (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2002). Cardiovascular disease and cancer account for the largest portion of deaths annually in the United States and researchers have estimated that the adoption of healthy lifestyles could prevent many of these deaths. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has identified physical inactivity and overweight/obesity as primary contributors in the increased prevalence of chronic disease (USDHHS, 2000). Recently, data collected on LCMS church professionals identified both physical inactivity and overweight/obesity as major health concerns (Summex, 2001). It is imperative that these leading health indicators are addressed within the learning communities served by Lutheran schools.

Evidence of the multiple health benefits of regular physical activity continues to mount. Current U.S. estimates indicate that more than 250,000 deaths yearly are attributed to lack of activity (Centers for Disease Control [CDC], 1993). Regular physical activity can help to prevent and manage coronary heart disease, hypertension, noninsulin-dependent diabetes (commonly known as Type II diabetes), osteoporosis, obesity, and mental health problems, e.g. depression, anxiety. Additionally, regular physical activity has also been associated with lower rates of colon cancer and stroke and may decrease the likelihood of developing chronic back pain (USDHHS, 1996). Although historically our nation embraced activity, industrialization and technological advances have resulted in a change in our activity patterns as we are becoming increasingly sedentary. The automated society in which we live no longer provides us with enough activity to ensure adequate health. Unfortunately, although it has been consistently documented that regular physical activity throughout life is important, in the last ten years the number of adults ages 18 years and older who participate in 30 minutes of moderate physical activity three or more times per week has decreased from 22 to 15%. However, perhaps more alarming is that in that same time frame the number of adults who engage in no leisure-time physical activity has increased from 24 to 40%! (USDHHS, 2000) It is
essential that the need to promote physical activity is addressed within the various communities that Lutheran schools serve. Approximately 107 million adults in the United States are overweight and obese, which is an increase of more than 10 million people over the past five years (USDHHS, 2000). The alarming change in the prevalence rate is a major health concern for our nation because obesity is a major contributor to many preventable causes of death. Obesity has been associated with high cholesterol, hypertension, and non-insulin dependent diabetes, and it is an independent risk factor for coronary heart disease. Additionally, obesity also increases an individual’s risk for gallbladder disease and some types of cancers and has been implicated in the development of osteoarthritis of the weight bearing joints of the lower extremities (USDHHS, 2001). Data from the National Institutes of Health indicate that the total cost attributable to obesity-related diseases is approximately $100 billion per year (Wolf & Colditz, 1998). Although in an earlier publication of the national health objectives (USDHHS, 1990), obesity was addressed as a subcomponent of nutrition, in the most recent report (USDHHS, 2000) it is listed as a leading health indicator! Researchers predict that given the current trends of reduced physical activity and increased caloric consumption, the percentage of persons affected by this disease will increase to epidemic proportions! As with physical inactivity, it is critical that the need to promote proper nutrition and encourage physically active lifestyles is addressed in an effort to eradicate or minimally decrease the prevalence and incidence of obesity.

In the past, religious organizations have been extremely successful in targeting lifestyle behaviors and encouraging the adoption of healthy lifestyle practices of their constituents. Currently, the lowest mortality rates reported in the medical literature were documented in California Mormons who adopted healthy lifestyle practices promoted by their organization (Enstrom, 1989). The practices encouraged included abstaining from tobacco, alcohol, caffeine, and drugs, and adherence to a well-balanced diet, based on grains, fruits, and vegetables, and moderate consumption of poultry and red meat. Men in the study had one-third the death rate from cancer, one-seventh the death rate from cardiovascular disease, and one-fifth the rate of overall mortality. The women had about half the rate of cancer and overall mortality and a third of the death rate from cardiovascular disease. Life expectancies for the 25-year-olds who
adhered to the healthy lifestyle habits were 85 and 86, respectively, as compared to the 74 and 80 for the average U.S. population (Enstrom, 1989). Additionally, mortality rates of parishioners of the Seventh-Day Adventist church, which has encouraged healthy lifestyle practices that includes a diet free from pork and a lifestyle that excludes the use of alcohol and tobacco, are lower than the general populations (Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001). Researchers have concluded that their greater life expectancies can be attributed to the lifestyle choices that they have made.

Religious practices, i.e. attending services, reading the Bible, prayer, etc., also have an impact on death and disease rates. In a study that followed 5,286 persons in Alameda County, California for over 28 years, those who attended religious services weekly or more were 25 percent less likely to die from chronic diseases than infrequent attendees. (Strawbridge, Cohen, Shema, & Kaplan, 1997). Not only were frequent attendees likely to live longer, once they began to attend church they also made healthier lifestyle choices, becoming more apt to quit smoking and increase exercising. After statistically analyzing the data, it appears that the health-enhancing behaviors of the religiously motivated seemed to contribute to their lower death rates. A study of religious practices and death rates in 2,025 senior citizens living in Marin County, California found that attending worship services on a regular basis was an important factor in predicting longevity (Omen & Reed, 1998). In the analysis of the data, a range of other factors were accounted for that may have contributed to the longer life span; nevertheless, attending religious services remained the most important factor for predicting a longer life.

Based on the studies described above, it would appear that religious organization and religious practices have played and can play vital roles relative to health promotion. Unfortunately, in a recently published comprehensive review of 1,600 studies examining the relationship between religion and health, surprisingly only one study involved Lutherans (Koenig, 2001). It is hoped thatCUS-CPAW can be instrumental in encouraging all constituents served to live an abundant life in Christ by adopting and maintaining physically active lifestyles and making health lifestyle choices.

To date, the group has been engaged in collaboration, advocacy, research, and education efforts to further its mission and it is intend to focus on these areas in the future. Boye outlines one of CUS-CPAW’s specific research efforts in another article in this issue of Lutheran Education1 and it is the group’s intent to use the data collected to direct its future educational efforts. It is hoped that God will continue to richly bless this health ministry and that those who concur with the need for targeted health ministry efforts would keep the membership of CUS-CPAW in your prayers.

1 Editor's Note: The article to which Dr. Duey refers follows immediately.
References


Bikes or Television? – Milk or Pop? - What Is The State Of Health And Physical Education In Lutheran Schools?

This past June, I was trying to teach my 6-year-old daughter how to ride her bike and wasn’t having much success. Although she was on the verge of “getting it”, it was very difficult getting her to practice and master the skill. She was always too “busy” or was more interested in doing something else. Fortunately, most of the time, it was either wanting to play outside with friends or go swimming but still too often it was wanting to watch TV or a video. It started me thinking about how and why things have changed since I was a child. I learned to ride a bike, as did most of my friends when I was five, practicing and practicing until I could do it. Once it was mastered, literally hours were spent after school and during the summer riding my bike, not to mention riding my bike to school almost everyday. This continued until I entered junior high. Granted, my perceptions are based on childhood memories, but getting enough physical activity and eating relatively healthy were never really issues for my friends or me. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said today. How healthy and active are the students we serve?
Alarming Health Facts

Physical inactivity, excessive fat and caloric intake as well as other health risk behaviors leading to premature death and/or disability are becoming more and more prevalent among children and youth today. Diseases such as Type II diabetes (more commonly known as adult-onset diabetes) are showing up in children as young as ten. Precursors to cardiovascular disease (elevated blood pressure, obesity, elevated blood cholesterol) are evident in children and youth as well. Other alarming health facts and statistics include:

- 15.3 percent of children (ages 6-11) and 15.5% of adolescents (ages 12-19) are overweight. Another 15% are “at-risk” for becoming overweight. Obesity rates have more than doubled in the last 20 years (Beals, 2003).
- One out of three children born in 2000 are at risk for developing diabetes during their lifetime. For black and Hispanic children the risk goes up to one in two (McConnaughey, 2003).
- One out of three children have cholesterol levels too high for good heart health. The optimum level is 170 or less (Creager, 2003).
- Twenty years ago, teenage boys in the United States drank twice as much milk as soda; now they drink twice as much soda as milk. Nine percent of a typical teenage boy’s total daily caloric intake comes from soft drinks. Teenage girls’ soft drink consumption has doubled in the last twenty years as well (Schlosser, 2001, p.54).
- The average American child watches four hours of television daily and is exposed to up to 20 acts of violence an hour and over 30,000 commercials a year (Goodman & Gurian, 2000).
- Most school-aged children are sedentary - only one in four gets the recommended amount of physical activity each day (Center for Disease Control [CDC], 2002).
- Fewer than 25 percent of students living less than one mile from school walk to school regularly (Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, 2003).
- After unintentional injuries including motor vehicle accidents, drowning, falls, etc., the leading causes of death for 15-24 year olds are homicide and intentional self-harm. For 5-14 year olds homicide and intentional self-harm are the 4th and 5th leading causes of death (Anderson, 2002).

The statistics go on and on. It is not a question as to whether our children and youth are at risk, it is a question of what is, can and should be done
to reverse this trend. What responsibility do we as Lutheran educators and do Lutheran schools have in developing and implementing comprehensive physical education and health programs that increase physical activity levels and teach and develop skills that reduce student health risk behaviors while increasing the practice of positive ones?

**Governmental and Organizational Recommendations**

Government initiatives and guidelines such as Healthy People 2010 and Centers for Disease Control’s (CDC) Guidelines to Promote Lifelong Physical Activity Among Young People, as well as professional organizations such as the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAHPERD), the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), the American School Health Association (ASHA), and the American Association for Health Education (AAHE) advocate for the establishment of quality daily physical education programs as well as comprehensive health education programs for elementary, middle, and secondary schools. Healthy People 2010 (CDC, 2001) objectives, among others, propose to:

- Increase the proportion of the Nation’s public and private schools that require daily physical education for all students.

- Increase the proportion of adolescents who participate in daily school physical education.

- Increase the proportion of adolescents who spend at least 50 percent of school physical education class time being physically active.

In addition, the CDC’s Guidelines for Promoting Lifelong Physical Activity (2000) recommend the implementation of sequential physical education curricula and instruction in grades K-12 that:

- Emphasize enjoyable participation in lifetime physical activities such as walking and dancing, not just competitive sports.

- Help students develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to adopt and maintain a physically active lifestyle.

- Follow the National Standards for Physical Education.

- Keep students active for most of class time.

Similar goals and recommendations are made for the establishment of
comprehensive health education programs in K-12 schools. Healthy People 2010 (CDC, 2001) Objective 7-2 is to:

Increase the proportion of .... schools that provide school health education to prevent health problems in the following areas: unintentional injury; violence; suicide; tobacco use and addiction; alcohol and other drug use; unintended pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and STD infection; unhealthy dietary patterns; inadequate physical activity; and environmental health.

The CDC’s Guidelines for Promoting Lifelong Physical Activity (2000) also recommends requiring comprehensive health education in grades K-12, as well as the implementation of health education curricula and instruction that:

- Feature active learning strategies and follow the National Health Education Standards.
- Help students develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

**National Findings**

Clearly our nation’s children and youth are in need of programming that promotes and engages them in physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices. Quality daily physical education and comprehensive school health education programs are not only being recommended but have been found to be effective in improving physical fitness and other health behaviors (CDC, 2002). Yet, the majority of students are not currently involved in such programming. Findings from the School Health Policies and Programs Study (CDC, 2002) indicate that less than ten percent of elementary, middle, and secondary schools currently offer daily physical education for their students. Yet 81 percent of adults surveyed believe daily physical education should be mandatory (NASPE, 2001), and 95 percent of parents believe that regular daily physical activity helps children perform better academically (NASPE, 2003). Furthermore, a study involving third grade children, found that they received an average of 25 minutes per week in school of moderate to vigorous activity (National Institute of Child and Human development [NICHD], 2003), far below the recommended 30-60 minutes each day. In addition, only 38 percent of high school students who participated in physical education classes were physically active for more than 20 minutes 3 to 5 times a week (CDC, 2001). Although the majority of schools require health education instruction in their schools (80.4 percent), required health education instruction at each grade level drops off dramatically, ranging from 44 percent at the 5th grade level to 2 percent for the 12th grade.
Examining Lutheran Schools

How do Lutheran schools compare to these national findings? Are we doing a better job of promoting, instructing, and engaging our students in physical activity and other healthy behaviors? The Concordia University System’s Council for Physical Activity and Wellness (CUS-CPAW) would like to find out. CUS-CPAW is a council composed of faculty members from the different Concordia University System (CUS) institutions who teach in the areas of Health, Physical Education, Exercise Science and Athletic Training. This council was established in 2001. Its mission is to seek “to encourage all constituents...serve[d] to live abundantly in Christ by adopting and maintaining physically active lifestyles and making healthy lifestyle choices.” Lutheran schools, their faculty and staff, as well as their students are important members of this constituency. Hence, it is the council’s desire to examine the state of affairs of physical education and health programs and instruction in Lutheran schools.

In an effort to determine the current status of these health and physical education programs in Lutheran schools, CUS-CPAW - in collaboration with the Lutheran Education Association (LEA) - will be conducting a survey of all Lutheran elementary, middle, and secondary schools later this academic year. Questionnaires will be sent to each school to be completed by the most appropriate person(s). Findings from this study will be not only provide a snapshot of current practices but they will be used to affirm quality health and physical education programs and practices that promote and enhance the quality of healthy life of their students. Furthermore, these “best” practices as well as additional resources and ideas will be shared with interested parties. In addition, CUS-CPAW members are available to serve as resource personnel and consultants. It is the hope of CUS-CPAW that the Lutheran school community, both as individual schools as well as members of the Lutheran educational system, embrace and continue to embrace the promotion of healthy lifestyles especially in and through their physical education and health programs.

By the way, after much cajoling and coaxing my daughter has finally learned to ride her bike. Now we'll have to wait and see how much she does. Maybe if she had a unit in physical education... Just a thought....

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What’s the Rush?
Living a Healthy, Balanced Life in Ministry

Nathan Kretzmann

Is it really possible to live a balanced, healthy life in ministry?

On our own? No.

With Christ? Absolutely!

Is it important? Yes, critically so.

When we move so fast, we pass God by or we don’t even recognize him at work in our lives. It is also critically important because how we live each day is a picture window to the world of a life captured by the amazing grace of Jesus Christ.

Life’s Realities

The realities of life pull us in so many directions. Satan uses this to mess with our lives, our relationships, and our priorities, intent on keeping us off our called journey and blurring our purpose. Without a clear focus, our daily choices in life become misguided. Our value of healthy life stewardship has been abandoned (Barna, 2002). We have forgotten about the Sabbath, and have brought the world’s rat race into our ministries.

Both professionally and personally, each day we carry out a multitude of life roles: spouse, parent, educator, coach, leader, minister, administrator, manager, committee member, counselor, mentor, model, etc. Each role requires and demands something different from us. In some way they all ask for time,
abilities, finances, support, etc. - all of which require a life stewardship choice. We get into trouble when we too often try to fill all these roles in unrealistic and unattainable levels. (Do we think we’re God?) We can’t do it. We know that, yet, we try too often. We get stuck in a performance trap that leads us to believe that everything depends on us and how well we perform (Seamands, 1991). Consequently, we end up living a lifestyle that is counterproductive to the type of life in Christ to which we are inviting others. The result is a mixed message.

I believe that a renewal of life stewardship as a value is critical for Lutheran schools. The alarm has been sounding and we must respond. We must be honest with ourselves. Organizations, including those in ministry, that want to move from good-to-great in their effectiveness must begin the process by confronting the brutal facts of their current reality (Collins, 2001). Our response begins with each of us individually, and then flows through the philosophy, culture, policies and overall decision-making of Lutheran school ministry.

...When our lives become full of stress we begin to see a diminishment of joy, we become less productive, and we become less and less able to hear God as he speaks to us.

Individually, when our lives become full of stress we begin to see a diminishment of joy, we become less productive, and we become less and less able to hear God as he speaks to us. “Be still and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10). When we are never still we eventually burn out. Avoiding burnout requires an evaluation of our own lives, how we live, and how we make decisions. Something must change or be given up. It starts with the heart – and what has a hold on it.

It Begins With the Heart

When we look into our heart we see so many things and our first reaction is the need to balance. However to live the life of victory that Christ calls us to cannot be achieved through simple balance. Although much has been written about the benefits of a balanced life, balance connotes a segmented life. This idea suggests that work life is one segment, finance life another segment, faith life another segment; etc., and then we are to strive to proportion them appropriately. The problem is not seeing that all of life – work/finance/faith/leisure - every moment, every decision, every action, and every tiny choice – flows from one area – our spiritual lives. We are spiritual beings, created in the image of God. Our heart and life must be wholly given to God.
Where does our professional ministry fit into this? Does a life wholly given to serve God mean we are to spend all of our time at school or church? Not at all. We would miss the expanse of our “life ministry” which is “to serve God in every moment, wherever we are, whatever we are doing, as stewards of the gift of life itself” (Bass, 2000). This transcends professional ministry. We can be serving God through our rest (at the right time) just as much as when we are teaching or preaching (at the right time) or bowling with the neighbors. It is a moment-by-moment life, prompted and moved by the Holy Spirit. When a heart is wholly surrendered to God, time decisions become easier, healthy boundaries are created, and a new freedom has been discovered. A renewal of the value of life stewardship has taken place in one’s life!

Of course we understand that because of sin we will never fully experience this on earth. However, moving from the power that God’s grace gives us, we can choose to live differently and make decisions that can help us move to a healthier lifestyle in ministry. Because we are all created wonderfully unique and respond to things in diverse ways, I hesitate to provide specific strategies and then claim their effectiveness. Yet, I believe some of the following ideas implemented in one’s life can challenge and profoundly change the way one lives each day. Implement them all, implement one, let the Holy Spirit prompt and guide you. They are in no particular order except that I believe prayer must be foundational.

Developing a Healthy Life

A. Pray – have ongoing “moment by moment” conversation with Christ!
   Pray all the time, in all circumstances. Pray for forgiveness and a clean heart. Pray for a renewing of a right spirit within you. Listen, be still, and hear His voice. Meet God daily, hourly; do you recognize him?

B. Seek a wholly surrendered heart!
   Identify and eliminate barriers to God, i.e. sin, becoming an “I” land, pride, ego, approval addiction, self-reliance. Do not accept boundary markers – the number of minutes in prayer, going to church, amount of giving, etc. - as spirituality (Ortberg, 1997). The Pharisees did these things. Grow in your love and joy! Don’t settle for being informed from God’s word but be transformed. Seek and you will find!

C. Evaluate your own personal level of healthy life stewardship!
   Our use of time, resources, and our abilities are intertwined and cannot be separated. A decision in one area affects the:
Time Choices

Financial Choices
Are you giving? Joyfully? Are you growing in “gracious generosity” as the Macedonians (2 Corinthians)? Do you have a budget in place? Savings? Are you avoiding debt? Are you grateful for what you have? God owns 100% not 10%

Ability/Talent Choices
Do you know what your spiritual gifts are? Are you developing them? Are you continually learning and being challenged? Are you using them and investing them in others?

D. Develop a plan for your time, finances, and abilities!
Most people are responders not planners. The world has a plan for you – marketers, businesses, government, staff, parents, school boards, etc., do you? God has a plan for you; do you know what it is? What is your mission or call from God? It will be the guide for how you invest your time, resources, and talent.

E. Focus on what God values!
Life stewardship decisions/plans are made based on what we value. God values eternal things - people. “You are my treasured possession” (Deut. 7:6). How do our daily life choices invest in people and relationships? God values righteousness and the rest of life falls into place. “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).

F. Practice slowing down!
Drive the speed limit. Eliminate multi-tasking, i.e. driving and eating, driving and talking on the cell phone, etc. Place yourself in places requiring patience (choose the longest line in the store – ask God to speak to you – and listen). Learn to say no. Have healthy boundaries. Love and loving people takes time and cannot be hurried. Work on God’s agenda, not yours – there is enough time in the day to complete what he wants you to accomplish!
G. Create “margin” in your life!
Margin is the space between your load and your limit. We usually live to the “limit” in most aspects of life – work, spending, debt, information, media, choices, activities, etc. Put space into your schedule and in your budget because you will have problems and challenges; expect them and plan for them. Prune back activities and spending.

H. Lighten up - your load and your attitude!
You and Christ are connected and yoked together, side-by-side. Being “yoked” requires you to move in the same direction and at the same pace. Trying to get ahead or go a different direction leads to stress. Give up the desire to control, learn to trust, delegate, and empower others. Laugh! Don’t take everything so seriously. Engage your sense of humor. Find an accountability partner to be a “joy mentor”. Forgive quickly and completely – yourself and others

Practicing and modeling healthy living is a responsibility we have as individuals, but it is also the responsibility of the Lutheran school. I believe a renewal of the value of “life stewardship” within the entire culture of the school is critical. Lutheran schools have great opportunity to provide “life stewardship” education, resources, workshops, etc. - for parents, children, families, and staff. However, although providing stewardship education is important, the school culture must also follow in step and promote avenues for building of strong families through healthy living. What does this mean for the Lutheran school?

Implications for the Lutheran School
A Lutheran school must develop an intentional, well-coordinated plan and philosophy of life stewardship. Time issues need to be addressed for staff, students, and parents. Our schools can become a culprit in mixing up priorities for families. Research on families confirms that children today are “tired” and “stressed out”. They feel rushed from activity to activity, and feel that parents (and other adults) spend little personal and meaningful time with them. Schools should evaluate and research how much time is appropriate, healthy, and adequate for students in all areas of school life; including special events, athletic practices, games, tournaments, homework, projects, etc. Hours worked by staff should also be evaluated and curbed if necessary. Consistently working over 60 hours a week is not good modeling. Boundaries and safeguards should be in place so that school families see healthy living by employees. “Seasons of life” needs of staff should be taken into consideration, i.e. staff with young children may have “limited, if any” additional responsibilities. Finding ways to promote and build family time is important. The Sabbath should be honored.
Healthy life stewardship in schools demands a focus on people before things. Relationships are of critical importance. Treating and serving others (parents, children, staff, community) at a high level of care and concern must be a daily goal. The heart of customer service must be continually evaluated. Many times we fall victim to the “Lake Wobegon Effect” (where the women are strong, the men good-looking, and all of the children are above average) of our service; we overestimate ourselves, and we think we’re better than we really are (Beckwith, 1997).

How a Lutheran school stewards its financial resources is also important for healthy modeling. It begins with adequate and appropriate staff compensation. Low staff salaries should not underwrite a school budget. We are called to be generous and practice gracious generosity. God will bless this! Financial decisions should be based on what is “right”. Budget decisions must reflect what he asks us to do (not what we think we can do – this takes no faith) and being confident in his resources and provision. Adequate tuition assistance should be available for those in need. Funds should be set-aside for lean times. Fundraising strategies and philosophy should be evaluated to determine if they really fit a biblical plan for funding ministry. The Bible is the greatest funding manual ever written! Our funding strategies send messages about our God, and can either promote the Gospel or hinder it.

We share our faith with others through how we live each day. This is much more impactful, profound, and believable than what we say. The world sees our level of stress, our response to circumstances, our search for value and significance, our attitudes and priorities. In Philemon 1:27 we are challenged to “live in such a way that you are a credit to the message of Christ.”

Living a healthy life in ministry today can be an extra-ordinary challenge. Yet with Christ, it can be a reality in our lives! The evil foe that messes with our priorities and keeps us misguided in our purpose has been defeated! This victory gives us the hope and ability to move forward and to live a life of celebration! In this victory – with God’s power – we are able to think, act, and respond differently from the world on how we “steward” our lives for God’s purposes.

Throughout history God has provided for the needs of his people. When God asks his people to do something – his provision follows - resources of time, energy, rest, laughter; wisdom, grace, finance, ability, hope, support, and all other things needed to accomplish the task (Cymbala, 1999). We know that “God is able, to make ALL grace abound to you...so in ALL things at ALL times, having ALL that you need, you will abound in every good work” (1 Corinthians 9:6-15).

Through Christ the victory has been won. Grace, hope, and peace are yours! I encourage you to begin your walk of faith towards healthy living in ministry! The Lord will provide!

“So Abraham called that place, The Lord will Provide” (Genesis 22:14).

References
Celebrate Life: Joy in Ministry in the Age of the Quick Fix

John M. Hirsch

The introduction of the fast food business into the American culture through the likes of McDonald’s, Wendy’s and Burger King did not only provide an opportunity for quick solutions to a basic human need, it also helped usher in the age of the quick fix. Solutions for being hungry no longer required waiting, as food could come within a few minutes after placing an order. This quick fix thinking was generalized to other areas of life as well. Quick lube services for automobiles soon came on the scene. These conveniently located and well advertised auto service resources eliminated the need for changing the oil in your car yourself or having the inconvenience of leaving it with a local mechanic for an hour or two while you were without a car or you sat in a small waiting area thumbing through the tattered pages of a two year old copy of Sports Illustrated. Quick fix thinking led also to self service gas stations connected to convenience stores where you can not only buy gas, but you can also pick up a cup of coffee and a donut on the way to work, bread and milk on the way home from work as well and get cash from the ATM anytime.

The movement into the era of the quick fix was hastened with the development of the computer and its rapid reduction in prices over a short period of time. Apple computing made the product user friendly and Windows took much of the frustration out of the mind-boggling DOS system for the rest of those who ventured into the waters of buying a commercially marketed computer in those infancy years. This phenomenon was soon paralleled with the development of the Internet, which opened up whole new
vistas of the world. Connections that were impossible before were now possible and the level of information sharing and gathering moved beyond the comprehension of what many people thought possible only a decade earlier. With its movement into what it now calls high speed, the Internet continues to confirm the age of the quick fix. The world is now almost instantaneously accessible through a five-pound laptop computer that can be carried around in a briefcase. It is only a matter of time before this same accessibility will come through a cell phone or wristwatch size electronic device. The movement is toward instantaneous accessibility to life almost anywhere in the world, e.g., the coverage of Iraqi Freedom earlier this year. We live in the age of the quick fix.

**Advancements May Be Counterproductive**

While the benefits of these advancements are obvious to those of us who have grown to use and expect them, they also have helped create a mindset that may be counter productive to life and ministry. For example, prior to the computer and the Internet, or even the phone, people at a distance communicated through a not always popular mail system. A letter was written and began its journey by being placed in a mailbox. It was taken from this box by a human being and through a variety of transportation forms delivered to the intended recipient. The recipient then received the letter and, in time, sent a response that reversed the original process. This process took time, but it also gave time. It allowed time for thinking, reflection and more than a knee jerk response.

We still have that system, but we also have the computer and Internet system where letters or notes are typed and within seconds delivered to almost any place in the world. The expectation has grown that not only should a person check his/her e-mail box daily, if not more often, but he/she should also respond in a rapid fashion as well. Thinking, reflecting and being have been replaced with doing, reacting and quickness. We have learned the hurried life. We have become just another component in the Internet system. It no longer serves us. We serve it. Our whole self (mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual) has become secondary to a system that was created to serve it.

**Internet As Metaphor**

While the Internet system is just one piece of the pie that makes up life in the age of the quick fix, it serves as a metaphor of the many other pieces that continually change themselves and continually change the culture in which we live and, if unabated, can deny or rob us of the joy of ministry. It can deny us the time to build, reflect and maintain ourselves spiritually,
emotionally, and physically. It can draw us into the web of the deceptive thinking that quicker is better, life is to be lived in the fast lane and that the more we do at church or school, the more we are being God’s servant. The reality is, though, if we are going to live in and not withdraw from this world in which God has placed us to carry out his ministry, we will be affected by these pieces. We cannot decide to do otherwise. However, by God’s sovereign grace and mercy we do have power over the influence they have on our lives.

As we live in this world and are subject to all of what is going on in it, it is difficult to have a sense of self that is not, at least in part, significantly influenced by it. And if that world says that there should be instant solutions to the problems and issues of that world, we can find ourselves buying into that thinking. It is not that we choose to do this, it just happens as a result of living life and as an active participant of it. We become a part of the thinking of the whole and the emotional system that drives it.

Unconsciously we can begin to incorporate into our sense of self the values, mores, and norms of that culture. Consequently, we can find ourselves more frustrated or impatient with slow moving traffic, fast food that is not fast and hardly tastes like food, computers that do not immediately respond to our commands, and people around us who do not think like we think or react as we think they should. We become more reactive ourselves. Blaming becomes easier and negative or derogatory labels are given to people or things as the objects of our projected discontent. We are no longer irritated with someone driving slow in the inside lane, we speed up to get ahead of them and think, if not say, some unkind words about them as we pass by. People who cannot return the correct change for a purchase if the computer did not tell them the correct amount may be labeled as “stupid.” Computers that do not read our minds and know that we did not really want to delete without saving that report we just finished receive a harsh word and clenched fist to the keyboard. Though we do not want perfection expected of us, we expect it of others. It becomes more and more difficult to incorporate Christ and Christ-like values, words, thoughts and actions into our lives. We are too busy to do so.

Not only are we living in this quick fix world, but also are the parents of your students or other members of your church. And, while we are reacting to it as we do, so are they. They have become students of the school of the quick fix also. They see themselves as super moms or dads who not only desire to have successful careers but are loving, caring parents who spend quality time with their kids while driving them around town in their SUV to every known life enhancing experience the child could ever have. They too can find it difficult to incorporate Christ and Christ-like values, words,
thoughts and actions into their everyday lives. Worship, prayer and Bible study are activities for a set time or to meet an immediate need, but not for life transformation. They may find themselves the recipient of the anger, name-calling, blaming and fault finding of those around them at work, home or in the community. The reality is this, the homeostatic forces of the system means that the stuff of the quick fix world just keeps getting passed around and around. Consequently, this means that as a teacher and educator of the children of these parents - just as the driver driving too slowly or the person who cannot give you the correct change - may be the recipient of some of your displaced anger. Likewise, you are the potential recipient of some of the displaced reactivity of your students’ parents.

Joy is surely associated with an abundance of the good things of this life, but it is essentially an ongoing, thriving relationship with God...

Joy As Seen in Scripture

With all of this happening, how does one celebrate life and have joy in ministry? First, a brief look at joy and joy in ministry as it is seen in Scripture. Joy in ministry is emotional, but it is more than our emotions. It comes from activities and through relationships with other people, but it is more than what we do and the relational connections we have with others. It involves having good thoughts about others, but is deeper than cognitive constructs. True joy in ministry involves our being, the whole of us, and the ongoing process of living the journey of life under God’s grace. It is about who we are in relationship to the Living God. It is the righteousness of God living in and through us by the work of the Holy Spirit. It does not come through the quick fix mentality of today’s world.

The Old Testament looks most closely at joy through the eyes of the believing community gathered to worship and praise God. Joy is an emotion that is evoked by remembering God and his work and by the confident expectation that God will act to deliver when troubles come. One’s relationship with God, maintained by obedient response to his Word, is a source of joy. Joy is surely associated with an abundance of the good things of this life, but it is essentially an ongoing thriving relationship with God, a religious experience with God.

The New Testament suggests that all people - even pagans - can find joy in God’s material blessings. But, true joy embraces the Creator, not just the created. It is found in a saving relationship with God and in maintaining fellowship with him. Love, expressed in worship, prayer and obedience is the key to the Christian’s full experience of joy. Joy, as Christ and the writers of the New Testament see it, is independent of circumstances. The believer’s joy is found in
the inner work of the Holy Spirit, who, despite trials or suffering, is bringing us salvation. Thus joy, like peace, is rooted in trust in the Lord. As for externals, the greatest source of joy for the Christian is found in serving others and in seeing God work in their lives.

**From Knowing God**

Consequently, joy in ministry comes not from knowing about God, but from knowing God. It comes from having a personal and interpersonal relationship with the transcendent Holy One. Many Christians spend much of their time talking about God and quoting what he has revealed in his Word, but they spend precious little time truly knowing him. He is another part of the quick fix solution to today’s problems. The Bible is read and the blank spaces in the workbook are completed, but life has not been touched by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. He provides the words that are quoted as the answer to the question, but he is not the Living Word that dwells within us breathing new life into our mortal bodies.

**Through Personal Transformation**

Therefore, joy in ministry comes from a transformation of the mind (Rom. 12:2) and a maturing in the faith (Eph. 4:13). Personal transformation happens best in the context of a reflective lifestyle, not the busy-ness of doing ministry. The classic disciplines of the Christian faith - worship (Word and Sacrament), solitude, fasting, prayer, silence, and study of the Word - are essential to spiritual transformation and joy in ministry. Though some of these disciplines, e.g., solitude and fasting, may be foreign to many of us, they are clearly referenced in Scripture and were significant in the life of our Lord and Savior. Embracing them in the context of Bible study and prayer opens the door to receiving the wisdom and understanding that the brother of Jesus encourages us to seek from the Father (James 1:5). Out of this growing encounter with the living God comes the joy of ministry.

**From Having Purpose**

Flowing out of this ongoing growing relationship with the living God, joy in ministry comes from having a personal purpose, vision and dream for one’s own life. Bearing the cross of Christ is more than suffering. It embraces the mission and purpose of his life, which was to do his Father’s will and bring all people into the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:3-4). Those whom he has called have been gifted to be his servants. He has placed each in a ministry setting that may or may not be clear to that person at the time he or she is there. It may be everything about ministry that a person did not want and nothing about what he or she did. In fact, it may be seen as the
worst possible place for anyone to do ministry. However, joy in ministry comes not from allowing the people, circumstances or events of that ministry setting to define the person in that place, but by the grace of God having a sense of redeemed and empowered personhood that is greater than the circumstances of life. Joy is lost when we lose our sense of self to the doing of ministry and the programs, lessons, projects and duties of our role and function. Joy is gained by enmeshing oneself in the Word, the Living Word (John 1:1-5). It comes through the experiences of life where the evidence of God’s being exceeds and supercedes the will of a lost world. It comes through patience, wisdom and understanding, all gifts of God (Rom. 5:1-5).

Through Christ’s Eyes

Joy comes when we quit seeing ministry through the eyes of an organization and start seeing it through the eyes of a Christ-embodied organism.

through the eyes of a Christ-embodied organism. Twenty centuries of institutionalizing the church has taken its toll. Mechanistic approaches to all phases of ministry have resulted in dozens of three ring binders lining the shelves of pastors and teachers with the hope that the quick fix lives somewhere in one of these programs. Joy is lost when it is discovered that the last three “guaranteed success” workshops only left one anxiously waiting for the mail to deliver a brochure for another workshop to provide the ultimate solution to the students’ learning problems or classroom discipline. Joy is gained when it becomes operational in our thinking and feeling that the church is the body of Christ of which he is the head (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 4:15). It reduces the thinking about organizational structure and quick fix solutions and increases the thinking about health, life, maturity, relationships and purpose. The stuff of the three ring binders becomes servant to the higher calling of loving the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength and your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:30-31). Having the right program, that someone else has created, becomes secondary to love, care, nurturance, forgiveness, sharing the message of salvation from a personal perspective and celebrating life eternal because it is real to me. Structures come and go, but the body of Christ is forever. Feeding it brings joy.
Adopting God’s Passion

Be passionate about what God is passionate about. God is passionate about people and their eternal destinies. He is passionate about salvation and bringing people to know him as their Lord and Savior. He is passionate about health, spiritual health, and your health. He is passionate about having a sense of healthy self that has purpose; a purpose that is built on a faith in him and that is girded up with goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love (2 Pet. 1:5-7). He is not about a sloppy life that has capitulated self to meetings, programs, maintaining or avoiding structure at any cost or falling prey to the desires and wishes of others who would take all of you if they could. He is about a life that is well managed and regulated. He is about keeping the main thing the main thing. Joy in ministry is lost when we become like a pond that has no new water flowing into it and become stagnant from the toxins of the world around us. We let people put in and take out, but we have no sense of whom we are or where we are going. On the other hand, joy in ministry exists when we flow like a river with defined boundaries toward a known destiny. Joy comes from recognizing the boundaries given by God and intended for our good. Joy comes from standing in awe and respect of God while living fully in the present under his banner of love.

Through Forgiveness

Joy in ministry comes through forgiveness. While serving as a parish pastor in Michigan I also served as a police chaplain in a small village police department. The chief and I met occasionally for lunch to discuss the needs of the police force and how their families were coping with the stresses of their jobs. It needs to be said that the chief was a recovering alcoholic, going through a divorce and had a son in prison for murder. At one of our luncheon appointments, in his very raspy voice and reflecting upon all of the circumstances of his life, he made a comment I do not think I will ever forget. It was this: “By the time a person reaches the age of 25, he has had enough experiences in life that if he told someone about them it could bring tears to the eyes of anyone.” The sound of those words and their reality still rings loudly in my ears some twenty-eight years later. It is the case that in all of our lives that by the time we reach the age of two decades plus five that there has been at least one event that was so negative, so heinous, or so harmful, that if we told someone about it, they would cry. It may have been some words shared in the heat of an argument, an inappropriate sexual advance by a relative, neighbor or friend, witnessing a crime of passion or hate, being on the receiving of a letter that reveals something about your past or that of a relative. It does not make a difference what it is, it is still there.
and it still hurts. It is still deep in your viscera and is still defining you. It may be such a part of our life that just the thought of it brings about anger, resentment, hatred, malice and a desire to get even. It has not been forgotten and it has not been forgiven. It may be the case that the event will never be forgotten. Some events are so traumatic such as those associated with the loss of life and rescue efforts of the World Trade Center in New York post September 11, 2001, that they significantly change our brain chemistry so that we will never forget: It is there until we die. That reality we may never be able to change. Forgiveness, however, is another matter. It is something that by the grace of God we can do. If Jesus taught us to pray to the Father saying that we want him to forgive our trespasses as we forgive those of others (Matt. 6: 9-12) that surely means that we can forgive the sins of others. That means that we do not have to carry that broken relationship around with us any more. That means that through him we have the power to disallow the past to define the present and to define us. That means that joy to ministry can be restored by utilizing the power of God to step away from the cross and leave at the foot of it that issue that Christ died for so that you would be free, truly free.

If you are a person who is struggling with such a matter, if possible, resolve the issue with the person with whom the brokenness exists. If that is not possible, talk to a person who you trust about this event. If necessary, seek counseling. Do whatever is necessary under God’s grace and mercy to unburden yourself from this bondage. This may be one of the most significant actions that you do to bring joy to ministry. It frees you from the past and from the possibility of triggering words or events taking you back there and rebinding you to it. Even if you have resolved any such issues in your life, confession and absolution as components of forgiveness are always called for when sin against another is present. God would not have given this resource for life if he did not want us to have joy in life.

Through Faithfulness

Joy in ministry comes through faithfulness. This is faithfulness to God, your family, your spouse if you are married and your self. There is much heartache in ministry when faithfulness is broken. If faithfulness to God is lost, then the purpose for ministry is lost. If faithfulness to family is
lost, then you lose the blessings of these relationships and they lose the blessings of your life that God can use to bring to them. If faithfulness to your spouse is lost, trust is lost and may never be regained again, if at all. It is not worth the agony, much less the message it sends to God about your commitment to him. Be faithful to your self. Seek to grow and know who you are. Honesty through self-reflection and God directed understanding helps dispel the need for denial and leads to integrity and veracity.

Living in the joy of ministry is a process. Perhaps Martin Luther (1521) captured it well when he wrote, “This life, therefore, is not godliness but the process of becoming godly, not health but getting well, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not now what we shall be, but we are on the way. The process is not yet finished, but it is actively going on. This is not the goal but it is the right road. At present, everything does not gleam and sparkle, but everything is being cleansed.”

*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.* (Romans 14:17)

**References**

Let the Peace of Christ Rule in Your Hearts
David Ludwig

Wouldn’t it be nice to wake up in good spirits again? What about being excited about the day, looking forward to new experiences? “Being in good spirits” relates to the atmosphere or mood. It means that the weather inside your house and the atmosphere at school is sunny, warm, and friendly. It also means that the weather inside your soul is peaceful and uplifting!

Attitude

Just what is a “spirit?” The Greek word, “pneuma,” literally means “wind, breath, or atmosphere.” It is used to describe the quality of relationships. In fact, the word, “attitude” is another word for “spirit.”

Let’s take a simple example. Your school has just called a new principal. Even before you meet her/him for the first time, you start gathering information. Each encounter adds more data. You notice lots of things and gradually organize this information into useful form. In other words, you begin to form an attitude toward your principal. Your attitude is based on how you have chosen to organize the information you have gathered. This determines how you will relate to her/him and will begin to form the “spirit” or atmosphere when you are in each other’s presence.

Why can two people meet the same person and form totally different attitudes? Obviously each person has a different way of organizing the data. Let’s call these different organizing principles - or the person’s belief and value system.

Of course your value system is a product of your background.

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Your attitudes do reflect your family values. But they also reflect past hurt and disappointment, as well as your hopes and dreams.

**Attitude and Reality**

But there is one thing common about all attitudes - they reflect the individual’s view of reality! The basic organizing principle is based on what the person believes to be true.

Now we are talking about the HEART, the “inmost chamber of the soul.” When God created man “in his image,” he gave that mysterious capacity called, “free will.” In other words, all people have the power to judge reality for themselves. This mysterious power takes place in the “heart.” When we, like Mary, “ponder things in our hearts,” we are trying to decide what is real and true. We are trying to decide whether to trust someone. We are forming our attitudes!

However, our attitudes are based on “ME,” on what I consider to be “right” and “fair.” Such judgment rules our attitudes. And when our attitudes are formed, they can become quite rigid and hardened! And we can disguise them very well from everyone but God, who “judges the intentions of the heart!” (Heb. 4:12)

You can see that whoever rules your heart, controls your attitudes! So the basic question is: “Who rules your life?”

**Two Options in Forming Attitudes**

St. Paul is clear that at any given moment, our “natural self” will rule us. In 1 Corinthians 2:14, he uses the Greek word, “psychikos,” to describe a soul or “psyche” that has anxiously organized life based on ones’ limited view of reality. This is a powerful description of the “old self” that is so much a part of all of us that “keeps score” and decides that something is “not fair.” This is how we usually form our “spirit or attitudes.”

St. Paul then uses the Greek word, “pneumatikos” to describe the “spiritual man” or “new self.” The word picture is beautiful. This is a soul that is organized by guidance of the Holy Spirit, who convinces us of the reality of God’s love in Christ Jesus! In Christ, reality is different - so our attitudes can be different - more loving, forgiving, and gracious! He sets us free from our private moods and allows us to think of others - to consider the good of all concerned - to “Think WE, Not ME.”

To summarize, when you are forming attitudes, there are two options:
1. "**ME** rules your heart - “Following the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air...following the desires and thoughts of our sinful nature.” (Eph. 2:2-3)
   - Ordinary, predictable.
   - A spirit of self-protection (the wisdom of the culture).
   - "My Rights," the "Old Self".

2. "**WE** rules your heart - “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one “body, you were called to peace.” (Col. 3:15)
   - Extraordinary, awesome.
   - A spirit of love and concern for all (wisdom from God).
   - "WE rights," the "New Self".

**Changing the Mood**

Now, how can you put this into practice so that your life can experience more the "love, joy, and peace" that is the fruit of the Spirit? How can he influence your attitude and mood? How can the Holy Spirit uplift your spirits day by day?

The key to being in "good spirits" is in St. Paul’s 3-step advice (Eph. 4:22-24). Let's look at this advice in context of the marriage relationship. Note that you can see that the same advice works for all relationships, e.g., other family relationships, your school and church relationships, etc.

*Consider this family scene:*

It was all too familiar. Mother left their house without saying "Goodbye." Ginger was angry, "Why don’t you ever stand up for me when your mother is here?" she demanded. Ned turned away, teeth clenched, thinking, "Why do you always react like that? Why can't you get along her?" The WE had broken down again - as it usually did anytime Mother came over. As usual, both Ginger and Ned were blaming each other.

Now let's look at this scene through Ned’s eyes. He was absolutely convinced that the problem was that Ginger did not put in the effort to get along with his mother. He felt caught in the middle. "If only she would be nice to my mother for a change..." his thoughts began.

Instead of trying to change Ginger (a strategy he had tried for the past 5 years), Ned’s power lies in his half of the relationship. His upset mood as he feels caught in the middle is just an old pattern. His reaction is immature, based on a childhood strategy to keep peace. So how can Ned change the mood? There are three steps.
1. “Put off your old self.”

First Ned has to be convinced that his conclusions about reality are flawed. He must realize that his attitudes reflect his own baggage and selfish concerns. This is hard!

In any given conflict, it will be perfectly clear that the other person is at fault. Ned can see Ginger’s faults perfectly, but is blind to his own. In other words, you can see clearly what the other person should do to help the relationship, but are blind to your own side of the relationship.

In applying St. Paul’s advice to relationships, this means that you have to see any interaction having two sides. You are always reacting to what the other person is doing or saying. Even though you always try to change that person, there is no power to do that. Your power lies on your half of the relationship. You can break your half of the pattern! In this way, you can “put off the old self.”

- See your reaction (even if it is only turning away) as your part of the pattern.
- Stop what you are doing or thinking.
- Shift your eyes, voice tone, or facial expression.

In Ned’s case, that meant that as he walked away from Ginger in a bad mood, he had to stop and turn around. He had never done that before! So he stopped and got ready to go back to talk over his mother to Ginger! But he had some internal work to do before he took those steps!

2. “Be made new in the spirit of your mind.”

Up to this time, Ned had just taken himself out of an automatic pattern. He was still convinced that he was right and that Ginger was at fault. So now he needed to do some “Heart Work.” Ned had been hurt in the interaction and his “old self” still believes that things are “not fair.” He really felt that he deserved to be in a bad mood!

Now he needs to spend some time in Christ’s presence. The Holy Spirit must influence a “change of heart” in you so that you see reality different! This can take minutes, hours, or even days! This work of the Holy Spirit is quite mysterious. He can convince you of a new reality! He can change your spirit!

For example, you can look at your spouse after an argument and see his/her face as angry and unapproachable. All you can think about is how you have been hurt. You are stuck in a bad mood! After Christ has changed your heart, your mood shifts. Then you look at the exact same face of your spouse, and see that he/she is hurting also. Your hurt and anger mysteriously changes to compassion!
- Shift to heart where Christ lives (8 inches).
- Be in his presence. Pray - pray for your own mood - pray for the relationship!
- Do a reality check: What is more important, [1] your hurt feelings (ME) or [2] your relationship (WE)?
- Stay in prayer until you actually feel a shift in mood and attitude - until you can look at your spouse and feel compassion!

Ned just stood still for a few minutes, facing the door that he had just left. He prayed that God would help his mood and change his heart. In a few moments, he stopped being consumed by his own hurt feelings and began to imagine how Ginger must be feeling. His mood began to shift as he realized that she was hurt too.

3. “Put on the new self, created to be like God.”

But don't stop there. Do something to change the pattern in the relationship! Now that you have felt a real change in attitude, now use this new attitude to change things between the two of you. This is “putting on the new self.” This is using the power that God has given you to bring more “love, joy, and peace” to your home.

The “new self” is no “wimp.” It has the power of the Holy Spirit. It has the confidence to change things. And it brings a right spirit to the situation!

- Connect eyes, voice, and face to your heart. Ask, “What Would Jesus See?” (WWJS?) Since the new self is “created to be like God,” let this attitude dominate your eyes and ears!
- Connect your voice and hands to heart. Now ask, “What Would Jesus Do?” (WWJD?). Then act on it! Say something in a firm, loving voice. Touch with the same firm, loving touch that Jesus gave.

- Think WE, not ME! “If you have any encouragement in being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit...then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition...have the same attitude that was in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 2:1-5)

Ned took the first hesitant steps back to the room where he had left Ginger. He felt apprehension rise and wanted to turn back and leave things alone. But something inside him said, “No, it is not good for us that WE let this mood stay between us.”

With that new confidence and resolve, he walked back into the room and said to a surprised Ginger, “Let’s talk over this ‘Mother’ situation and decide how WE can handle things in the future!”
Relationship With Self

St. Paul’s 3-step advice can be applied in the same way with your relationship with yourself. After all, we are talking about a relationship that goes with you twenty-four hours a day/seven days a week. If this relationship is dominated by the usual “ME” focus of the natural self, then the same power struggles and resentment will build up inside your soul - the same way that it does in your family and school relationships.

Taking a look at the soul through St. Paul’s eyes, there are three powerful forces inside your soul. According to Romans 7: 21-25 and Romans 8:2, there is:

1. The Law of your MIND.
   - This is the Directional Force for your life.
   - This tells you what you SHOULD do in any given situation.
   - This force develops your values and your conscience.
   - The power of your MIND is to produce guilt and anxiety if the proper direction is not followed.

2. The Law of your BODY.
   - This is the Motivational Force for your life.
   - This lets you know what you WANT TO do in any given situation.
   - This force develops your passion and gives color and emotion to your life.
   - The power of the BODY is to rebel and give the feeling of “who cares?” if controlled by the mind.

3. The Law of your Spirit.
   - This is how your soul is organized.
   - The SPIRIT determines relationship between Mind and Body.
   - The SPIRIT develops strategies for life.
   - This is your conscious awareness of what is going on inside, but it will detach if not safe inside!
The “Law of SIN” is the bad relationship between the MIND and BODY! St. Paul found out that in his natural state, the mind and body were at war! The “war” is the spiritual problem - how the mind and body are organized.

In the natural state, the mind is anxious and wants to control the body so that it can keep things safe. The mind does not “love” the body and does not care about its passions. In the natural state, the body is rebellious and wants to express its passions no matter what the consequences. The body does not “love” the mind and does not care about being safe.

For a practical example of this war, think about exercising. In your mind, you know you should go jogging, but your body wants to relax. You sit there awhile and your mind makes you feel guilty. You get up to put on your tennis shoes and get distracted by a television program. Then you realize that you let an hour go by and feel guilty again!

Why this war - why this bad relationship? With original sin, take God out of the picture, take out His LOVING PRESENCE in the heart and the result is a spiritual “ME” strategy. The MIND becomes anxious and wants to control. The BODY becomes anxious and wants to rebel.

Where’s the POWER to overcome this bad relationship? Romans 8:2 introduces a “WE” strategy in the “Law of the Spirit and life.” As the mind and body struggle with each other, they are like two kids fighting! What is needed is a mature, loving force inside that can take charge and make decisions that are good for the whole self! That force is the “new self.”

Christ dwells in the heart by faith. The “new self” is created to be like God. The New Self operates with the new strategy of love. It can take both the Mind and the Body’s needs into consideration, then make a decision that is best for the whole person! This is the Power of WE.

Disciplining Mind and Body

So how do you discipline your mind and body so that you begin to want to do what you should do? The same 3 steps of Eph. 4:22-24 apply to your relationship with self:
1. “Put off the old self.”
   - Jana found herself thinking back over her reaction to one of her students. He had pushed things to the limit, so she finally got angry with him and sent him to the principal. But now she was worried about his parents. “Would they be upset at her?” For such an over-controlling Mind, “putting off the old self,” means to stop mid-worry!
   - Chris couldn’t wait until school was over and left his classroom as soon as he could. It was Friday and after a hard week, he deserved a little something to change his mood. But he knew that he would stumble home after a few too many and have the usual argument with his wife. For such an Impulsive Body, “putting off the old self,” means to stop mid-action! So Chris turned his car away from the bar and headed home.

2. “Be renewed in the attitude of your mind.”
   - Jana was able to stop her worry, but she found her mind wanting to drift back to the situation. So she walked 16 inches to her heart, where Christ lives and meditated on the words, “Be still and know that I am God.” To renew your attitude with an over controlling mind try meditation.
   - Chris still felt like he deserved a drink after working so hard, so he walked 8 inches from his stomach to his heart! He prayed and asked God to change his desire. To renew your attitude with an impulsive body, try fasting, that is, you do not let the body take over but stop your body in a loving way.

3. “Put on the new self, created to be like God.”
   - Now both Jana and Chris could change their life-style! The “new self” can take charge inside and stop the war. Then new self uses the principle of love, not control or rebellion! Now you can “Think WE” and direct things so that your life is fulfilling and full of passion!
   - Such a good relationship inside means that you begin to want to do what you should do! Then you can wake up refreshed and in good spirits!

   www.ThinkWENotME.com
Lutheran Schools: Are They Worth It?
David G. Abrahamson

Lutheran schools - are they worth it? In a world where we spend so much time evaluating what’s worth it and what’s not, what to do and what not to do, is it cost effective, does it meet the goal, what is the “bottom line,” we take a moment to think about why we have Lutheran schools in the first place. And because we have them, we must ask, are they in fact worth it? Are Lutheran schools worth the cost and the sacrifice?

The public, and that would include the major Lutheran denominations, would offer many different answers. But clearly, given the fact that we support Lutheran education in America and maintain and promote Lutheran schools, our actions have already answered that question affirmatively. We have enabled generation after generation of Lutheran schools to exist and to grow. However, just because Lutheran schools exist does not make their worth a certainty.

What God Values

In our material culture we are told to buy this, that, or the next thing because, “I’m worth it, you’re worth it, and we’re worth it.” Whether we select a particular coloring product for our hair, drive a particular automobile, enjoy a particular luxury product, or engage an extravagant service, we’re told it’s okay to do these things, because after all, we’re worth it! That may be so in the world as we understand it and as the world understands itself. But when it comes to the world that God created, what’s “worth it” assumes a new
dimension and a different format altogether. What’s “worth it” finally is what God says has value. What counts is not what the world values, not what we value, but what God values. And in the end, there is only one absolute being of worth, one almighty, all-knowing, ever-present God. God alone holds the place of absolute worth. In a world created by God, redeemed by God, and sanctified by God, it is God alone who is worth it. What we do, then, in service to that God, in thanksgiving to that God, gives worth and value to our daily tasks - not because the world stands up and says that means something, or that’s a good thing to do. No, because at the end of the day, it’s God’s judgment that is worth it because God alone is worth it.

Worth Acknowledged Through Service

How do we acknowledge that absolute worth of God? Through service to God that is rooted and grounded first and foremost in our worship in word and sacrament instituted by Christ and commanded by him so that the church might be formed and have the worth and the worthiness of calling itself the Body of Christ. What we do in worship overflows to every other area of life - music, art, service, support - and also education. Education in all its forms is worth it because it opens doors for us to understand the world - that environment that God created, that God redeemed and that God cares for each and every day. Education is worth it from early childhood through the elementary years, through the high school years, through college and on to continuing education, i.e., life long learning, because it draws us all into a deeper understanding of the creation God has given us and into a deeper understanding of God as well. To strive, to struggle each day to be drawn closer to the mystery of God is worth it. Hence an educational system that encourages that striving is worth it.

Public education is universally regarded as having great worth. Even the world understands that. In most cases we gladly pay our tax dollars so that there is a system of public education because we understand the value - the worth - of an educated society that can deal as civilized individuals with the problems, with the technology, and with all the challenges that face a 21st century global community.

Limits of Public Education

Because we value education so highly and see the limitations in the public system, we move beyond the public offerings to see that there are private options as well. Private education - Lutheran education - is costly, expensive and sometimes even exclusive. (Try as we may, inclusivity in the private sector in many cases still escapes us.) Why not settle for all the other options that are out there, both public and private? Why pay extra for
Lutheran schools? The answer is clear. It’s worth it. Why? A Lutheran education leads us to understand our world, to frame it and to focus it, to serve, support and understand it through the lens of faith, a faith that is focused not only on what goes on in the world, but also on what Christ has done for that world through his suffering, death and resurrection. The distinction is a narrow one - but it is one that makes the difference between living and dying, for time and eternity.

Lutheran education has value and is worth it because it gets the job done. It gets the job done academically and socially. It may have its flaws. As with any system of education, there may be many areas where it can do a better job. But because it gets the job done spiritually, within the framework of faith, drawing children into the mystery of creation and of God so that God in Christ might be glorified, it is indeed worth it. Other schools accomplish the academic and social tasks. But faith is sorely lacking. At best these institutions can teach “values”, a watered down version of common sense. And in some cases, the law, that time honored tradition in our country of separation of church and state, stands in the way of any real teaching of values.

Lutheran Schools’ Unique Quality

What is that unique quality that makes Lutheran schools worth it? What compels us to commit time, talent and money to this principle? Is it class size, personal attention, family-like atmosphere? All of those qualities are hallmarks of Lutheran education, but they are present among other schools as well. Is it because Lutheran schools are faith-based and grounded in Christian principles? There are many organizations that are faith-based and have Christian principles, yet we would hardly say they accomplish the same task as Lutheran schools. Faith-based hospital care systems, the YMCA, and other organizations with a history of faith connections are but a pale reflection of their faith traditions. These organizations have been almost totally secularized for a variety of reasons, good and bad, as they attempt to live in the 21st century. How are Lutheran schools different? Because they are privately funded, they have the mandate and the freedom to teach, in addition to the academic and social disciplines, that life is viewed, creation is viewed, daily work and activity are viewed through the lens of faith. That lens of faith always sees first and foremost Jesus Christ crucified and risen
from the dead and teaches our children to apply that life-giving principle to every action, to every part of the curriculum, so that God is glorified and we understand anew the absolute worth of God. That's why Lutheran schools are worth it!

This is not to suggest that somehow Lutheran schools have their own set of mathematical principles, or that history gets rewritten so that Lutherans come out “on top”, so to speak. It is to say, however, that in the teaching environment created within Lutheran schools, history, math, social studies and science all find their relationship to a God who unfolds before us each day the mystery of our creation, redemption and sanctification. The lens of faith doesn't change the approach to academics. It doesn't change the daily environment that is subject to all the follies and foibles of our daily living - from the necessity for security, to the need for rules and regulations, to the procedures for dealing with discord and differences. The lens of faith doesn't change the kind of struggles we have in financing such institutions, in supporting them, in guiding them, in keeping them current. It doesn't change the challenge to move our schools forward with the latest skills, technology and methods that God gives to the entire world. It does, however, change the reason why we do what we do. We spend our time, our talents, and our money on Lutheran schools because they are worth it. We do it because the children that Christ gives to us - each and every one of them - are worth it. It is Christ who bids those children to come to him so that they may be touched by his love, nurtured and nourished, shaped and formed through what we do and what we say each day in our Lutheran schools. Lutheran schools are worth it because these children are worth it because Christ is worth it. Christ's children are our future. They will be the next leaders of the Church. They will be the ones who shape and form society. We are not out to create a “Lutheran” society, but we work toward a society that properly distinguishes, as Martin Luther himself would say, between the “two kingdoms”, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world, and knows how to do justice and service in those kingdoms effectively and forcefully, boldly and bravely. Lutheran education can effectively accomplish this, so Lutheran schools are indeed worth it.
Discipline Into Discipleship

Additionally, Lutheran education turns discipline into discipleship. We do not promote discipline that is grounded in fear of punishment and retribution, but we teach instead a discipleship that shows the way, that urges correction, that admonishes gently so that one might follow better the example of Christ himself, our best example of service to God and to the neighbor. We support Lutheran education because that kind of “following”, that kind of discipleship, leads to the faithfulness and the loyalty that are the hallmarks of what God intends children to practice each and every day.

Christ commands us to “feed his lambs” (John 21:15). And in feeding them we nurture them, we show them, we teach them, we lead them, we make them wise. We show them what God expects of them and we see that they have the tools to accomplish it. In Lutheran schools, young minds are shaped and formed for discipleship, for faithfulness, for life-long learning. In Lutheran schools God’s lambs receive the academic skills and the spiritual skills necessary to become productive citizens in the world that God gives us now and in the world to come. Because this is our goal, our work, and our obedience to Christ’s command, Lutheran education is worth it.

Lutheran education is worth it because the lives these schools touch, educate, discipline, and call to discipleship bear an indelible mark, the mark of Christ himself - that seal of God’s promise in Holy Baptism and the understanding that they have a place with God now and with God eternally. That’s what makes Lutheran education and Lutheran schools worth it.

A story from our own experience effectively illustrates this point. Many years ago we had two sisters who had enrolled in a Lutheran school. They had been with the school for many years. Throughout the course of their study, for a variety of reasons, they found themselves in deep trouble, both academically and socially. After repeated lapses in schoolwork and behavior they finally were forced to leave the institution. And as they left, they hurled back at the principal, “We hate this place. We hate you, and we’re never, ever coming back.” Some years later, when these sisters had their own families, the principal called to tell me that they were up in the school office and wished to enroll their children in the school. It was one of those stunning and puzzling moments. Why would they want to come back? Why would they want to be in a place they hated and despised so badly? They were honest enough to say to the principal that they had made a mistake; what they had accomplished and learned at a Lutheran school was now what they wanted for their own children. Nothing less would do.
Goal of Mission and Ministry

Yes, the mark of Lutheran education is indelible and I would submit that because that is so, Lutheran schools are worth it - not because we brand people for life, but because we connect them to Jesus Christ, the source of life, salvation and resurrection from the dead. Lutheran schools are worth it because the mission and ministry of Christ are accomplished through them. They may or may not make money. They may or may not be better than some other school close by. But that really isn’t the point. Lutheran schools strive for excellence with the resources that they have. And we must remember that the goal of the Lutheran school is not to make money. The goal of Lutheran schools is mission and ministry - and that requires that we spend money, not accumulate it. Some would submit that Lutheran schools do that spending all too well and become too much of a burden. But when that spending is done in service to Christ, when young minds are changed and formed for Christ, then it is money well spent. The outcome supports the investment. And even the world is forced to acknowledge, “Wow, it’s worth it!”

Lutheran schools are worth it because through them faith is created, lives are changed, society is served and God is glorified. I do not mean to suggest that this cannot happen within other denominations, other systems of education or in other places. But within the system that we call Lutheran education, especially at the elementary and secondary levels, Lutheran schools are worth it because Christ is worth it. And to Christ, the one who gives all knowledge, we owe all that we are. Day in and day out in our Lutheran schools, teachers and principals, pastors, congregations and communities that support these schools have all caught a glimpse of that vision - that although we may not always have the best equipment, the latest technology, that we may not always have everything that we want or even sometimes even everything we need - what we do have to offer through our Lutheran schools is the connection to Jesus Christ for this time and for all eternity.

That’s what Lutheran Schools do each and every day. They serve Christ. They serve God. They serve us all. And that’s worth it!
Older Version: “Before you criticize a person, walk a mile in his moccasins.”

Newer Version: “Before you criticize a person, walk a mile in his moccasins. When the owner realizes his moccasins are missing and decides to chase after you, you’ll already be a mile away, and he’ll be barefoot.”

While the newer version of the often-used quotation may be more humorous, the older version better conveys the importance of empathizing with the plight of others. It’s only by experiencing the circumstances of others that understanding can be reached. It’s common for principals to fail to view things from the perspectives of the members of their staffs. Principals are often too mired down in their own workloads to have much time to see things from any point of view other than their own. This causes problems for members of the staff and the principal. It becomes an obstacle to effective leadership.

The book Leadership and Self-Deception – Getting out of the Box offers an interesting analysis of why leaders sometimes have relational problems with others in the workplace. The authors posit that leaders may unknowingly see others not so much as people but as objects. While most principals would deny the accusations that they see others only as objects, it’s an easy trap to fall into. One only needs to be human to be guilty. It bears further study.

The problem starts, say the authors, with an act of self-betrayal by the leader. Self-betrayal begins for a person when he does something that is contrary to what he feels he should have done for someone else in a certain situation. As a result of this act of betrayal, the person feels guilt. To overcome this feeling, he begins to interpret the situation in a way that justifies his inappropriate act. He creates reasons to excuse his actions. As a consequence of this, his view of reality becomes distorted. He transfers the blame from himself to the other person. He has placed himself into a box. In this condition, his view of reality is skewed. He fails to see himself as the cause of
the problem.

For example, suppose a principal overhears two students’ parents talking to each other in the hallway after school. They are unjustly criticizing a teacher. The principal’s first thought is to break into the conversation and defend the teacher. He knows that doing so is the right thing to do. However, he decides to take the easy way out and ignore the problem. Rather than seeing the teacher as a person who needs support, he sees her as an object. He sees her as something that could jeopardize his own reputation with the parents and as something that will rob him of time to do other tasks. He views her as an additional item on his already too full agenda. His decision to pretend he didn’t hear the conversation is based upon his view of the teacher not as a person but as an object. The principal has betrayed himself. He has stepped into the box – he has become self-deceived. As a result of his failure to do the right thing, the principal now tries to justify his actions to himself. He tells himself that he was too busy to step into the conversation. He begins to create a mental list of all the mistakes the teacher had made over the years. He tells himself that the teacher didn’t deserve his help in the first place. He begins to project his displeasure of himself onto the teacher. Before long, he has transferred the blame for the incident from himself to the teacher. And all this time the teacher isn’t even aware of the parents’ conversation or the principal’s thoughts.

When a leader steps into the box, he can’t help but carry his box around with him. He is so intent on masking his displeasure with himself that he can no longer see others as people. He succeeds in seeing himself as a victim. He inflates the faults of others. He consistently finds reasons to blame them. By doing so, he has unwittingly forced others to blame him for wrongly blaming them. By blaming them again in turn, he has created a cycle that will continue to damage relationships. Once in the box, his actions invite mutual mistreatment.

As a result of all of this, the principal can’t focus on bringing about positive results within the school. He’s too busy focusing on himself. He has invited others to focus on themselves as well. The way out of the box depends upon his ability to see others as people. The solution is simple – yet elusive. Principals can’t possibly understand the situations of all those with whom they work. And only the most narrow minded of fellow workers would expect them to do so. However, a principal is able to get out of the box when he conveys to others that he notices them, appreciates them, and will deal with them in a straightforward fashion. “People respond not primarily to what you do but to how you’re being – whether you’re in or out of the box toward them.” (p. 43)

The focus needs to be directed away from self and to others’ needs. The stress is upon empathizing with them - walking in their moccasins. Principals can’t allow themselves to focus on what others are doing wrong. Their focus
needs to be on what they can do right to help. When a leader does this, he does much to create a school culture in which people treat each other in a straightforward, accepting manner.

This doesn’t mean that principals need to be indulgent with people. When the situation warrants it, principals must deal firmly with staff members. However, such can be accomplished best when it’s done out of the box – by seeing and dealing with others as people with needs, not as objects. People follow after leaders who are out of the box because the leaders have walked in their moccasins, not because they’ve stolen them.

References:
Smile!...

You see it in magazines, on billboards, in advertising, and as graffiti. It is arguably the most popular single graphic representation of an emotion in modern times. Hundreds of versions pop up on Internet messages and web sites. You would recognize it in an instant. It’s the ever-popular, always lovable “smiley face.” OK . . . you’re probably sick of it by now. But I’ll bet the image comes immediately to mind!

The original version of the smiley face with a circle containing two eyes and a big grin became a part of popular culture at a time when smiles were needed the most. Its real origin is not clear, but the familiar icon has been with us for an entire generation. It has picked us up during wars, given us hope during economic downturns and relieved the stress associated with pressures on the job, in the home and in society as a whole. The smiley face has been symbolic of a desire to change attitudes when adjustments were required.

In many senses, there is no need for reminders to “smile” in Lutheran education ministry. What makes us want to smile every day is much more significant than any advertising campaign can convey. It tops all the smiling icons that any graphics program can produce. It is even more basic than the simple design that popped up in someone’s sketch book over three decades ago. Educators in Lutheran ministries can smile because we are called to do so! What can possibly make us happier than to serve our Lord by serving His people? When we accept God’s call to minister to children, youth and adults in a variety of settings around the world, we are doing what Jesus did with smiles during His ministry! When we “serve the Lord enthusiastically”, we put smiles on the faces of His people. It is a daily privilege and a daily joy to do what we have been trained and called to carry out in Jesus’ name.

God also gives us many sources of smiles on a daily basis because of our ministry:

- the story that the six-year-old told about how her parents met
- the experiences of the high school youth as they tasted “unique” Mexican foods on a recent servant event
- most of the jokes shared with fellow staff members by the veteran principal who considers these to be an important part of his call
daily play activities of the young children who are in the child care program
- the annual faculty/8th grade basketball game

These are just a few of the ways in which smiles can be generated every day. Did any of them bring a smile to your face? Are you reminded of someone in particular who contributed to the experience? Do we take the time to thank the countless individuals who help us get through each day by making us laugh, grin, smirk, or chuckle? How responsible are we—each one of us—for putting a smile on the faces of those with whom we come into contact?

Lutheran Education Association has initiated a new campaign. Its acronym should be easy to remember: SMILE. In fact, that’s the point. What we do as educators in Lutheran ministries is, in large part, put smiles on the faces of those we serve. LEA is a part of the same ministry. As we go about “Supporting Ministers in Lutheran Education” (SMILE), we wish to put smiles on the faces of teachers, administrators, DCEs, DCOs, pastors, executives, volunteers and all those who minister through education to God’s children, youth and adults. Events such as the Convocation, national DCE and administrators conferences and academies will be places of interaction, learning and joy. Print publications will address topics of interest and relevance, and place smiles on readers’ faces and into hearts. Internet resources will increasingly concentrate on “ministry connections”: with fellow Lutheran educators, with other resources and with ministry opportunities. Sometimes, the main focus of attention will be on joy in ministry (check out the current “Smile File”).

If what we do is God-pleasing, we should do it with joy in our hearts and on our faces! Our words, our actions and our thoughts need to be in “happy mode”. Why? Because we have the most joy-filled message! Consider each day how carrying out your own area of ministry can produce smiles. Look around to see if someone needs a smile. Take a personal smile inventory. Does how you look to others reflect the joy that you feel about what you do? We have every reason to express it every day.

SMILE! You’re a Lutheran educator!
"IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY, PUT YOUR OXYGEN MASK ON FIRST, BEFORE ASSISTING OTHERS!"

We’ve all heard the flight attendant say those magical words as the plane is ready to take off. But on a recent flight, it really struck me that these words are great “health and hope” words for each of us. This statement is what wellness is all about – we need to first take care of ourselves in order to be able to care for others around us!

That is not a selfish motive at all. As a matter of fact, it was Dr. Luther himself who said that the reason Christians need to take care of their own bodies is to be ready and able to take care of the people that God puts around them!

If our “oxygen” is cut-off from us, we’re in really bad shape. If we do not have our act together, how can we help and assist others? If we are cut-off from the power of the Spirit Who brings us joy and love and forgiveness, we are unable to share that same joy and love and forgiveness with others. It is the Spirit of God who breathes into us, through Word and Sacrament, the breath of life, in Jesus Christ!

When we are cut-off from this life-support system, we are not full of health and hope. We choke in our own worries, wars, and woes, because the Gift of Life, Jesus Christ, is not flowing to us.

And so we rejoice in the knowledge that we are the Lord’s through His death and Resurrection! We rejoice in our Baptism each day, because we know who we are and Whose we are! The Spirit gives us life…to share with those around us!

That’s what Church is all about; that’s what Lutheran education is all about; that’s what life in the Lord is all about!

I returned recently from a trip to Bethlehem, in Palestine. We helped to dedicate a new Wellness Center, seeded by Wheat Ridge Ministries, as part of the ministry of Christmas Lutheran Church and Dar al-Kalima Lutheran School. Talk about the Spirit of God breathing His Gift of life...
into people. This ministry of health and hope is like a “haven of hope in the midst of a desert of destruction”. Through Word and Sacrament ministries, and the living out of health and hope in the Lord, the Breath of life is alive, even in the midst of horrible circumstances.

And so we are enabled by God to put our “oxygen masks” on daily – to breathe into our lives the Life blood of hope and joy and caring. It is the only way to be able to fully share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others – to have a steady diet of worship, prayer, Bible study, and the Sacraments in order to be equipped to serve those around us, who so desperately need the Oxygen of Life, Christ, and Jesus Himself!

Here’s an interesting way to look at *How to Keep Well in Today’s World*:

- Avoid riding in cars, because they are responsible for 20 percent of all fatal accidents.

- Do not stay home, because 17 percent of all accidents occur in the home.

- Avoid walking on streets or sidewalks, because 14 percent of all accidents happen to pedestrians.

- Avoid traveling by air, rail, or water, because 16 percent of all accidents involve these forms of travel.

- Of the remaining 33 percent of all deaths, 32 percent occur in hospitals. Therefore, above all, avoid hospitals!

But, you will be pleased to know that only .001 percent of all deaths occur in worship services, and these are usually related to previous physical disorders (nothing to do with the Order of Service!). Therefore, logic tells us that the safest place to be at any given time is church! Bible study is safe too. The percentage of deaths during Bible study is even smaller!

Therefore, for safety’s sake, attend church and study your Bible – it could save your life!

God’s life in Christ has certainly saved us so that we now can breathe the gift of Life into others’ lives! Keep your oxygen mask on…and continue to share health and hope, in the name of the healing Christ!
What Is Our Theology?

There is a section in II Corinthians that—if you close your eyes and imagine it—could very well be a faculty lounge on a Friday afternoon... in late February, during the dog days of a school year. Picture two old veterans commiserating with each other. A young novice teacher sits wide-eyed in the corner, listening to the conversation...

“I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea. I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.” (II Cor. 11:23b-28)

By his own admission, Paul claims to be speaking “like a fool” in this passage. (v. 21) His underlying point, of course, is that he boasts of his weaknesses in order to elevate the work of Christ in and through him. Later in chapter 12, he “delights in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when (he is) weak, then (he is) strong.” (II Cor. 12:10)

I get a little nervous when church workers start talking about health and happiness in ministry. I would certainly be more than a little uncomfortable discussing the subjects with Paul sitting next to me! I think he would have a thing or two to say about the theology of glory versus the theology of the cross.

You might recall from your doctrine class days that a theology of glory comes naturally to our flesh. We seek methods and formulas to the “victorious Christian life.” As Americans we wish to be successful and we have many laws
and principles to help us attain our goal. Even Christian bookstore shelves abound with much self-help literature. You can find five steps to parenting, to marriage, to wealth, to health, and to happiness. All along the way, we apply Bible passages and implore God’s assistance in our plan.

This approach to life is very tempting and appealing, especially to us educators. But there are three things wrong with it: 1) we can’t keep the law, 2) Jesus said, “In this world you will have trouble,” (Jn. 16:33) and 3) it is idolatry.

If the world and our flesh are full of the theology of glory, then what the world needs to hear and especially see enacted is a theology of the cross. Rather than focusing on ways to avoid suffering, defeat, and weakness, I believe Lutheran High students need to see God’s people living with these trials in faith, hope, and love. They need to see that “God’s power is indeed made perfect in our weakness.” (II Cor. 12:9)

Even now as I write this many of my colleagues are not happy. Budgets are tight, enrollment has decreased, responsibilities have increased, and the future is uncertain. Many of my colleagues are not healthy. A few are battling the bulge, two are keeping high cholesterol down, one is overcoming a vocal disability, a few have heart concerns, and one is living nobly with Parkinson’s Disease.

But I don’t sense from any of them that their top priority is pursuing health and happiness. On the contrary, they move about daily with the greater fruit of joy and the greater aim of pleasing the Lord. And students are observing this and taking note.

Please don’t misunderstand: I like health and happiness as much as the next guy and I believe that we should be good stewards of the body God has given us. I just don’t think that should be our top priority. I have seen the Lord work for good in my seasons of misery and poor mental health. And I have witnessed others with horrible health and bouts of depression continue to give and love and trust with grace and strength.

‘With the psalmist I can now say, “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”’ (Ps. 34:18) “I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy.” (Ps. 116:1) Given the choice, I will take hope over health and joy over happiness.

As it was once explained to me, happiness depends upon others or circumstances coming through as I wish. But joy is an internal assurance that all is well with my soul, despite circumstances or others. Happiness can’t coexist with suffering, defeat, and weakness; but joy can.
And so can hope. Hope is not mere wishing; hope is based on a future certainty. I believe that health and happiness are coming to all of God’s children...but perhaps not in this life.

Odd as it may sound, I do not wish for God’s students to see me as a well-balanced healthy and happy guy. I do not want my appearance of having it all together become the drawing power for them to Christianity.

I want them to see Jesus. And the best view for that is always a cross, both His and mine. “Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me.” (Rom. 15:17-18)

Let me tell you what He has done with some of my weaknesses! Please, come into our faculty lounge and have a seat....
Healthy Teachers,
Healthy Classrooms

How would you describe the health of your classroom? I’m thinking far more broadly than safety and absence of disease here. Those are important, and they need your constant attention. But let’s also consider the less tangible, more proactive aspects of healthy classrooms. That would include a more comprehensive view of health to include wellness, fitness, and a lifestyle that builds a foundation for a lifetime of health and wellness.

Healthy Lifestyles

Young children need to begin the practice of living healthy lives and building healthy habits when they are young. It is the choices they make in early childhood that become the habits they practice throughout their lives.

Healthy food choices, appropriate rest and exercise, and positive attitudes toward adventure are among those healthy habits. Do the children in your classrooms really get enough exercise? Are they vigorously active for a minimum of 20 sustained minutes each day? Too many children are not!

My husband and I took two of our young grandchildren to the zoo last Saturday. While we had a stroller with us, Aaron and Jordan spent most of the two hours on their feet – walking, running and standing. I noticed far too many children neatly and safely strapped into strollers or over-the-shoulder carriers, getting no exercise at all! Is that the way to build healthy lifestyles? I don’t think so!

Healthy Attitudes

An important part of our health is our emotional health and well-being. Our attitudes and our emotions play an important role in keeping both our minds and our bodies healthy. What are you doing in the classroom that helps children build healthy attitudes and emotions?

For young children, building healthy attitudes involves having their personal interaction styles honored. The shy child needs to be given time warm up to new environments and new activities. The active child needs to be given produc-
tive ways to be active. The intense child needs to be helped to develop ways to modulate that intensity.

**Dispositions toward Learning**

An ongoing discussion in early childhood education today revolves around helping children develop appropriate dispositions toward learning. We might even think about these dispositions as their attitudes and approaches to life. How children approach new situations and new tasks when they are young will build the dispositions that they carry into their adult lives.

For optimal learning, all children need the disposition of willing discovery. They need to be excited about learning new things and about approaching new experiences. That disposition toward discovery will provide the foundation for lifelong learning, an important trait in all people.

Children also need the disposition of optimism and hope. An attitude that events and experiences can and will be positive is built through the foundation of optimism that is developed in early childhood through positive and trustworthy experiences beginning in infancy.

Another disposition is the disposition of curiosity. For optimal learning to take place children need to be curious about the world around them and how that world works. Closely related to that is the disposition of awe – a gratefulness for the world God has created for us.

Yet another important disposition is the disposition of industry. Children need to be willing to expend effort to complete a task and to do their best. Industry, like hope, is built in early childhood as children experience opportunities to complete tasks and to appreciate the satisfaction of a job well done. Teachers can help build that disposition by “walking” and working alongside children, coaching them toward completion of a task that is just outside their ability to complete independently. In doing so, the teacher is actually working within the child’s zone of proximal development, an important concept from Lev Vygotsky, an important Russian psychologist who was a contemporary of Jean Piaget, Maria Montessori, and John Dewey – all of them developing complementary ideas in different parts of the world.

**Healthy Teachers**

Healthy classrooms are led by healthy teachers. As with young children, that health is far more broad than the absence of illness. Good health is the positive and more powerful side of illness absence. Good health involves a healthy lifestyle. Are you getting enough exercise to keep your body fit and to build the stamina you need in order to teach young children?
Good health also involves having good emotional health. Teachers need to take care of their emotional lives and to get the help and support in order to deal with unresolved issues.

Dispositional health is not only for children. Teachers, too, need to work on having and building the appropriate dispositions toward life and learning. Teacher dispositions are a strong example and model for children’s dispositions.

As teachers model disposition and how learning takes place, they demonstrate to the children they teach that learning is a lifetime investment, and that the joy of learning can be ongoing. As children and teachers learn together, they will be engaging in an ongoing discovery of the world and all it has to offer. What a wonderful way to provide healthy classrooms and learning environments for young children!
Happy New Year!

Those who are not students, parents, teachers or someone else connected to a school cannot comprehend this statement. The cycle of beginnings and endings for the business world rarely involves this time of the year. Most New Year’s celebrations occur at the beginning of a month when it is dark and cold. However, for many of us, our year starts with the ringing of a bell a few weeks before the autumnal equinox. For us at Concordia, River Forest we just recently celebrated our 140th New Year.

Starting over and having a new beginning is an important part of our educational enterprise. At the beginning of the year, the slate is clean for students, teachers and administrators alike. Most of the students in our classrooms have not worked with us before and may never have entered our classroom or our school before the first day of school. There is an excitement about this “newness”, not just for our students but also for us who are a little older than the students. Even after many years in the classroom, I still get butterflies before the start of my first class every fall.

There is so much that is new. There are new students, new textbooks, and if you are lucky new paint and some new furniture. Hopefully the bulletin boards are new and bright. This “newness” of the start of a new academic year should remind us of the daily new beginnings God gives to us. Each day He allows us to “start fresh” as we ask Him to forgive and forget the sins of the previous day and to set a new course for our day. Every day of our lives can be like the first day of school. The mistakes and errors from the past are behind us as we begin anew. In our Christian classrooms we are privileged to be able to share this “newness” with our children and our peers. We can share the love and the forgiveness that God gives to us. What a privilege this is for us and for the children in our care.

As you begin this new academic year, remind yourself to “start fresh” each day. Have a Happy New Year!
Guidelines for Submissions to Lutheran Education

Lutheran Education intends to publish the best research and reflection on a wide range of topics relevant to Lutheran Christian education. The journal welcomes manuscripts addressing Lutheran educator at all levels from early childhood to higher education, in the classroom or in the parish. First consideration is given to well documented articles which may provide theological context on Lutheran education, explore issues specific to Lutheran education, or which either present for the first time or discuss the implications of recent educational developments for Lutheran education.

1. Format for Submission: The preferred format in which to receive manuscripts is in Microsoft Word via documents attached to an email. Please limit formatting as much as possible (specifically multiple fonts, type sizes, headers/footers, boldface, etc.) as these must be removed and/or changed when creating copy for the printer. Second preference would be documents submitted on a 3.5 inch floppy disk or on CD-Rom.

2. Length: Manuscripts may range from approximately 2000-5000 words. The editors reserve the right to request modifications.

3. Style and Documentation: Style and documentation in the journal are governed by the most recent edition of The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA); Webster’s New International Dictionary is consulted in matters of spelling.

4. Contact: Manuscripts, article proposals or related inquiries may be made to:

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