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Volume 133/Number 5
**Ode To A Parochial School Teacher**

A tribute by (and to) Donald L. Deffner

Well done, good and faithful servant!

(Mar. 12, 1924 to Nov. 25, 1997)

I thank God for my faithful parochial school teachers. Together with my parents, in a warm Christian home, and the other teachers I had over the years, they gave me a solid foundation for my Christian training. They have been a profound blessing to me. And their instruction had a marked effect on my 48 years as a pastor and 36 years as a seminary professor.

At the age of 6, I was told I was going to school. I liked it at home and said I didn’t want to go. But my mother said I had to go or I’d just be a dummy. Well, I had seen them in the store windows downtown. And I didn’t want to turn into a dummy, so I went to school.

I can see the parochial school classroom as clearly as if it were yesterday. That’s 1930, Immanuel Lutheran School, 324 South Ellis St., Wichita, Kansas. There was the “little room” (grades 1-4), and then the “big room” (grades 4-8). Then there was the multicolored map of the United States which fascinated me. A pan of water on an ancient heater was supposed to balance the humidity. Vividly etched in my memory is the picture above the teacher’s desk. It showed two children about to cross a rickety bridge. A fierce-looking snake awaited them behind a bush on the other side. But an angel hovered overhead, its protecting hand shielding them from harm.

But my most wide-eyed memory is from the third grade. If we had behaved during the day, before dismissal the teacher would read to us from Fox’s *Book of Martyrs*. We sat there with our mouths agape at the gory crucifixions and varied forms of slaughter of the early Christians.

But that school had “an atmosphere in which grace flourished.” Christ was at the center of all instruction. And by the Holy Spirit’s blessing we daily grew in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4)

In the early years I remember Ms. Popp and a Mr. Juergensen. For the last four years Mr. Harold Leimer was my teacher. At this date, 65 years later, I don’t recall the details of doctrine or Scriptural truth which they taught me. But their instruction is deeply imbedded in my faith and life.

I thank you, my teachers. I thank God for dedicated teachers one and all! I salute you for your faithful service. As Scripture says, “Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3). And I look forward to seeing you again in heaven where Our Lord will give you your Master’s degree, “W.D.”: “Well done, good and faithful servants!”

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The Role of School Ministry in the Church — Today and Tomorrow

David Zersen, President of Concordia University, Austin, offers some challenging remarks on the role of Lutheran schools. He argues that the potential for schools to minister within the church can best be realized through a broader perspective on our historical and spiritual foundations, through patterns of formation which are more affective, and through greater appreciation for human and religious diversity.

by David Zersen

Children in Worship, Part 5: Findings and Implications

The final installment of the series of articles reporting findings from the Children in Worship Study presents the researchers' conclusions. Insisting that children are members of the congregation from the moment of their baptism and rightful participants in its worship life, they challenge congregations to do a better job of designing Sunday worship to reflect the needs of believers of all ages.

by Shirley Morgenthaler, Peter Becker, and Gary Bertels

The New Face of Children's Ministry

A children's pastor offers a provocative challenge to the vision of faith formation through corporate worship informing the Children in Worship Study (above). He outlines four ways in which he believes children's ministry must change in order to reach out effectively to the "millennial generation" and illustrates these new paradigms for children's ministry by describing the ministries of his own congregation, King of King's Lutheran Church in Omaha.

by Roger Theimer

Faith, Family, and Careers

As the next century rapidly approaches and the need for future church workers dramatically increases, two church worker/parents urge parents and other adults in church careers to help young people ask and respond to the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

by Steve and Dee Christopher

The Internet as a Research Tool

The author presents a primer on internet as a resource for teachers. He discusses how the World Wide Web might be integrated into classroom teaching and offers some web site addresses as useful starting points.

by C. Mark Schoenborn

One Day at a Time, One Person at a Time

A twenty-five year veteran of the teaching ministry offers a timely antidote to the frustration and fatigue many classroom teachers often feel by the end of the school year. He reminds us that it is the little things, accomplished one day at a time, one person at a time, that truly make a difference.

by Rich Kerr
Teaching Cheek to Cheek

“What that noise, Daddy?” It’s been Megan’s favorite question for a few weeks now, having superseded those perennial two-year-old favorites, “Why?” and “What happened, Daddy?” We had been playing out in the backyard when the mournful cooing of a mourning dove attracted her attention. “It’s just a bird,” I responded.

But when the dove cooed again, Megan repeated the question: “What that noise, Daddy?” This time I offered a little more explanation. “It’s a mourning dove,” I said. “It’s cooing.”

But that still wasn’t enough, and as the dove continued to coo, Megan continued to scan the sky and ask, “What that noise, Daddy?”

Pointing to the bird on the wire did little good. She was unable to follow either my line of vision or the precise direction my finger was pointing. Not until I knelt down beside her, placed my cheek against hers, and gently guided her gaze was her question finally answered. She saw what I saw, and she understood.

Several days later, I was reminded of this experience and suddenly realized I had lived a parable. In reflecting on this routine occurrence, I’ve come to realize that it reveals more than the cognitive and perceptual limitations of two-year-olds and the burdens these limitations place on parents. I’ve come to see it as a profound metaphor with something important to say about teaching and learning.

When Megan first asked, “What that noise, Daddy?” I reacted as I know I’ve often responded to students’ questions. Her question was off the lesson plan, unrelated to what I was focused on; therefore, the question was a distraction, and I disposed of it as quickly as possible. Only her persistence convinced me otherwise: it was an genuine question. She really wanted to know something, and she thought I could help her.

Next I tried simply adding more information. Now, it’s true she wanted to know a piece of factual information. Words were needed. But words themselves weren’t enough. Even my gestures couldn’t make the connection. Not until I put myself on her level and placed my cheek next to hers, joining her perspective with mine, was I able to bridge the gap and let her grasp this information.

It’s not a bad metaphor for teaching, is it?

Over and over again, whether in the early childhood classroom where “teaching cheek to cheek” may happen quite literally or in a secondary classroom in which it may need to be more metaphorical, I’ve seen “eurekas!” happen in just this way: Good teachers find ways to break through the distance between them and their students, to draw...
In current educational parlance, one often hears about replacing “the sage on the stage” (the Gradgrindian conception of teaching as the act of pouring information into the little inert pitchers arrayed before us in the classroom) with “the guide on the side” (the teacher as coach or facilitator, gently helping students make discoveries on their own). On the whole, I think, this re-conception of the teacher’s role has been positive. But it’s as true in educational as in theological matters that, as George Heider points out in this issue’s “A Final Word,” it’s possible to fall off a horse on either side. Perhaps my parable can speak to these potential pitfalls, too.

Taken to one extreme, the “guide on the side” can leave a classroom essentially content-less. The teacher functions as little more than a cheerleader for the “process” of her students as they flounder around seeking answers. In our laudable pursuit of more humane classrooms, it pays to remember that we teachers do (I hope!) know things our students need to know, and it won’t do to pretend otherwise. In our laudable pursuit of more humane classrooms, it pays to remember that we teachers do (I hope!) know things our students need to know, and it won’t do to pretend otherwise. Nevertheless, the freedom we have to engage spiritual issues with our students, along with the more intimate settings in which many of us teach, allow us to do so in a way that is respectful and supportive of their individual journeys.

Best of all, we follow the Risen Lord whom Mary Magdalene addressed on Easter morning as “Rabboni.” We know the ultimate Teacher, who comes to us his students at our level, inviting us cheek to cheek next to hers, bridging the gulf between father/teacher and daughter/learner and leading her to understanding.

Paradoxically, in rushing to vacate the role of “sage on the stage,” it is also possible to err by moving away from our students rather than closer to them, to move from the podium to the wings rather than down among the groundlings. (Frankly, I often fear that if we aren’t careful the increasing emphasis on the role of technology in education may lead us precisely in this direction, that the net effect of “distance learning” may be to create distance between teacher and learner rather than to bridge distances.)
The Role of School Ministry in the Church—Today and Tomorrow

David Zersen is President of Concordia University, Austin, Texas. This article is based on a presentation he made to a conference of Lutheran administrators in Texas in July of 1996.

Recently, I had the opportunity to visit the National University of Physical Education in Seoul, Korea, where young men and women pursue a degree in physical education in the morning and train to be Olympic athletes in the afternoon. I have never seen such a fascinating combination of theory and practice applied in an academic setting. The commitment of the students was overwhelming, and the acknowledged inappropriateness of anything which discouraged excellence (like addictive or abusive substances) was striking.

I reflected on this again in reading the headlines with the stories about the Atlanta Olympics and the preparations for world competition in a friendly but strongly intentional climate. It struck me that we also seek to place such intentionality and such qualities of excellence at the heart of the LCMS school system and that the reflections in this article should do no less than seek to help us realize the optimum dimensions of quality for our schools—and through them for our church and our society.

My reflections here are those of an insider who became an outsider and then came back to work on the inside. I'm the product of a parochial school education.

In the spirit (and Spirit) of Pentecost, we can recall and teach that God remains active in our world and in our lives. Indeed, our Lord himself suggests in the Gospel of John that we are even better off with the gift of the Spirit than with his own, visible presence (16:7-15; 20:29). We are called, then, to respond with faithful teaching and faithful living. We may well continue to struggle with how to conceive of the power of God at work within us, but we join nevertheless in the ancient prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful, and kindle in them the fire of your love! Alleluia!

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**Lutheran Education Web Site**

By the time you receive this issue of *Lutheran Education*, it should be possible for you to use your computer to access our World Wide Web site on the internet.

The design and contents of the web page have not been finalized at this time, but the site is likely to include the following:

- Tables of contents for each published issue.
- Text of selected articles and columns from current issues of *Lutheran Education*.
- Indexes for past volumes of the journal.
- Text of selected articles from the archives.
- Author guidelines for submitting articles and calls for papers for future issues.
- Links to related web sites.

One of the goals for creating this web site is to make it possible to address more specific, practical issues of Lutheran education in addition to the broader, often more theoretical and scholarly articles generally featured in the journal. To this end, we are also exploring the possibility of creating an interactive forum for discussion of issues and ideas relating to the varied areas of Lutheran education.

To access *Lutheran Education* online, point your web browser at [www.curf.edu/~LEJournal](http://www.curf.edu/~LEJournal).

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**The Role of School Ministry in the Church**

in Elmhurst, Illinois (eight grades). I attended a public high school. I attended two Lutheran seminaries, one non-Lutheran one, and two secular universities, Georg-August at Goettingen and Columbia University. Today, as President of Concordia University at Austin, I have ultimate oversight over programs which prepare educators for both public and parochial school classrooms. Given my background, I feel I have the opportunity to be somewhat objective about my own experiences with the strengths and weaknesses of the LCMS parochial school system, and about the needs for direction in the years ahead.

Let me begin my remarks by telling you about a letter I received this week from the Harvard Medical School signed by a D.B., M.D. He had read my name somewhere and wondered whether I was the David Zersen of his childhood. If I were, he said, then I would surely remember Mrs. R., who regularly chased Billy B. through the coat closet with a razor strap, and Mr. M. who effected discipline by picking up a pile of books and hitting students over the head with them, and Mr. W. who once beat up Bruce H. in the hallway. He reflected that while our educational environment was a bit brutal, he at least had been set on the straight and narrow. In the Unitarian congregation of which he is now a member, he occasionally reminds the leadership, in their theological discussions, not to forget the Atonement! His reflections set me thinking.

I want you to know, first of all, that I am grateful for many things I received in my parochial education. I learned a phonetic approach to alphabetization which I think was helpful. I learned to read and appreciate music. I acquired some understanding of Biblical content. I learned a respect for the role of religion in society. I received some sense of the position descriptions of professional church workers (one of which I ultimately became).

On the other hand, you need to know that I received poor foundations in science and math. I was introduced to an authoritarian and abusive approach to discipline, and Dr. D. B. remembered it correctly. I became anaesthetized to Biblical stories through an overly repetitive religious curriculum (Mary and Martha were always coming around the corner over the course of eight years). We had grossly inadequate facilities. (Eighth grade science consisted of fellow student Wesley J. being permitted weekly to open the wooden box and perform an experiment, which usually ended up in disaster.) I acquired a fear of the secular world and a condescension to other religious groups which, unlike us in the LCMS, "had not been given the one true faith."

Over the course of many years, I have had occasion to rethink the value of my own educational background at the elementary level. Although there have been some dark ages over my personal centuries, and there is much I would happily trade in for more learner-centered and balanced approaches, I nevertheless do believe that the prospects for a vital educational ministry in the church have never been greater than they
are today. However, we may need to move beyond simplicities and enlarge the context within which we construe Christian education. In the remarks which follow, therefore, I’d like to share some thoughts about Foundations, Formation, and Fellowship, along with the transforming moments in my own life which brought me to such conclusions.

Foundations

I have been around long enough to know all the phrases. Our educational ministries “root children in the Word,” they “ground them in the truth,” they are “faithful to a heritage.” “Missouri gets them out and keeps it straight!” Lest that seem to be the exclusive propensities of the LCMS, I have also been struck by the fact that the corporate world, in the midst of a rapidly changing society, has a concern for organizational memory, for keeping employees attuned to the culture and the traditions which give a corporation direction and stability. There is a place for rootage, and I would never deny that.

Some years ago, however, I had an experience which sharpened and transformed my perspective on rootage. On behalf of the Commission on Ministerial Growth and Support, I developed programs for church leaders in Israel. For seven years I led study/travel programs for literally hundreds of clergy and educators which I entitled “Living Churches in Old Jerusalem.” I had become aware of 22 million Christians, members of the Ancient Separated Churches of the East, which had been separated from the West in 451. I had known them only from the historical theology texts and assumed these Monophysite “heretics” had died out centuries ago. I came to learn, however, that today they are an often persecuted, certainly economically deprived and politically disadvantaged, yet vital Christian minority within the growing Islamic population of the Middle East. Although their roots go back to the earliest church, I discovered that these ancient Christians had never heard of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod—the last bastion of truth in the Christian world. They had never even heard of Lutherans. This was a transforming experience for me.

As I reflected on my rootage in the foundations which had been given to me by the parochial school system, I came to realize that it was not that the foundations were wrong, but that what the LCMS had come to call the “foundation” was often too narrowly conceived, and that its own approach to spirituality was myopic. I had been shortchanged by my well-

Our church’s schools, however, because of a too narrowly conceived view of Christian history and Christian spirituality, have not developed those emphases which might have helped us produce visible (perhaps also viable) candidates for leadership in areas of social justice, politics, servanthood, science and sainthood.

Seeing Red

A former seminary professor wrote a book on the subject, entitled, The Half-Known God. Little wonder that it is so with the Holy Spirit. Fathers we know, and sons we know, so that we can at least conceive by analogy of the Father and the Son. But a Spirit (or “Ghost” for those raised on older hymnals and translations of Scripture) is a real challenge. Our culture helps us not at all, offering only the strange exaggerations of Halloween (by turns silly and Satanic). Even what pronoun to use is tricky: the Hebrew word for “spirit” is feminine (“she”), the Greek word is neuter (“it”), but the preponderance of the church’s liturgical and doctrinal tradition favors “he.” How, then, to help ourselves and our students to think and speak of the Third Person in the Holy Trinity? What difference does it make for us that there is a Holy Spirit?

It is not, of course, that two millennia of Christian life and thought have ignored the issue. Indeed, the Holy Spirit has featured large from time to time. Mysticism and various charismatic movements have heavily emphasized the Spirit’s role in the relationship between God and the believer and in living the Christian life. Yet Lutheran Christian doctrine and practice have often recognized significant dangers in these movements, particularly as they can lead one to rely on means of receiving God’s grace outside of those promised in Scripture. The Spirit’s work of conversion through Word and Sacrament receives the greatest stress.

What’s essential to recall, however, is that one can fall off of a horse on two sides. The fruits of our traditional teaching can be an overly cognitive faith, even rationalistic in its tendency to work out details of doctrine where Scripture is silent or unclear. Sermons can then end too soon, before working out the application of the Truth in the lives of the hearers. To use theological and educational terms, respectively, sanctification and the affective domain are too easily ignored.

It need not be so. This year the middle day of the two months covered by this issue of Lutheran Education, Sunday, the 31st of May, is the Day of Pentecost, the one day of the Church Year when the Holy Spirit’s work takes center stage. We “see red,” not in anger, but in joy at the gift of God’s fiery presence among his people.

Pentecost, in fact, marks a crucial pivot, being both the last day of the Easter festival (when we celebrate the central fact of history and faith which gives us the sure hope of life) and the first day of the long season wherein we consider what Easter means for ourselves and our neighbors, as we live in a world still beset by the Last Enemy, Death.
We grow up. We grow old. We die. In between there are a lot of games to play—some serious, some frivolous, some dangerous, some not worth playing at all, some that just are necessary, and a few, I hope, that are just plain fun.

Christopher Robin is leaving the Forest, and he doesn’t know how to say good-bye. So he and Pooh go to the very top of the 100 acre Wood to the only place in the Forest where you can sit down carelessly, without getting up again almost at once and looking for somewhere else. Sitting there they can see the whole world spread out until it touched the sky.

"Pooh, promise you’ll never forget about me ever."
"I promise," he said.
"Pooh, whatever happens you will understand, won’t you?"
"Understand what?"
"Oh, nothing. He laughed and jumped to his feet. "Come on!"
"Where?" said Pooh.
"Anywhere!" said Christopher Robin.

(The House At Pooh Corner by A. A. Milne, E. P. Dutton & Co. New York; 1956)

These ten chapters have been all about growing up and what we lose and what we gain and how the two really go together. You see, when the games get really serious, when you’d rather not play at all but don’t have a choice, when you can see the end coming and you know it will not be a happy one this time, that’s when Pooh, at least for me, is a gift of God.

It’s a promise really. It’s a promise that someday when all is said and done and the serious games have all been played, it will be time for fun, just plain fun. And it won’t be fun that costs more than it’s worth, or fun that is really seriousness in disguise, or fun that gets you into trouble. It will be real, honest fun, like Chase Pastor Phil and Squeal Fun. Only this time the grownups won’t get tired. And everyone will play together and no one will get hurt and everyone will win.

"And (God) will destroy the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces . . . " (Isaiah 25:7-8)

The last words A. A. Milne wrote about Pooh and Christopher Robin go like this:

So they went off together. But wherever they go, and whatever happens to them on the way, in that enchanted place on the top of the Forest, a little boy and his Bear will always be playing.

God, like Pooh, I suppose, is always there, wherever you are, just waiting to be remembered, waiting to be picked up, waiting to play."

meaning teachers and pastors—and I hope that as I reflect on these foundations with you, I can encourage you not to feel intimidated by such an observation, but to agree with me that narrow parochialism and myopia are not to be prized as educational objectives.

Dr. Al Sager helped me work through this concern in an Augsburg-Fortress book on spirituality. Imagine a circle with four quadrants, each a different dimension of spirituality. The Lutheran strength is in the quadrant which perceives God through language and logic, cerebral exercises which can praise God at lofty dimensions. However, other quadrants praise God through service to fellow human beings, by giving a prophetic witness to implications of the faith within society, and by developing an intense personal relationship in prayer. I have come to believe that the Lutheran genius is to intellectualize all of that.

As a result, the contribution of our parochial schools to the field of academia has been significant (Lutheranism was, after all, born in a university). There are numerous individuals in the educational world who received their starts in our schools. Our church’s schools, however, because of a too narrowly conceived view of Christian history and Christian spirituality, have not developed those emphases which might have helped us produce visible (perhaps also viable) candidates for leadership in areas of social justice, politics, servanthood, science and sainthood. Name them! You will find yourself stuttering.

Our educational programming has not been as holistic as it could have been, and products of our parochial schools sometimes find themselves sitting painfully on the tip of an iceberg. All too often, failing to appreciate that that tip is at least the focal point of the iceberg, they simply get off and move onto something which is more comfortable. This is a loss to the church! It is the role of the church’s schools to do a better job in respecting the broader foundations of the church’s history and spirituality. We simply are not all there is of Christianity. While we may know that intuitively, we have not developed meaningful ways to talk about those other brothers and sisters in Christ who do not bear the name “Lutheran.” Our schools ought to be the places where such reflection is done lovingly and perceptively.

Formation
In all my years in parochial school, and for many years thereafter, to move now into a different area of reflection, I had not realized the degree to which the school—and the church itself—is a living laboratory in which the faith is tested and found to be defensible. It was there for me to see, but this important dimension of formation escaped me.

Last month, I had two transformational experiences which helped me in this regard. During the Eucharist on a Sunday morning in the church in which my wife and I hold membership, I observed a handsome young father, the chairman of the congregation, escort his handicapped and retarded teenage son to the communion rail and hold him while they communed.
together. That same Sunday, I observed one of my pastors, tenderly escort his wife out of the service. She has Alzheimer’s. Suddenly, it hit me. This is what it’s all about! This is why I tell my faculty that I expect them to be worshiping members of a Christian community. This is why our children and teenagers participate in our educational programming. We want to incarnate Christ before their very eyes.

Sooner or later, along with what we teach cognitively, we want them to be able to test these ideas in our Christian community effectively. There is no place in all the world like the church! Students are being prepared for life in a difficult and challenging world, and they need to know that forgiveness works — that it “rules,” as my son would say, that compassion is more powerful than destruction, that people of hope can endure all things, that to experience being loved makes you a conqueror!

Students need to know that forgiveness works — that it “rules,” as my son would say, that compassion is more powerful than destruction, that people of hope can endure all things, that to experience being loved makes you a conqueror!

Fellowship

Finally, I want to talk about the importance of the church’s schools creating student encounters with diversity. I want to explore the importance of the church’s schools celebrating and prizing diversity among humans — as one of God’s richest gifts. As you well know, this has not been our strength historically, and we still have problems with much of it. There is diversity among races, abilities, genders, sexual preferences, physical shapes and sizes. While the church enjoys quoting passages such as “in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, slave nor free,” we have not, even in our

dying of cancer to talk about her hope, or Mr. M., fighting alcoholism, to describe the way faith fought the battle. We knew about those things, however, only through rumor and gossip. It seems to me that if the school is to be a formational catalyst, a living laboratory, an affective hugger-of-the-truth, it might have intentionally exposed us to some of that. It is the role of the church’s schools to do a better job of preparing us for life — and for life in the church — by helping us to experience personally the convicting power which comes from knowing that the church’s teachings have affective power. They simply work. Oh, God, they work!

Chapter Ten in Which We Play Games

Whew! Let me catch my breath!

I’ve just come back from the fellowship hall where I got into an intense round of keep the ball away from the Parent’s Day Out Kids. Actually, I was playing soccer. They were playing Run Around, Chase Pastor Phil, and Squeal. It’s a fairly simple game, which is about all they can handle at this point. I tried to teach them Duck, Duck, Goose with limited success. By that I mean they understood the concept of sitting on the ground in a circle. It was the Duck, Duck, Duck, Goose! and run part they didn’t get.

It could be their limited verbal skills. Perhaps if the game was Beeka, Beeka, Naanee! I would have had more luck. At any rate, the game ended abruptly when I tapped Mitchell Bro on the head and said, “Goose!” He was startled for a moment and then looked up at me with a “Hey!” sort of look and then decided that perhaps crying was a better response to someone tapping you on the head and calling you a Goose. I could see that the others were coming to the same conclusion so I quickly said in my best game playing voice, “Run, Mitchell, Run!” He did. Right out the door and down the hall.

So we ended up playing the Run Around, Chase Pastor Phil and Squeal Game. The only trouble I see with this game is that there is not enough sitting. The great thing about Duck, Duck, Goose is that if you’re a Duck, you get to stay seated. The only thing that might make Duck, Duck, Goose better is if it was played by mimes. That’s nice kind of game. A quiet sitting game in which the players appear to be sleeping and, in fact, the really good ones are.

So that is why I needed to catch my breath. I tried to catch it in the Fellowship Hall by falling down and lying still. It almost worked. Until Karl Koenig jumped on my stomach, and my breath got away again. Apparently the rest of the Parent’s Day Out Kids or PDOK’s as I call them, thought that Karl had invented a new game. I believe it’s called the Jump On Pastor Phil and Watch Him Turn Blue Game.

I know what these ten chapters of Pooh are all about now. They’re about me. When I look in the mirror I see my father as he looked to me when I was young-er. And something about that is . . . unsettling. It’s not really the getting old-er. I guess I expected that. It’s that it happened so quickly. You see, I’m almost sure I was younger last year. At least I still thought of myself as young. I don’t think I do anymore, especially when six small children are using my stomach (ample as it may be) as a trampoline.

It’s not a bad thing, getting old-er. It’s just life. We’re born.
solutions to challenges far more completely than the \textit{results} of the reactions to those challenges. Simply put, it means giving parents and administrators information about how children learn and discover, rather than simply what they know. It means valuing and recording persistence, problem-solving, curiosity, and wonder. It means noticing and valuing questions and creativity. It means finding ways to communicate the process of learning.

Reporting systems need to be based on the portfolios and anecdotal records which you have begun to collect and organize. Those records are more than mere backup for the same old way of reporting what children know. Anecdots and portfolios are the trip log that will be used to create the journey story, complete with pictures (portfolios) and narrative (anecdots).

\textbf{The Learning Roadmap}

Teaching the way children learn requires each teacher to find more graphic (quite literally!) ways to communicate the learning which results. Reporting formats need to be open enough to allow for a narrative which describes the child’s life. Good teachers have always taken history into account. I am suggesting that we systematize this approach.

For instance, children often want to take home paintings and other creations as soon as the paint or the glue has dried. While this may be exciting, it does not promote an appreciation of learning history. A learning history approach requires an appreciation of what has gone before, a comparison with the past. A learning history also needs to document persistence, problem-solving, curiosity, and wonder.

In teaching, as in life, we see what we want to see. We document what we expect to report. We notice what we know we will need to record.

So maybe the first challenge is to make certain that the reporting and recording system we are using makes sense. Are we documenting discovery? Chronicling creativity? Archiving artifacts that underscore the development of persistence? In short, are we teaching the way children learn and reporting that learning?

\textbf{The History Approach}

For anyone to appreciate progress, an understanding of the history of that progress is important. What came before will inform what is currently happening. For some children, attempts to learn have included challenges and frustrations which have been longstanding. If this is the case, any current progress is all the more significant.

On the other hand, for some children, progress has slowed from its prior rate. That history is also important. To be understood, that history may need to be informed by other circumstances in the child’s life. Good teachers have always taken history into account. I am suggesting that we systematize this approach.

For instance, children often want to take home paintings and other creations as soon as the paint or the glue has dried. While this may be exciting, it does not promote an appreciation of learning history. A learning history approach requires an appreciation of what has gone before, a comparison with the past. A learning history also needs to document persistence, problem-solving, curiosity, and wonder.

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\textbf{schools, been completely successful in developing the strategies to help students celebrate and appreciate the gifts of diversity.}

In a new and as yet unpublished book entitled \textit{Common Fire: Lives of Commitment in a Complex World} by Daloz and Keen, reviewed in Valparaiso University’s \textit{Cresset}, we can read how the authors interviewed 100 movers and shakers to understand how commitment to the common good in society is formed and shaped. Their conclusion is that the single most defining pattern found in the formation of those committed to the common good was that each had had a significant, transforming encounter with another outside their own tribe. They had learned how to reorder the “we” and the “they.” They had come to experience personally that others suffer just as they do, and that others know joy, love, and hope just as they do.

It was a transformational experience for me recently to read in the newspaper that a young man, a product of inadequate urban formation, had so little appreciation for the differences among races as well as for the common hopes and fears in two Japanese teenagers. He shot both of them in a parking lot in order to get the keys to steal their car. Now he will spend life in prison.

The transformation was further shaped by the observation that Japan has 126 million people and the U.S. has 260 million, about twice as many, but last year in Japan there were 5 homicides — and in the U.S. there were 16,000! What kind of nation is this, I mused? One which some have wanted to call Christian—a religion which depreciates differences between the Jews and the Greeks and celebrates the values in such differences? Hardly! What is happening to us as a nation—and to Christians within that nation?

And should we not also be puzzled and troubled, I further pondered, about the fact that in places in our world, the religious minorities, including Christians, slaughter one another in their ethnic homelands, because the atheistic communists are no longer able to keep them at bay!

One troubling thought followed another in my mind. What will keep our children and teens and our adults from fights in congregations and societies and worlds if we do not expose them to the creative wonder in diversity in our schools? It has been a long time since the reaction of members in my first congregation to a surprise Sunday visit was, “What were those niggers doing here; are they trying to take over the church?” The 1960’s seem like a long time ago — aeons of thought patterns ago!

And does not the church still have many unanswered questions about issues involving gender, sexual preferences, and numerous other issues, I speculated? After many years of being a pastoral counselor and confidante, for example, I can tell you that I believe that social scientists and psychologists are correct in saying that, in general, humans do not choose sexual preferences, but those preferences choose them—through a chain of very complex and not fully explainable factors. I do not personally...
understand how we are to deal with such an awareness given our Biblical backgrounds on the subject, but I am convinced that Christians who claim to be

readers in the discussion about how we are to regard one another in Christ. I am also convinced that much of what is said on the issue in churches and the church’s schools is sometimes not helpful to children who struggle with the complexities of maturation. We have a long struggle ahead of us in this area.

This was a transformational change for me. What had grown up with in the church and in the church’s schools was often piously contrived and simplistically portrayed, and it did not deal with the realities which had come to understand. While the church struggles to make up its mind on a variety of thorny issues, it seemed clear to me, the students in its schools dare not be held hostage to perspectives which are not informed either by the best thinking of our day or by the love of Christ which agonizes for expression through us. We must—must—continue to help students to treat all who are different with respect, compassion, understanding, and a sense of wonder over the rich possibilities in our world. This is the niche for which we deserve to be known.

One of the things which continues to distress me most, given my transformational experiences, specifically with respect to issues of compassion, justice, equality and fair play, is that the interpreters of the Judaico-Christian tradition in our society have often been the courts, not the churches and their schools. Society integrated not because Christian communities wanted to celebrate diversity, but because the courts required it. Congregations gave women the franchise, finally, not because we embraced diversity, but because of the inevitable momentum resulting from the Constitutional amendment on woman suffrage. Congregations built ramps for the disabled because it became law! At what point do the church and the church’s schools lead the way for society—and help its youthful learners to participate in the paving of the new road? At what point do our schools become proactive proponents of the new age which seeks to be born among us?

It is the role of the church’s schools—and, in fact, a unique niche for it—to create here already, now already, that kind of compassionate and creative fellowship which anticipates among diverse people the full stature which Christ gives to all his followers who accept one another even as they are accepted by him.
vagaries and challenges of existence. Regardless of the speed of our lives and even if we were unfettered from the monsters of media, we all still face the basic questions of existence. Who am I, and why am I here? If busy enough and if bold enough, it seems that the facade of attitude can be a place of refuge, but it is only made of straw.

In an earlier age the salient characteristics of attitude might have been simply and even accurately termed a lack of grace, or a lack of manners. Could this still apply? Is it possible that we, dedicated Lutheran teachers, can confront the severely flawed imaging of some sports/political giants by returning to the basic teachings in the book of manners? James Morris in "Democracy Beguiled," (The Wilson Quarterly, Autumn 1996), suggests this very obligation for society as a whole. He says, "Manners are a legacy of education, and the society’s failure is in its reluctance to provide education, in and out of the classroom, that can be trusted to instruct the young about the world and its history, the nation and its context, to instill critical discrimination and an ease with nuance, to set the terms for everyday conduct, and to rank bad, better, best. An adequate education should leave you on perpetual alert, accustomed to raising the possibility, like a flare at a disaster site, that what you are being told is nonsense, even if it’s hardbound and best-selling."

Fortunately, we educators who have still retained that element of professional distance granted long ago by the rules of social decorum may rely upon the functional titles Mr. or Mrs. or Miss or Ms., as in Goodbye, Mr. Chips, and To Sir With Love. No honorific title here. Simple respect will do. The stage is set for leadership into ideas, thought provoking disagreement, and teamwork toward a common end. Why not include the basics of silverware functions in a mannered setting. Why not gustatory delight without gustatory sound effects? Why not do unto others as you would have them do unto you as the glue that makes society work? Why not the highest order of things as the motivator to good behavior? Why not the response of love for the Love that God showed us first? Why forget to link the everyday "Thank you" to the Eternal "Thank you?" Why not rise above the commonplace with the timeless gratitude of the forgiven sinner? Who needs an attitude? Only the poor sap who is denied the eternal sense of who he is and why he exists.

Pardon me, but would you please . . . ? Thank you.?

"Teaching is one of the few professions that permits love."

Theodore Roethke

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**The Role of School Ministry in the Church**

diverse people the full stature which Christ gives to all his followers who accept one another even as they are accepted by him.

These three concerns seem to me to be important opportunities for the school’s ministry in the church—if, in fact, the church is to have any strength and vision for the next century: We need to broaden our perspective of our historical and spiritual foundations; we need to create patterns of formation which are more affective, and thus convince children that Christian profession is not whistling in the dark; and we need to celebrate through actual and intentional programming that kind of appreciation for diversity which undermines conflict and establishes those bonds which allow us to see Jesus in one another.

By and large, the messages I hear coming from the church’s agencies and parochial schools call for strengthening the family, teaching sound moral principles, opposing abortion and teaching the liturgy! Those themes seem to be repeated in a “Johnny-one-note” fashion, and they often fail to appreciate the larger social, cultural, theological and political contexts in which such topics need to be framed. The three issues I have raised are very personal, and were each of you to prepare these remarks, you might add many others to the list—and I invite you to do so. Whatever is added, however, needs to take into account those broad contexts and the implications they have for making meaning. As an adult learning theorist, I would be particularly interested in the ways in which your own transformations may bring reinterpretations in these matters. All that we say, however, should never be construed as negative or destructive for us who love the church and its schools.

The potential for improving the way in which we minister through the church’s schools is given anew to each generation. We who believe in excellence and intentionality as gifts and opportunities provided by the Gospel’s power at work in us should carry the torch for such a possibility no less confidently than the runners who last year brought their convictions and dreams to Atlanta. After all, for us as well, the race is not over.?

References

Children in Worship: Findings and Implications

For the church, the topic of worship, and especially children in worship, has merely begun to be explored. In most congregations, according to the recently completed Study One of the Children in Worship (CIW) project, children are taken for granted and are almost invisible. Congregations rarely use an "impact on children" index when considering new programs or congregational policies. For most leaders in the church, children belong to members. Yet the Lutheran understanding of baptism would indicate otherwise. Children are members!

The task of studying children in worship and the congregation's role in enriching that worship has just begun. More work is needed. And plans for such work are underway at CenSCED. Study Two of Children in Worship is already proposed and seeking funding. The completed study is descriptive, identifying what current practices, attitudes, and environments exist in Lutheran congregations across the United States. This baseline study is critical to future work and provides the foundation for continued understanding of the impact of congregational practice on children in worship.

As a result of the work of Study One, it has become apparent that three separate but related contexts impact
There are still too many people around us who are living joy-impaired lives. We live in a society reeking of chronic seriousness. And it is to this world that the Lord sends us with the message of Easter, the message of hope, the message of joy, forgiveness, and celebration!

Celebrate with others today the message that Christ is alive — in you, in them!

May you have a “ta dah” day in the Lord!!

WHAT I’VE LEARNED . . .

I’ve learned that I like my teacher because she cries when we sing “Silent Night.” Age 6
I’ve learned that if you want to cheer yourself up, you should try cheering someone else up. Age 14
I’ve learned that silent company is often more healing than words of advice. Age 24
I’ve learned that brushing my child’s hair is one of life’s great pleasures. Age 26
I’ve learned that wherever I go, the world’s worst drivers have followed me there. Age 29
I’ve learned that if someone says something unkind about me, I must live so that no one will believe it. Age 39
I’ve learned that there are people who love you dearly but just don’t know how to show it. Age 41
I’ve learned that singing “Amazing Grace” can lift my spirits for hours. Age 49
I’ve learned that making a living is not the same thing as making a life. Age 58
I’ve learned that if you want to do something positive for your children, try to improve your marriage. Age 61
I’ve learned that you shouldn’t go through life with a catcher’s mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back. Age 64
I’ve learned that everyone can use a prayer. Age 72
I’ve learned that it pays to believe in miracles. And to tell the truth, I’ve seen several. Age 73
I’ve learned that even when I have pains, I don’t have to be one. Age 82
I’ve learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love that human touch-holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back. Age 85

(Source unknown, received via e-mail)
For children, the shared meanings of corporate worship need to be experienced and explored within the context of that worship. They need to know the meaning of the cross and of the candles. They need to be told the reason for prayer and confession. They need to understand the elements of worship and their importance to the historic and ongoing telling of the faith story.

**The Power of Ritual**
Liturgy is ritual. It is the repeated and repetitious telling of the faith story so that all understand. For children, this means the predictable points of participation to which they can look forward from Sunday to Sunday are important. For all Christians, this shared ritual is powerful beyond the experience in communicating their membership in the church universal.

For liturgy to be predictable for children, it must have an element of sameness and structure. While this sameness can be dynamic, it needs to contain sameness to be accessible to the child (and to the visitor or new Christian).

For children, the opportunity to participate in prayers by folding hands and kneeling is a powerful point of entry into liturgy. For children, this is a way to spend our time more wisely, as we make plans for the fall appointments in the environment. For many children, the presence of familiar versicles and responses sung by the congregation is an opportunity for participation. For the non-reading child, the opportunity to participate in liturgy is solely dependent on the presence of those predictable elements.

While adults and older children can follow a new or creative liturgical pattern, young children cannot. If they are to be considered as members whose needs, too, are to be served, then liturgy must be predictable. The absence of many of the historic elements of the liturgy in many of the churches surveyed indicates to the CIW team that children’s needs may not fully be served by the diminution of ritual and predictability in those worship services.

**The Power of Environment**
Appropriate worship environments for young children teach children about worship. Are there visual images of faith and faith stories for children to see and study? Are there symbols which depict the key elements of the faith of the worshiping community? Are there objects to touch which tell the faith story? Are there sounds which appeal to and can be understood by young children? Are there smells and aromas which signify “church” and “worship” for the child? Each of the senses can potentially be used by the child to learn more about the faith story of the worshiping community.

Appointments in the environment may quickly indicate whether young children are even expected to be or to stay in the worship setting. How accessible is the environment for the family with children? Are there items such as booster seats or children’s bulletins which would say that young children are expected in this place? How well will children be able to view the activity at and near the altar without obstruction?

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**“Ta Dah!”**

A little boy came home from Sunday school on Easter Sunday with some exciting news. “Mom and Dad, I learned today what Jesus said when he broke out of that tomb on Easter Sunday!”

“Tell us, son, what did Jesus say?”

The boy was so excited that he got in front of his parents, raised his hands, and shouted out, “Ta dah!”

May you have a “ta dah” day today also. A “ta dah” day means that we continue to celebrate the good news of that first Easter Sunday — that Jesus Christ indeed is alive — in us! Watch for those boys and girls around you who will bring “ta dah” experiences to you this day. Listen for the “ta dah” remark at the staff meeting or when you get home in the evening. And you may even get a glimpse of the “ta dah” faith of some people today that you would have never guessed would come from them!

In one sense, the Lord takes our “dah” days and turns them into “ta dah” days, because of his death and resurrection for us. The sainted Henri Nouwen, author of many books on spirituality, once wrote, “I have a friend who radiates joy, not because his life is easy, but because he habitually recognizes God’s presence in the midst of all human suffering, his own as well as others’. . . My friend’s joy is contagious. The more I am with him, the more I catch glimpses of the sun shining through the clouds. Yes, I know there is a sun, even though the skies are covered with clouds. While my friend always spoke about the sun, I kept speaking about the clouds, until one day I realized it was the sun that allowed me to see the clouds. Those who keep speaking about the sun while walking under a cloudy sky are messengers of hope, the true saints of our day.”

As we get ready for the summer months, as we try to assess ways to spend our time more wisely, as we make plans for the fall season, the Spirit of the Lord brings the “ta dah” experience to us each day.

Once again, little children help us to sense the power of Christ’s presence in our lives as well as the presence of Christ’s power in our lives.

Watch for the “ta dah” experiences that will come to you today. Perhaps in the hug of a child, the phone call of a friend, the friendly note from a peer, a word of thanks from a grandmother. And look for ways that you can bring a word of “ta dah” to that special person in your life today, also.
Math “War”

Most students like to play games. One way to stimulate interest during drill and practice activities is to put them into a game format. When I was a youngster, my friends and I would spend hours playing a card game called “War.” Why not modify this game into an exciting fraction game? You will need to make a deck of sixty-six cards. You can use index cards but cut them down to an 8 cm by 6 cm size. On each of these cards write one of the following common fractions, being careful not to simplify the fractions to lowest terms:

- \(\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{3}, \frac{2}{3}, \frac{1}{4}, \frac{2}{4}, \frac{3}{4}, \frac{1}{5}, \frac{2}{5}, \frac{3}{5}, \frac{4}{5}, \frac{1}{6}, \frac{2}{6}, \frac{3}{6}, \frac{4}{6}, \frac{5}{6}, \frac{1}{7}, \frac{2}{7}, \frac{3}{7}, \frac{4}{7}, \frac{5}{7}, \frac{6}{7}, \frac{1}{8}, \frac{2}{8}, \frac{3}{8}, \frac{4}{8}, \frac{5}{8}, \frac{6}{8}, \frac{7}{8}, \frac{1}{9}, \frac{2}{9}, \frac{3}{9}, \frac{4}{9}, \frac{5}{9}, \frac{6}{9}, \frac{7}{9}, \frac{1}{10}, \frac{2}{10}, \frac{3}{10}, \frac{4}{10}, \frac{5}{10}, \frac{6}{10}, \frac{7}{10}, \frac{8}{10}, \frac{9}{10}, \frac{1}{11}, \frac{2}{11}, \frac{3}{11}, \frac{4}{11}, \frac{5}{11}, \frac{6}{11}, \frac{7}{11}, \frac{8}{11}, \frac{9}{11}, \frac{10}{11}, \frac{1}{12}, \frac{2}{12}, \frac{3}{12}, \frac{4}{12}, \frac{5}{12}, \frac{6}{12}, \frac{7}{12}, \frac{8}{12}, \frac{9}{12}, \frac{10}{12}, \frac{11}{12}\)

Once you have created the deck you are ready to play.

Shuffle the deck and deal out the cards to the players face down. Each player keeps the cards face down in front of him. To begin play each player turns his top card face up. The player with the fraction that has the highest value takes all of the cards that are face up. (Scrap paper can be used by the students to help in determining which of the fractions has the highest value.) When there are fractions played that are equivalent a “war” is declared. To win the war each player involved in the war plays two more cards. One is face down and the second is face up. Once played the players in the war turn over the cards that were face down. The player with the highest value on these cards wins all of the cards that are now face up. (The war I described is what has been used in my experiences. You and your students may know of a different procedure to win the war. Use the method common in your area.) The play continues in a similar manner until one player has lost all his cards or until time is called. If time is called the player with the most cards is the winner.

There are a number of easy extensions to this game. You could eliminate the cards with thirds, sixths, ninths, elevenths, and twelfths and substitute cards that have the decimal representations of the remaining deck. You could leave the original deck intact and just use all the decimals that you wish. You might want to add a few percents into the mix and now you could have a deck that includes fractions, decimals, and percents.

As you consider the card games that can be played by children, think of others that can be modified for use in your classroom. Games like “Go Fish” and “Rummy” have some interesting possibilities.

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Children in Worship: Findings and Implications

In fully 10% of the congregations visited in the CIW study, a cross – the centerpiece of our theology of substitutionary atonement – was not present. What is the environment saying to children in that case? How can elements of the faith speak to children nonverbally if they are not there?

The Power of Planning

The intentionality of experiences provided for children are also important. Children learn most powerfully and effectively when adults provide experiences which take the child's capacity to comprehend into account. For children, this means that there are regular patterns of participation which can be remembered and understood. It also means that there is a frequency of participation beyond the “high holiday” approach to including children in worship.

Worship planners need first of all to consider that children are members from the moment of their baptism. As members, they deserve the same consideration as members of other ages – not greater consideration, but the same attention and regard.

The Power of Participation

Yet another factor to be considered in children’s corporate worship experience is the presence of an early childhood education center as a part of the congregation’s ministry to children. Congregations offering early childhood programs as a part of their ministry (with or without the presence of a full elementary school) appeared to provide a greater range of participatory experiences for children in corporate Sunday morning worship. This is not to be confused with weekday chapel experiences which were also a part of the offerings in most of these congregations. Study One of CIW looked only at corporate weekend worship experiences and their provision for children’s participation.

It is the conclusion of the researchers that the presence of early childhood weekday programming, both with an elementary school and in freestanding centers, was a strong indicator of greater participation and “visibility” of children in corporate worship. Was the visibility of children during the week the cause of
greater provision for children on the weekend? Or was the provision for children on the weekend a motivator to find ways to also provide programming for young children during the week? More research will be needed to answer these questions. However, the lower levels of participation for children in worship settings with only elementary schools (and no early childhood education component) or with no formal weekday education enterprise would seem to indicate that children were not as great a concern in these settings.

**Recommendations — Worship Rituals**

Worship rituals which support and extend children’s participation unto understanding of worship will include predictable elements which children will recognize each week. These elements need to include:

- prayers and prayer postures
- the exchange of peace in which children are intentionally greeted
- the sign of the cross, made by congregation as well as clergy
- specific addresses to children in the sermon of the day
- responsive liturgy which is predictably present so that it will be learned by children.

The children’s sermon is a worship element which must be used to teach children, not the adults who are “listening in.” For children, this means opportunities to hear the worship experience explained in language they can understand. This includes:

- explorations of the symbolic and theological significance of elements of the environment, such as the cross, the candles, and the baptismal font;
- explanations of pieces of the liturgy in a series of children’s sermons;
- discussion of the parament colors and their meanings;
- consideration of the banners, windows, and icons and of their meanings;
- discussion of “words to listen for” in the main sermon which will encourage attention to the message;
- exhortations to tell others the good news of Jesus as child evangelists.

**Recommendations — Worship Environments**

Church environments which are planned with children in mind will “speak” to the pre-literate child in powerful ways through the visual images of color and symbol. They will also “speak” to the child through auditory messages beyond words, such as through bells, language cadences, and loud/soft sounds.

These aspects indicate whether worship is considered an adult or an intergenerational activity. These aspects also indicate whether children are expected to learn to worship by worshiping. The analysis of the CIW Study One results indicates that, for most children, worship is a spectator activity. This is due, at least in part, to the messages of the environment.

Positive messages which welcome children and their families include:

- realistic banners which communicate the faith story to young children;
- theological meaning of elements of the environment, such as the cross, the candles, and the baptismal font;
- explanations of pieces of the liturgy in a series of children’s sermons;
- discussion of the parament colors and their meanings;
- consideration of the banners, windows, and icons and of their meanings;
- discussion of “words to listen for” in the main sermon which will encourage attention to the message;
- exhortations to tell others the good news of Jesus as child evangelists.

Suhard has said, “To be a witness does not consist in engaging in propaganda, nor even in stirring people up, but in being a living mystery. It means to live in such a way that one’s life would not make sense if God did not exist” (L’Engle, 1980, p. 31).

**So Where Does the “Baby” Come In?**

Especially for one in church work, it can be exceedingly tempting to become so involved in the activity of our ministry that we are fooled into believing we do not need the time away. When we are in the Word, it is for preparation of a Bible study lesson. When we are in prayer, it is to ask God’s blessing on all our plans to carry out God’s will, perhaps with a few petitions regarding those people in our life who are in need of help and healing. These words of Sir Thomas Browne serve both to warn and warn:

“If thou could’st empty all thyself of self, Like to a shell dishabited, Then might He find thee on the ocean shelf, And say, ‘This is not dead,’ And fill thee with Himself instead.

But thou art all replete with very thou. And hast such shrewd activity, That when He comes He says, ‘This is enow Unto itself—’twere better let it be, It is so small and full, there is no room for me’” (L’Engle, 1980, p. 24).

And so, ask yourself, as a teacher of the faith, a catalyst to creativity, “How do I fan the flame without getting burned in the process?” If this ministry is about relationship building, first and foremost must be my relationship with Jesus as personal Lord and Savior. It means being on intimate terms with him, knowing his voice, and recognizing his ways with me. Do I teach about Jesus or do I teach Jesus? Am I reading books about Jesus and not spending much time in Jesus’ words for me? What about daily and regular conversation time with Jesus? After I do the talking, do I expect and allow him time to respond?

Learn more about yourself. How is your own faith flame best fanned? What energizes you for ministry and story sharing? What heats your coals and sets the spark? Are you making time, assigning calendar time, to take advantage of these moments? If you don’t, no one else will do it for you! Evaluate your communal spiritual life. Are you aware of who feeds and nurtures your spirit, holds you accountable for personal gifting and self-care? If so, are they a part of your regular routine? Make a commitment to schedule yourself into some of those slots. Time not blocked off is easily filled, often by others, with nonessential activities and interruptions. Prioritize some “Mary-time” in your daily planner. If you don’t, you may soon find yourself feeling more slave than servant, more livid than alive, and more anguished than anchored?

**References**

How Could Anybody . . .?

I don’t know about you, but it seems to be my experience that whenever I ask this question, it is undoubtedly from high upon a precarious perch of personal judgment! Oh, I may appear to be expressing concern or on the verge of offering intriguing intercessions, but God knows my heart and center. God knows my underlying thought process is closer to the pious pronouncement, “You’d never catch me . . .” There have been times I’ve gotten away with this. Thankfully, in other instances of proverbial finger pointing, God, in that special way only he can, gently reminds me of the remaining three digits pointing back toward me!

A few months back, a radio story caught my attention because it seemed nearly unbelievable. A mother left her child in its car seat on the roof of her car and drove away. The baby fell off as the car accelerated. Thankfully, another person saw this happening and was able to save the child from further harm. Only minor bumps and bruises resulted.

I could not fathom how a mother could be so rushed, so stressed out, that she would leave something as near and dear, something as precious as her own child, on the roof of her car. Where was her mind? Where was her heart?

I brought this woman and her child to my intercessions, offering thanksgiving for the child’s safety, and trying to put myself (unbelievably) in the position of the mother. The words were fine; the attitude was not. Almost immediately, I was faced with the horror of my own personal guilt for the many times I, too, in moments of stress and faulty focus, had left something just as precious lying about, unattended, forgotten.

Fanning the Flame

As teachers of the faith, it is our role to call others to fullness, to be catalysts to creativity. Paul encourages Timothy to “fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you” (2 Tim. 1:6-7). We must take heed and with intentionality see to the fanning of our own personal flames before we reach out to fuel others. The interior life we lead will, by God’s grace and blessing, become the light which shows a way, perhaps even ignites a fire in those placed in our charge. We pass on to others what we have first experienced ourselves — God’s love in Jesus. And, the more we ourselves allow and even seek out opportunities for such personally intimate experiences with our Lord, the better, more clearly, and more meaningfully we will be able to communicate and motivate others to do likewise. Emmanuel Cardinal

Recommendations — Planning

Planning for the inclusion of children in worship needs to include the intentional planning of a pattern of participation which will be experienced by children. It also involves assuring the inclusion of role models who, by their participation, communicate the message that children, too, can aspire to participation. This is especially important for the regular and frequent inclusion of adolescents as acolytes, ushers, and readers. Younger children will be more likely to interpret their participation as “accessible” than that of adults or clergy.

Worship planning also needs to include the intentional provision for worship education. While some of this worship education may be placed in the children’s sermon, other outside-of-worship time needs to be planned for such experiences.

Specific recommendations for worship planning include:

- physical provisions for children, such as booster seats and “church bags”;
- explanations of the environment from a liturgic standpoint;
- references to changes in the liturgic environment so that children can understand their meaning;
- seating expectations which assure that children can see the focus of worship and begin to participate more fully.

Conclusions and Implications

From the data reported in the previous four articles in this journal volume, it is clear that the perspective of children in worship was not strongly considered in the majority of the congregations included in the study. Yet, if Westerhoff’s theory (1992, 1996) is valid, these congregations have missed an important opportunity.

The opportunity to welcome children into worship begins with small but powerful messages that children are expected to be present. These messages would include where children are expected to be seated if they are to participate, whether special seating accommodations, such as booster chairs for preschoolers, are available, and what kinds of other intentional provisions have been made for children and their families.

From the perspective of the worship...
kinds of other intentional provisions have been made for children and their families. From the perspective of the worship ritual, the messages of welcome include specific references to children in the main sermon, whether or not a children’s sermon is also present. It includes intentional greetings to children on the part of the pastor and parishioners. It includes predictability of liturgy which children can follow and are taught.

From the perspective of planning, worship planners need first of all to consider that children are members from the moment of their baptism. As members, they deserve the same consideration as members of other ages—not greater consideration, but the same attention and regard.

Questions to Consider
As congregations consider the importance of including children in worship there are key questions which can inform and guide that consideration.

1. What are we doing for worship education? Can “field trips” to the sanctuary be planned for Saturday morning family outings?
2. Do we “celebrate” or “perform” worship? What are the evidences of each in the weekly worship of this congregation?
3. What is the appropriate movement from “formation” to “instruction” for the children in this congregation? Are we giving them enough affective experiences on which to base their cognitive understandings?
4. How and when do we articulate the shared meanings of the elements of worship? How and when are the rituals and practices explained even to adults?
5. How and where are children allowed and encouraged to explore the worship environment? Would that Saturday morning field trip help them to feel comfortable in the environment?
6. Do the banners we display include real enough representations for young children to understand? Are the meanings of abstract banners ever explained?
7. Do we have icons and artifacts of the essential tenets of Lutheran theology (e.g., cross, Trinity, key Bible stories, etc.)?
8. Do we display symbols and signs of the church year to remind both children and adults of the faith story we celebrate?
9. Do we consider the participation of children in worship to “mess up” worship for adults?
10. If we have a school or early childhood center in our congregation, what is the relationship of worship to the life of that educational and/or caregiving enterprise? How is the ministry of the entire congregation carried out in the schooling of children?
11. If we do not have a school or early childhood center, what are we doing to intentionally reach out to children and their families through the worship practices of this congregation?
12. Do we encourage the participation of members of all ages, both

Choose 5 hymns from Hymnal Supplement 98 that you can’t wait to hear being taught in Lutheran schools.

G: Only five!? Here they are:
1. Jesus on the Mountain Peak (a new tune for this Transfiguration hymn by Brian Wren);
2. Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia (a great Easter hymn from Tanzania);
3. God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say It (a powerful baptism hymn set to a charming melody);
4. When I Behold Jesus Christ (a compelling hymn from Ethiopia);
5. All You Works of God (a great new text to the tune LINSTEAD).

We thank Dr. Grime for this interview and look forward to Hymnal Supplement 98. Teachers who wish to learn more about it, or to order copies for examination should contact Concordia Publishing House for further information.

“My education was the liberty I had to read indiscriminately and all the time, with my eyes hanging out.”

Dylan Thomas

“You don’t have to suffer to be a poet. Adolescence is enough suffering for anyone.”

John Ciardi
Evening Prayer that attempt — successfully, I think — to lay out the liturgy in a straightforward and clear manner.

As is the case with any new hymnal, our supplement will contain a number of new hymns that will appear in print for the first time. Additionally, the supplement will feature some hymns that are not readily available to churches in this country (e.g., a beautiful hymn from Ethiopia that was published in a small collection almost 30 years ago). Finally, there will be some hymns that don’t appear in TLH or LW but should be available to our people (e.g., “Children of the Heavenly Father” and “We Know that Christ is Raised”).

SW: The ethnic population of a school is often far more varied than that of a congregation. Does the selection of materials in the supplement address the needs of our very diverse student populations?

G: Whether the supplement will adequately address these issues, I can’t say. But there is a representative sampling of hymns from a number of ethnic backgrounds. There are spirituals, hymns from Africa, South America, the Hispanic traditions, the Caribbean, and China. I think the supplement will provide a nice balance that most schools will find helpful in introducing children to the contributions of Christians from other parts of the world.

SW: Are there any plans to create instructional materials to go with the supplement? Many teachers might enjoy having lesson plans and reproducible handouts for new hymns to complement their religion curriculum.

G: At present, there are not. We are looking into producing Bible studies for adults that are based on some of the hymns. Your suggestion is a good one, something that I will bring to the Commission on Worship!

SW: One good feature of With One Voice* is its accompaniment book. It offers suggestions for rhythm instruments, guitar chords, and stylistically appropriate accompaniments for many ethnic hymns. Will the LCMS publication give us something comparable?

G: The accompaniment edition for Hymnal Supplement 98 will contain several features that will be of interest and help. For about a quarter of the hymns, simplified accompaniments will be included, geared especially for organists who don’t use pedals, and for other keyboard players who may find standard accompaniments too difficult. A number of hymns will include guitar chords. Other things like stylistic accompaniments and suggestions for rhythm instruments are not planned at present.

SW: Some attendant instrumental publications for the hymnal supplement are already planned. Would their level of difficulty make them appropriate for use by school-age children?

G: Concordia Publishing House will be individually and as groups, in the corporate worship of this congregation?

13. How are children welcomed into the worshipping community?

14. What accommodations are made for families with young children?

15. Are young children being taught to tune out before they have even tuned in?

16. What are the messages of welcome which would tell children and their parents that they are not simply tolerated, but welcomed and provided for?

Each congregation will need to assess its accommodations for and welcoming of children for itself. Each congregation will need to determine if there are practices and attitudes which can be modified in order to move worship for children from a “spectator activity” to a meaningful experience in which children, too, can celebrate their relationship with God and grow in that relationship.

Closing Thoughts

In many congregations, worship appears to be a performance rather than a celebration. Lutheran theology regards worship as a sacrificial and sacramental celebration of God’s story of love and redemption. Worshipers of all ages need to understand that dynamic.

If congregations are to truly include worshipers of all ages, they need to provide for the needs and perspectives of those varying age levels. For children, this means that children need to be encouraged to worship, even if their form of participation is noisier or more boisterous than that of the adult. It means that congregations need to structure worship so that children’s participation and style of participation are included and valued. It means considering children’s participation valuable and important, not a disruption to the worship of adults.

The environmental elements of worship, such as changing colors, changing paraments, banners, even wreaths and Easter crosses, need to be explained. Children, especially, need to know what the environment and the liturgy of a given Sunday or season of the church year are teaching. However, it is quite possible that the reason children don’t know the significance of elements of worship is that their parents also do not know!

Church leaders, worship planners, and parents all bear responsibility for
providing appropriate access for children in the worship setting. Families of young children receive messages of welcome and accommodation (or the lack thereof) from the small ways in which accommodations for children are made in the environment, the planning, and the worship itself. In addition, children and their families receive messages of welcome or non-welcome from the attitudes caught through glances or comments in response to the wiggles or noises of a young child.

If Westerhoff’s theory is correct, as the researchers believe, then Lutheranism must reexamine its worship practices in regard to children. In Westerhoff’s theory, children are not to be relegated to a children’s church or a “developmentally appropriate experience.” Rather, they are to be welcomed into a truly inter-generational worship experience in which both the setting and the worship rituals themselves are planned with believers of all ages in mind.

It is incumbent upon church leaders to examine the value for children of corporate worship as it is currently practiced.

References

SW: Please give a brief overview of the content of this publication and its cost.

G: Hymnal Supplement 98 will contain approximately 120 hymns (including several canons and Taize responses). Liturgical materials will include hymnic settings of the Divine Service and Evening Prayer, a new Responsive Prayer setting, and daily prayer suggestions for families and individuals. Finally, about a dozen psalms will be included which provide congregational refrains. The final cost has not been set, but it will be around $6.00.

SW: How do you see Hymnal Supplement 98 being used in a parochial school setting?

G: There will be all kinds of uses. Responsive Prayer, for example, would work as an outline for school chapel services. The psalm settings would be ideal for all age levels. Because the refrains are short and easily learned, even the youngest children will be able to participate.

There are a number of hymns with refrains that can easily be sung by young children. Many of the hymns are based on specific biblical texts and can be used in conjunction with lessons on those stories. The responses and rounds will also provide children with something new to sing.

SW: There are already a number of hymnal supplements on the market. What does this one offer that the others do not?

G: One thing that it offers are settings of the Divine Service and
Administrative Talk

articulated by the speaker. The listener steers the speaker toward the main thrust of the problem and away from side issues. He asks for clarification. He sums up what he thinks are the speaker’s main points, then asks the speaker if his summary is correct. He takes notes to remind himself of actions he must take as a result of the conversation.

A good listener holds up his end of the conversation but doesn’t feel he has to talk a lot or make snap decisions. He knows that the passage of time sometimes allows wisdom to surface. He also knows that simply listening well and allowing people to state their feelings are keys to finding solutions.

If he senses that an argument is forthcoming, a good administrator uses his voice and manner to keep the conversation calm and objective. He also understands that silence is better than an angry response. Silence allows both sides to become more reasonable. An effective administrator doesn’t become defensive or feel that he has to shoot down every piece of false information the speaker has uttered. He knows that an adversarial relationship is counterproductive, so he tries hard to work cooperatively toward solutions (Watkins, 1993, p. 30).

Lastly, a good administrator realizes that sufficient time needs to be devoted to the speaker. Whether an administrator has to take the time or make the time, he works to be sure that sufficient time has been invested in the speaker.

An effective listener knows that there’s a reason for the Creator giving him two ears and just one mouth.

Top Ten Indicators That You’re Not Listening Well:

10) When asked to summarize last Sunday’s sermon, your response is, “I think it was about sin.”
9) The faculty communicates to you in sign language.
8) When practicing the verse that begins “Do you hear what I hear?” for the Christmas program, the students look directly at you.
7) A faculty member’s Master’s thesis is entitled “In One Ear and Out the Other: A Case Study.”
6) The last student you remember listening to is now a grandparent.
5) Each morning a teacher hands you a memo that says hello and asks you how you are.
4) The entire student body has evacuated the building for seven minutes before you realize what is supposed to happen when the fire drill sounds.
3) Your standard response when you see a teacher begin to talk to you is, “No, I haven’t forgotten what you told me yesterday.”
2) The board of education has voted to pay your tuition for a summer class at the American Listening Institute.
1) A teacher faints when she senses that you actually listened to her.

References

Pastor Roger Theimer enjoys his 3 sons and wife Cheryl as they live in Omaha, Nebraska. He serves as Children’s Pastor at King of Kings since 1995. Previously he served as a church planter in Memphis and pastor in Oklahoma and Arkansas. He is currently pursuing his doctor of ministry degree in designing ministry for the millennial generation.

When we hear the familiar term “Sunday-school,” what pops to mind? Do we see a class of fifteen children, well-dressed and behaved, sitting quietly in their seats? Is the teacher doing most of the talking? Are the students interested? Involved? If this is a stereotype from the Sunday-school lore of yesteryear, let’s take a look at the new face of children’s ministry today. What will it look like as we reach for the new millennium?

Before we peer into the future, let’s gather a glimpse of our present. As a church body how is the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod doing in meeting children’s needs effectively? Sunday-school enrollment is in a 30-year free-fall drop of over 60%. The average drop-out age is as low as 5th grade. Yet, few realize that in growing churches children constitute one-half or more of the entire attendance. In many large churches, it is common for there to be multiple hundreds and, in some cases, in excess of a thousand or more infants, toddlers, and children who gather for Christian learning and nurture. In congregations that are reaching young adults with families, an effective children’s ministry is often the “front door” to the church and the primary reason parents choose that church. These churches have kept pace with
the needed changes to design children's ministry to fit the ministry needs of the millennial generation.

This article will highlight four shifts which give a new paradigm for understanding ministry to and with this generation born after 1983. What some of these new shifts in children's ministry might actually look like will then be given in a brief description of children's ministry at King of Kings Lutheran Church in Omaha, Nebraska.

Shift #1: A Higher Value Will Be Given to Children's Ministry

The generation born after 1983 has been commonly referred to as the millennial generation. A pertinent assessment of children's ministry considers not only the age development of the child but the characteristics of that entire generation. The generation preceding the Millennials, commonly referred to as Generation X, experienced a rather dismal esteem given them from American society. Conversely, the Millennials are our society's cherished hope for the future.

Parents of this generation are accustomed to receiving specialized attention for their children. Consider their perspective. Most restaurants they attend have a menu just for their child's taste. These children are valued customers. Generation X had no such children's menus in the 60's and 70's. Effective churches today are ministering to children as a main menu feature and not as some side dish. They are careful not to portray children's ministry as some "cutesie" babysitting activity which happens while their parents receive the real ministry. Instead children's ministry has as much validity as any ministry to any other age group. Highly valued children's ministries communicate their mission as a matter of eternal life and death, heaven and hell, the church of today preparing itself to be the church of tomorrow. Just as Jesus said, these children are not valued as merely second-class citizens of the kingdom.

Consider as well the change in terminology. Now we often hear the term "children's ministry" which refers to a broad scope of activities which disciple children. Entrepreneurial churches have left the label of Sunday-school, opting for other ministry titles not laden with old stereotypes. Even the title of Sunday-school, they felt, conjures images of passive children sitting through some type of school setting. Now using titles like "PromiseLand" or "Kids Church" or "Celebration Station," new models of discipling children are highly active and creative.

As a church body how is the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod doing in meeting children's needs effectively? Sunday-school enrollment is in a 30-year free-fall drop of over 60%. The average drop-out age is as low as 5th grade.
not the purpose of our teaching, recognition is inspiring and motivating. When it comes right down to it, however, this is not what makes “the difference.” Rather, it is the little things, accomplished one day at a time, one person at a time. As we take a moment to consider them, they can provide a lot of reassurance. Little by little, one by one, these memories come, and as they come we are reminded of our real mission field. Not necessarily the large churches with seating for 1,000. Not necessarily the large schools with 350 students. Not just the classroom. Just one day at a time to one person at a time.

Can you remember...

... the student enrolled at one of our synodical colleges who has told family members she is there because she wants to be a teacher like you?

... the family being baptized at the Saturday evening service because you “talk a lot in class about baptism”?

... the student who, starved for conversation, described his full collection of baseball cards to you, after you simply asked him what he was carrying?

... the family you interviewed as they toured the school. They did not enroll the children and you have not seen them since, but you remember the witness you shared when they mentioned that times hadn’t been tough?

... the young student who gave you a hug every time she saw you, not because you did something to deserve it, but just because you were the teacher?

... the mother who came into the office to complain, but ended up asking for help because she really felt like a failure as a parent?

Regardless of how long we have taught, we all have such memories. The list can go on — one day at a time, one person at a time. These little things happen around us all the time because that’s what ministry is all about.

What about your list? Take a few moments. List names, places, events. Let the Spirit fill in the details. You will be pleasantly surprised and encouraged by all the lives he has been able to touch through your willingness to serve.

Churches giving new value to children’s ministry are scrambling to find qualified and innovative staff. Many are employing home-grown talent from within the existing ministry. Few D.C.E.s in Lutheran circles have specialties in this area, so many Lutheran churches are looking into the ranks of the Lutheran school teacher. Churches which value children are seeking staff who sense their primary calling and passion area to be ministry to children.

Shift 2: Churches Continue to Change to Reach New Family Structures

What used to be perfect attendance in Sunday-school? Every Sunday for a year? Now perfect attendance may be 50% because of the inconsistent attendance of children of divorce. Parents today are taking less responsibility for their children and even less for their spiritual formation. Yet the predominant characteristic of the millennial generation is that family is most important. Churches responding to that priority see children’s ministry as an opportunity to reach within the families to help with parenting classes, training in home devotions, counseling, and more. The number of children with emotional and physical special needs is skyrocketing.

Shift #3: Child’s Well-being and Safety Is Crucial.

A major change is related to the increasing legal implications of children’s ministry: the screening of workers (both paid and volunteer), safety policies, and compliance with local state, and federal laws. Children’s ministry today will consume much more administrative time to ensure high standards for safety and prevention of child abuse. Parents today live in a scary world, and they want to know, “Is it safe for me to leave my child with these people?” Nurseries in even mid-sized churches will have security procedures which return children only to parents who have the security slip which shows they have checked them in.

Shift #4: Interactive Learning Rather than Passive Assimilation.
Children today care about changing their world. Remember that the next time a child lectures you about recycling. They see themselves as actively involved in making a difference. Likewise today’s effective children’s ministries use interactive and hands-on learning. Group Publishing Company has exploded in growth as it has led the way for learning which engages all the senses and challenges students to apply God’s truth to the real issues of their lives. Effective children’s ministries today are passionate about fully engaging the students in the learning event. For them the cardinal sin is to be boring. Less is done by paper and pencil, while more and more utilizes creative problem solving skills and creative expression in drama, video production, crafts, and learning games.

**A Practical Application: What One Church is Doing.**

King of Kings Lutheran Church in Omaha, Nebraska, is a rapidly growing congregation with an average weekend worship of 2300 and a children’s enrollment of 900. In 1995 they called a pastor to oversee this ministry and be Children’s Pastor. This served to raise the value and to give higher visibility to children’s ministries. The term children’s ministry was traded for Kids Kount Ministries, which became the ministry umbrella for a wide array of children’s ministry activities. On Sunday this includes Kids Church, Promiseland, Exodus (5/6 grade), and nursery. Wednesday’s program is Adventure Club. Other Kids Kount Ministries include day care, Mom’s Day Out, preschool and many community outreach events targeting children. The church has warmly welcomed this new value given children by Kids Kount Ministries and is now remodeling for a 200 seat Kids Church and children’s theater.

Currently King of Kings’ Sunday morning offerings include three adult services: 8:00, 9:30, 11:00. Accordingly, they offer Kids Church at 8:00 and 11:00. Kids can either be in Kids Church for the entire hour or start in the adult service and exit at mid-service. This option is helpful for families who want some worship experience as a family. At the middle hour, 9:30, they offer Promiseland which is their version of Sunday School. Therefore, every child has an opportunity for 2 hours of child-centered ministry. Offering families several options was a key ingredient to a smooth implementation of the Kids Church option. The facility is fully utilized as worship, adult classes, and children’s programming are happening at all three hours.

The primary difference between Kids Church and Promiseland is one of setting. Promiseland involves small groups nurtured by a caring shepherd. It’s high expectations can be high when beginning teachers step into a classroom. Many face their first group of students proclaiming, “I’m going to make a difference.” Energy, enthusiasm, and love are poured into lesson planning and relationship building. Dreams are dreamed and visions are refined. “One day they’ll remember this classroom and this teacher,” they say to themselves.

As time passes, the commitment to teaching remains strong, but the statement is heard less and less. After a few years in the classroom, teachers may feel concern that original goals have not been achieved and original dreams have not been realized. In addition, they’ve read reports about what other schools have done and watched other teachers receive recognition and acclaim. Their experiences seem to pale in comparison to what others have accomplished. They begin to wonder if things would have been different had they been given the opportunity to minister in a different setting and wonder what will really be remembered of their work and their ministry.

After twenty-five years in teaching, I recognize that participating in a popular program or being part of a large-scale teaching project can be fulfilling. Although
Maine, and the Maine class would do the same. The students from both classrooms would track the weather patterns as they traveled across the nation on maps and determined a consistency in weather patterns separated by a fixed number of days. This communication greatly enhanced the science unit on weather for both classrooms.

Teachers, too, have a great reference tool in the Internet. If one is lacking information on a particular subject, one may access the Internet and find lesson plans for units of study on most subjects for any grade level. The lesson plans for each day may deal with the students accessing the Internet to discover information relating to their unit of study, or may be generic lesson plans which provide the plan, the subject matter detail, and references for further investigation.

The Internet is here. Some students in your classroom are currently using the Internet and may need guidance to direct their experiences toward more productive uses, and other students need to become experienced in the use of the Internet to lead productive lives in an ever changing world.

Newspapers on the Web

In addition to the web sites listed in the preceding article, try these websites to access educational resources for using newspapers in your classroom:

www.4Kids.org — a weekly educational and entertainment feature for children published in newspapers all over North America.

Weekly Reader (www.weeklyreader.com) — a widely-distributed elementary student newspaper with separate editions for pre-kindergarten through grade six; offers online resources for children, teachers, and parents. The Web site also includes links to resources for the middle and high school newspapers Current Events, Current Science, READ, and Know Your World Extra.

The following guide provides links to newspapers from throughout the world:

Internet Public Library — Online Newspapers (http://www.ipl.org/reading/news/)

relationship with hands-on learning and active discussion. Kids Church is a large group setting with all the components of worship, designed in age-appropriate ways for children. This necessitates dividing according to age. Kids Church is divided into two age levels happening simultaneously: upper level (grades 1-4) and lower level (age 3-kindergarten).

Here's a sample experience of upper level Kids Church. Children arrive at 10:45 and go to the Kids Welcome Zone. They get name tags and have a light snack while watching an entertaining Christian video for kids. Other kids are working on drama sketches, serving snacks or helping with name tags. At 11:00, about 60 first through fourth graders go to the chapel. They enter while upbeat children's music is playing. Welcomes are made. Visitors are cheered. Children song leaders take their place while a child leads an invocation prayer. A set of three or four worship songs are sung to the movement of fun hand motions or full body motions. It's worship, even if it's fun! The message leader leads a prayer of confession and forgiveness around the theme of the day. The music slows down a bit. The offering is taken. A child leads the offering prayer. Perhaps a creedal song concludes the opening worship segment. Now it's time for the message. Contestants vie for who can remember last week's Bible verse. This week’s theme is introduced. Then all go to a different room for a learning game. Marshmallows are tossed into buckets while teams cheer on their thrower. The fun has an object lesson which reinforces the learning point of the day. By now another dozen children have arrived.

They've come from mid-service dismissal in the adult worship service. Now all go back in the chapel for the Bible reading, puppets, video, drama, object lesson, and life story. No inattentive or bored children here! The service is closed with prayers by the kids as a microphone is passed among the congregation. Lord’s Prayer. Benediction. Where did the 70 minutes go?

Promiseland has a different feel to it altogether. While both settings are engaging and highly participatory, Promiseland is primarily small groups. A typical first grade experience would look like this:

Grade school children gather at the Kids Welcome Zone. This is a new adventure for a first grader since all children younger than grade school had a different check-in procedure. In kindergarten they were in a different part of the building which was restricted access for security reasons. Here they visit with their friends in a gathering area while getting their name tags.

At 9:30 they go to their rooms and into their small groups. The first 15 minutes is gathering time in which the shepherd leads the group in an activity in which the children usually share something about themselves. It will later apply to the theme which is also introduced at this time. The next 15 minutes is the large group gathering where all 100 first and second graders gather for singing and the presentation of the Bible event. This Bible event might be acted out by the group, seen on video, talked about by puppets, or demonstrated.
The new face of children's ministry approaches the task of reaching the millennial generation with as many questions as answers. Ministry leaders are taking a penetrating look at the needs and learning biases of a new generation. Yet some things never change. The face of Jesus continues to beam with love for these little ones whom he called greatest in the kingdom of God. The love of Jesus still beckons the children to come to him, for such is the kingdom of God.

http://www.yahooligans.com (a safe and educational format for students ages 8-14): Yahooligans provides help with homework in many subject areas, entertainment, TV and movie reviews, and allows searches for subject material within a somewhat safe environment. One might need information in the area of geography and will be presented with maps and other regional information about how people live and work together.

Teachers, too, have a great reference tool in the Internet. If one is lacking information on a particular subject, one may access the Internet and find lesson plans for units of study on most subjects for any grade level.

http://www.ipl.org/youth/ (the Internet Public Library's Youth Division): Accessing this site allows students to read illustrated books geared to their age, ability, and reading level. Book reviews written by other children are able to be read as well as information about the authors and book awards won. Students can also interact with authors by posing questions which the authors will answer by return E-mail.

Having explored some of these specific "addresses", one will have discovered that every site and many articles contain "links" to other sites or other articles. One begins to bounce from one link to another as a specific word in an article on any given subject sparks intrigue. The challenge on the Web is not to find information on any given subject, but rather, to narrow the scope of the search to the specific information under question.

Are you doing a search of family, a genealogy study, or looking for a friend's address or phone number? Check out http://www.switchboard.com and find people with your last name in your town, state, or the entire nation. Using Mapquest.com, one can get a printout of a city map showing main arterial roads, cross-streets, and the location of an individual's home address. Yahoo.com also offers these services, so if you do not find your friend or relative on Switchboard, try Yahoo.

Many readers have experience with college students and know the primary use of the Internet is to communicate around the world. My own children (who rarely wrote letters in the past) use the computer to send messages to each other, as well as to write to former high school classmates in California, Michigan, Washington, Scotland, West Germany, to name a few places where students from our city attend school and keep in touch with their friends, all for free. One elementary school class from South Dakota made use of e-mail to "chat" with students from a school in Maine. Each day the South Dakota class would relate current weather conditions to the class in...
telephone: never give your name or personal information to anyone you do not personally know and trust. The poorest thing a school can do is to communicate to the parents that they have filtering programs which will prevent children from viewing inappropriate material. If the program is really good, students will be limited, for instance, on the serious biological research they might wish to perform. On the other hand, if a student inadvertently accesses an unacceptable site and takes home an 8"x10" glossy to show the parents, legal ramifications can result. No parent would allow an eight year old loose in the shopping mall unattended. Likewise, students should have adult supervision when accessing the Internet, and a written school policy should exist and be signed by each Internet user and his/her parents. The worst scenario for the student would be to be denied future access to the library's Internet computer. A student who inadvertently accessed an inappropriate site could advise the attending adult so no future consequences could result.

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http://www.cnn.com (CNN News, Weather, Sports): One enjoyable use of time on CNN is to view and print satellite and radar maps of the region and compare regional forecasts from day to day. If interested in news on a specific subject, such as Flight 800, one might download or print all the articles on a particular subject from start to conclusion.

Once on the Web there are two primary methods of accessing information. One is to use a search engine (such as, Yahoo!, Lycos, Magellan, etc., probably provided by your local IP) and enter in a number of key words to narrow down the search for the information you need such as demonstrated with the chocolate chip cookies. The other is to directly type in the address of the location desired. The general format of an address is:

http://www.NAME.com for commercial
.gov for government (IRS, state, federal)
.org for non-profit organization
.edu for colleges and universities
.net is also sometimes used.

To access the Internet, one must first subscribe to an Internet Provider (IP). Today, the cost for unlimited Internet access is generally between $14.95 and $19.95 per month. Although one can sign on with one of the national IP's such as AOL, Compuserve, Prodigy, and AT&T, I like working with one of our local "Mom and Pops" which provide full service and whose owners I personally know. It seems to always be easier to work with local businesses owned by people one knows and can speak to.
However, as children grow in years, the question requires more thought, a deeper understanding of options, and genuine planning if the answer is to become a reality. It is a more serious question as children grow older. It is a question that parents who are in Lutheran ministry need to be asking their own children on a more regular basis.

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Now, imagine a library in which a student can find tens of thousands of articles and research papers on any given subject at the touch of a few keys; that is the power of the World Wide Web. While one student may use the computer with Compton’s Encyclopedia CD to look up whales, another might use the web to locate the latest data on the specific dangers whales face today; read a research paper of a noted marine biologist, and further contact that scientist through e-mail to communicate.

C. Mark Schoenborn

The Internet as a Reference Tool

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joy in giving of ourselves to the work of the kingdom. Our children need to hear us speaking in positive and kind ways regarding what we do and what we have been given. Our children must see and understand the blessings bestowed by God upon us so that we can be a blessing to others.

Not only should we be asking the question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” but we also need to be asking with our children, “What does God want you to be when you grow up?” Explore with your children the talents God has given, and ask them how they can be used in his service. Provide opportunities for your children to use their talents and gifts for the kingdom. Continually pray and ask for wisdom and guidance in this area. Pray with your children.

Today’s young people have many options to consider as they ponder the question of what they want to be and do when they grow up. One of the difficulties in recruiting potential church workers is the fact that there are so many options. The coming generation is one that wants to keep their options open. Therefore, they may be hesitant to consider a career that may appear to lock them into a certain role for years to come. To balance that perspective, young people need to consider some of the benefits of a career in the work of the Kingdom.

One benefit that a church career offers is personal growth in faith. Working in the church is a way to grow every day in a relationship with God. Other careers do not offer the kind of contact time with God’s people, his church, and the mission of making disciples. Church workers have a privileged position of being able to be a witness for Christ in every aspect of their professional and vocational lives.

The joy of serving is another benefit that the professional church worker is afforded. The reward for being a church worker is in the giving, and in giving we receive joy. We do not give so that we can be joyful, but rather, because of our joy in Christ, we can’t help but give. In the giving of ourselves in service, we are blessed. God richly blesses us as we are a blessing to others in his name.

Church work opportunities are becoming more diversified and now include a range of positions. A career in church work for the future is not limited to a particular job that would confine an individual for years to come; the doors for service are widening as various skills and interests are needed to do the work of the Kingdom in the coming century. As you pray for others in family devotion time, include the variety of church workers as they carry out the many and varied roles within the church. As you pray for them, talk about what it is they do and the gifts God has given to them to accomplish what they have been called by God to do.

Stability and mobility are both available for the Lutheran professional church worker. One person may desire to see the world as a part of their vocational life; another may want a stable and steady focus in their professional path. If a person desires a stable position where they can serve for many years, it is available. We need pastors and teachers to serve long terms of tenure in various ministry positions to create a sense of stability in a community and to model commitment over the years. The church also needs those who can serve in short term positions and be available for a quick move to new and distant places as the church has need and as the Spirit calls. The need to share the Gospel is unlimited, and we need workers who will step forward with their gifts and talents and serve as various situations arise and present themselves for opportunity.

Recruiting those within your family to serve the church in full time professional service needs intentionality. It used to be true among us that recruitment of our children sometimes happened without any direct conversation. It was modeling, a lifestyle, and the Holy Spirit. We still need modeling, we still need a lifestyle and the Holy Spirit. We also need to be intentional. It is time to ask the question of our sons and daughters, “So, what does God want you to be when you grow up.” We need to ask them intentionally, “Have you ever thought about being a teacher, DCE, pastor, or missionary?”

We also belong to a family of believers called the church. We need to encourage other church workers to share with our sons and daughters the joy of being in full time service to the Lord and his people. One possible way to do this would be to invite a young person along when you have to attend meetings, especially if you are near a Concordia College, Seminary, or University. This would allow them time to visit the campus, attend classes, and talk with admissions personnel while you attend your meeting. It also provides opportunity for discussions of a career in full time professional ministry as you travel. A pastor in southern California recruited many young men into full time church work this way. We need to encourage young people we see with the gifts needed to be in full time church work to seek it as a career choice.

Ask the question often. It is a take home exam. Ask it at home. Explore the possibilities often. Be patient as you await a response. It took young Samuel three time to recognize the voice of God, and he did so only after he heard the counsel of his wise mentor, Eli. Pray together for guidance and wisdom. Pray often.9
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The classroom and pulpit demand our time and attention and require our best efforts to properly prepare for the responsibilities of presenting the Word of God. Committee meetings, youth group activities, and educational programs take a great deal of time to coordinate so that we can effectively present ongoing ministry opportunities for those whom we serve. These and other activities make up the ministry we are called to perform. We must seek excellence in these and other areas of service.

We must also seek to be equally energized and interested in the ministry we have within our family. The family of the church worker can be defined in many ways. It can mean the immediate family of spouse and children. It can include family members of siblings and parents. It might also be the extended family of uncles, aunts, grandparents, and others. Family responsibility does not exclude single persons who may have family responsibilities to care about in an immediate and ongoing manner, or just need time to care for themselves.

Whatever the family composition, it is a challenge to manage these kinds of responsibilities in the busy culture of the late 90’s. It is certainly not like it used to be when we relied on the family to be the mainstay of the church and the community without much extra effort. It just happened. However, churches are placing a new emphasis on family ministry these days with the hope of restoring the sense of balance and order we used to feel. It is a worthy goal. What better way to begin a family ministry than to have strong church worker family units?

We can begin by giving time. While church workers give many hours to the church, they need to seek balance in their professional work so that there is time and energy for them to give to family responsibilities. If church workers are going to be empowering others to be strong family units, they must first model this in their own families. Strong families help other families grow strong. The days of the church worker fish bowl are over. We are all swimming in the same ocean together, just trying to keep afloat. We need church worker families who model service and care from within, so that the church can move forward in ministry and enable other families to grow.

The family of a church worker is the place to model service for children. Ministry is service to God and the church. A child who sees service, who understands service, who is involved in service from a young age on is more likely to produce elements of service in adult life. Mom and dad need to lead the way in modeling service and creating opportunities for service to be understood, shared, and experienced.

Beyond this, to create a healthy balance we need to be growing spiritually and teaching our children to grow. Our children need to see us in prayer for others as well as in prayer for the decisions we make. Our children need to participate with us in the study of God’s word. Our children need to see us take...
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Her demonstration involved typing in a list of words on a program called "Stairs." She typed in chocolate, sugar, flour, salt, baking soda, and then hit the return key. The computer searched itself for a match, then went on the Internet to the Hill Reference Library in St. Paul, and finally found the recipe for chocolate chip cookies in the Betty Crocker computer in Brookdale. A subsequent search for some engineering research turned up a match at Thermo-King in Northern Ireland.

The Internet was used in such a manner, primarily by large corporations and scientists to exchange research data until the early 1980s, when the Defense Department chose to build it into an indestructible "web" which could carry communicques across the nation or around the world in the event of a nuclear war. No one is in charge of the Internet. The Internet is a network of networks. You can hack out any part of the Internet and the rest will continue to work. If you shut off all of the connections over the Atlantic Ocean, the data would automatically reroute itself around the globe to get from the U.S. to Europe.

This lack of any physical center is mirrored by a lack of any administrative center. Every individual and organization that connects to the Internet has complete control of its network and computers. Even national governments are powerless over data that originates from outside their borders. When we consider that the Internet was built to survive a nuclear holocaust, we can understand why it might be impossible to lock out pornography and other harmful communication over the Internet, and why schools and parents have to contrive a method of dealing with the appropriate use of the Internet.

There are filtering programs, but the safest and most effective method of protecting students from exploring inappropriate areas on the Web is to always provide adult supervision when a student is doing research. Follow standard safety rules such as those we teach our children when using the
telephone: never give your name or personal information to anyone you do not personally know and trust. The poorest thing a school can do is to communicate to the parents that they have filtering programs which will prevent children from viewing inappropriate material. If the program is really good, students will be limited, for instance, on the serious biological research they might wish to perform. On the other hand, if a student inadvertently accesses an unacceptable site and takes home an 8"x10" glossy to show the parents, legal ramifications can result. No parent would allow an eight year old loose in the shopping mall unattended. Likewise, students should have adult supervision when accessing the Internet, and a written school policy should exist and be signed by each Internet user and his/her parents. The worst scenario for the student would be to be denied future access to the library’s Internet computer. A student who inadvertently accessed an inappropriate site could advise the attending adult so no future consequences could result.

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- http://www.NAME.com for commercial
- .gov for government (IRS, state, federal)
- .org for non-profit organization
- .edu for colleges and universities
- .net is also sometimes used.

To get one started, here are some useful locations. After teachers and their students explore some of these sites for information, they will feel more comfortable using the search engines.

http://www.lcms.org (St Louis LCMS Headquarters): From this location one can access information about all LCMS Congregations, World Missions, or other Synodical departments.

http://www.cnn.com (CNN News, Weather, Sports): One enjoyable use of time on CNN is to view and print satellite and radar maps of the region and compare regional forecasts from day to day. If interested in news on a specific subject, such as Flight 800, one might download or print all the articles on a particular subject from start to conclusion.
The new face of children’s ministry approaches the task of reaching the millennial generation with as many questions as answers. Ministry leaders are taking a penetrating look at the needs and learning biases of a new generation. Yet some things never change. The face of Jesus continues to beam with love for these little ones whom he called greatest in the kingdom of God. The love of Jesus still beckons the children to come to him, for such is the kingdom of God.

The Internet as a Reference Tool

http://www.yahooligans.com (a safe and educational format for students ages 8-14): Yahooligans provides help with homework in many subject areas, entertainment, TV and movie reviews, and allows searches for subject material within a somewhat safe environment. One might need information in the area of geography and will be presented with maps and other regional information about how people live and work together.

http://www.ipl.org/youth/ (the Internet Public Library’s Youth Division): Accessing this site allows students to read illustrated books geared to their age, ability, and reading level. Book reviews written by other children are able to be read as well as information about the authors and book awards won. Students can also interact with authors by posing questions which the authors will answer by return E-mail.

Having explored some of these specific “addresses”, one will have discovered that every site and many articles contain “links” to other sites or other articles. One begins to bounce from one link to another as a specific word in an article on any given subject sparks intrigue. The challenge on the Web is not to find information on any given subject, but rather, to narrow the scope of the search to the specific information under question.

LCMS National Youth Gathering Exhibit at Concordia Historical Institute

“Twenty Years of Grace, Growth & Good Times,” a summer exhibit featured at Concordia Historical Institute (CHI), will offer a 20-year retrospective of the LCMS National Youth Gathering.

The exhibit will feature photos, videos, Gathering books, and a variety of memorabilia — t-shirts, caps, backpacks and water bottles — from the youth gatherings, from Kansas City to Atlanta and every site in between.

The exhibition is in CHI’s museum, and runs from May 1 through August 31, 1998. Museum hours are 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1:00 to 4:30 p.m. weekdays. CHI will be closed May 25 for Memorial Day.

The Institute is located on the campus of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO. To arrange for a guided tour or for more information, call the museum’s curator, Rev. Mark A. Loest, at (314)505-7930.

Teachers, too, have a great reference tool in the Internet. If one is lacking information on a particular subject, one may access the Internet and find lesson plans for units of study on most subjects for any grade level.

Are you doing a search of family, a genealogy study, or looking for a friend’s address or phone number? Check out http://www.switchboard.com and find people with your last name in your town, state, or the entire nation. Using Mapquest.com, one can get a printout of a city map showing main arterial roads, cross-streets, and the location of an individual’s home address. Yahoo.com also offers these services, so if you do not find your friend or relative on Switchboard, try Yahoo.

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traveled across the nation on maps and tools in the Internet. If one is lacking for any grade level. The lesson plans for units of study on most subjects may access the Internet and find lesson information on a particular subject, one could lead productive lives in an ever changing world. The following guide provides links to newspapers from throughout the world:

Newspapers on the Web

In addition to the web sites listed in the preceding article, try these websites to access educational resources for using newspapers in your classroom:

www.4Kids.org — a weekly educational and entertainment feature for children published in newspapers all over North America.

Weekly Reader (www.weeklyreader.com) — a widely-distributed elementary student newspaper with separate editions for pre-kindergarten through grade six; offers online resources for children, teachers, and parents. The Web site also includes links to resources for the middle and high school newspapers Current Events, Current Science, READ, and Know Your World Extra.

The following guide provides links to newspapers from throughout the world:

Internet Public Library — Online Newspapers (http://www.ipl.org/reading/news/)

relationship with hands-on learning and active discussion. Kids Church is a large group setting with all the components of worship, designed in age-appropriate ways for children. This necessitates dividing according to age. Kids Church is divided into two age levels happening simultaneously: upper level (grades 1-4) and lower level (age 3-Kindergarten).

Here's a sample experience of upper level Kids Church. Children arrive at 10:45 and go to the Kids Welcome Zone. They get name tags and have a light snack while watching an entertaining Christian video for kids. Other kids are working on drama sketches, serving snacks or helping with name tags. At 11:00, about 60 first through fourth graders go to the chapel. They enter while upbeat children's music is playing. Welcomes are made. Visitors are cheered. Children song leaders take their place while a child leads an invocation prayer. A set of three or four worship songs are sung to the movement of fun hand motions or full body motions. It’s worship, even if it’s fun! The message leader leads a prayer of confession and forgiveness around the theme of the day. The music slows down a bit. The offering is taken. A child leads the offering prayer. Perhaps a creedal song concludes the opening worship segment. Now it’s time for the message. Contestants vie for who can remember last week's Bible verse. This week’s theme is introduced. Then all go to a different room for a learning game. Marshmallows are tossed into buckets while teams cheer on their thrower. The fun has an object lesson which reinforces the learning point of the day. By now another dozen children have arrived.

Promiseland has a different feel to it altogether. While both settings are engaging and highly participatory, Promiseland is primarily small groups. A typical first grade experience would be like this:

Grade school children gather at the Kids Welcome Zone. This is a new adventure for a first grader since all children younger than grade school had a different check-in procedure. In kindergarten they were in a different part of the building which was restricted access for security reasons. Here they visit with their friends in a gathering area while getting their name tags.

At 9:30 they go to their rooms and into their small groups. The first 15 minutes is gathering time in which the shepherd leads the group in an activity in which the children usually share something about themselves. It will later apply to the theme which is also introduced at this time. The next 15 minutes is the large group gathering where all 100 first and second graders gather for singing and the presentation of the Bible event. This Bible event might be acted out by the group, seen on video, talked about by puppets, or demonstrated.
Children today care about changing their world. Remember that the next time a child lectures you about recycling. They see themselves as actively involved in making a difference. Likewise today's effective children's ministries use interactive and hands-on learning. Group Publishing Company has exploded in growth as it has led the way for learning which engages all the senses and challenges students to apply God's truth to the real issues of their lives. Effective children ministries today are passionate about fully engaging the students in the learning event. For them the cardinal sin is to be boring. Less and less is done by paper and pencil, while more and more utilizes creative problem solving skills and creative expression in drama, video production, crafts, and learning games.

**A Practical Application: What One Church is Doing.**

King of Kings Lutheran Church in Omaha, Nebraska, is a rapidly growing congregation with an average weekend worship of 2300 and a children's enrollment of 900. In 1995 they called a pastor to oversee this ministry and be Children's Pastor. This served to raise the value and to give higher visibility to children's ministries. The term children's ministry was traded for Kids Kount Ministries, which became the ministry umbrella for a wide array of children's ministry activities. On Sunday this includes Kids Church, Promiseland, Exodus (5/6 grade), and nursery. Wednesday's program is Adventure Club. Other Kids Kount Ministries include day care, Mom's Day Out, preschool and many community outreach events targeting children. The church has warmly welcomed this new value given children by Kids Kount Ministries and is now remodeling for a 200 seat Kids Church and children's theater.

Currently King of Kings' Sunday morning offerings include three adult services: 8:00, 9:30, 11:00. Accordingly, they offer Kids Church at 8:00 and 11:00. Kids can either be in Kids Church for the entire hour or start in the adult service and exit at mid-service. This option is helpful for families who want some worship experience as a family. At the middle hour, 9:30, they offer Promiseland which is their version of Sunday School. Therefore, every child has an opportunity for 2 hours of child-centered ministry. Offering families several options was a key ingredient to a smooth implementation of the Kids Church option. The facility is fully utilized as worship, adult classes, and children's programming are happening at all three hours.

The primary difference between Kids Church and Promiseland is one of setting. Promiseland involves small groups nurtured by a caring shepherd. It's high expectations can be high when beginning teachers step into a classroom. Many face their first group of students proclaiming, "I'm going to make a difference." Energy, enthusiasm, and love are poured into lesson planning and relationship building. Dreams are dreamed and visions are refined. "One day they'll remember this classroom and this teacher," they say to themselves.

As time passes, the commitment to teaching remains strong, but the statement is heard less and less. After a few years in the classroom, teachers may feel concern that original goals have not been achieved and original dreams have not been realized. In addition, they've read reports about what other schools have done and watched other teachers receive recognition and acclaim. Their experiences seem to pale in comparison to what others have accomplished. They begin to wonder if things would have been different had they been given the opportunity to minister in a different setting and wonder what will really be remembered of their work and their ministry.

After twenty-five years in teaching, I recognize that participating in a popular program or being part of a large-scale teaching project can be fulfilling. Although
Churches giving new value to children’s ministry are scrambling to find qualified and innovative staff. Many are employing home-grown talent from within the existing ministry. Few D.C.E.s in Lutheran circles have specialties in this area, so many Lutheran churches are looking into the ranks of the Lutheran school teacher. Churches which value children are seeking staff who sense their primary calling and passion area to be ministry to children.

Shift 2: Churches Continue to Change to Reach New Family Structures

What used to be perfect attendance in Sunday-school? Every Sunday for a year? Now perfect attendance may be 50% because of the inconsistent attendance of children of divorce. Parents today are taking less responsibility for their children and even less for their spiritual formation. Yet the predominant characteristic of the millennial generation is that family is most important. Churches responding to that priority see children’s ministry as an opportunity to reach within the families to help with parenting classes, training in home devotions, counseling, and more. The number of children with emotional and physical special needs is skyrocketing due to fetal drug and alcohol abuse. Children as victims of sexual abuse are present in most churches, even smaller ones.

With such challenges facing the families of today’s children, the church is well positioned to make an impact. Children’s ministries are no longer merely concerned with delivering the content of a Sunday-school lesson. Today the focus is delivering the life changing presence of Jesus through relationship with a committed adult. The Bible lesson is still important. It is still the tool of God’s word. But for this generation that tool must be hand delivered through personal relationships. Kids today need to receive a positive family feeling when they go to church. Most effective ministries are using small groups as this intentional delivery system. For some, it might be a whole new dynamic for teaching, but its effective use dates back to Jesus himself. As a family feeling is created among the children and coached by the adult, all people minister to one another in prayer and Bible discovery.

Shift #3: Child’s Well-being and Safety Is Crucial.

A major change is related to the increasing legal implications of children’s ministry: the screening of workers (both paid and volunteer), safety policies, and compliance with local state, and federal laws. Children’s ministry today will consume much more administrative time to insure high standards for safety and prevention of child abuse. Parents today live in a scary world, and they want to know, “Is it safe for me to leave my child with these people?” Nurseries in even mid-sized churches will have security procedures which return children only to parents who have the security slip which shows they have checked them in.

Shift #4: Interactive Learning Rather than Passive Assimilation.

Regardless of how long we have taught, we all have such memories. The list can go on — one day at a time, one person at a time. All these little things happen around us all the time because that’s what ministry is all about.

What about your list? Take a few moments. List names, places, events. Let the Spirit fill in the details. You will be pleasantly surprised and encouraged by all the lives he has been able to touch through your willingness to serve. 

Kerr

not the purpose of our teaching, recognition is inspiring and motivating. When it comes right down to it, however, this is not what makes “the difference.” Rather, it is the little things, accomplished one day at a time, one person at a time. As we take a moment to consider them, they can provide a lot of reassurance. Little by little, one by one, these memories come, and as they come we are reminded of our real mission field. Not necessarily the large churches with seating for 1,000. Not necessarily the large schools with 350 students. Not just the classroom. Just one day at a time to one person at a time.

Can you remember... the student enrolled at one of our synodical colleges who has told family members she is there because she wants to be a teacher like you?... the family being baptized at the Saturday evening service because you “talk a lot in class about baptism”?... the student who, starved for conversation, described his full collection of baseball cards to you, after you simply asked him what he was carrying?... the family you interviewed as they toured the school. They did not enroll the children and you have not seen them since, but you remember the witness you shared when they mentioned that times had been tough?... the young student who gave you a hug every time she saw you, not because you did something to deserve it, but just because you were the teacher?... the mother who came into the office to complain, but ended up asking for help because she really felt like a failure as a parent?

Regardless of how long we have taught, we all have such memories. The list can go on — one day at a time, one person at a time. These little things happen around us all the time because that’s what ministry is all about.

What about your list? Take a few moments. List names, places, events. Let the Spirit fill in the details. You will be pleasantly surprised and encouraged by all the lives he has been able to touch through your willingness to serve.
the needed changes to design children’s ministry to fit the ministry needs of the millennial generation.

This article will highlight four shifts which give a new paradigm for understanding ministry to and with this generation born after 1983. What some of these new shifts in children’s ministry might actually look like will then be given in a brief description of children’s ministry at King of Kings Lutheran Church in Omaha, Nebraska.

Shift #1: A Higher Value Will Be Given to Children’s Ministry

The generation born after 1983 has been commonly referred to as the millennial generation. A pertinent assessment of children’s ministry considers not only the age development of the child but the characteristics of that entire generation. The generation preceding the Millennials, commonly referred to as Generation X, experienced a rather dismal esteem given them from American society. Conversely, the Millennials are our society’s cherished hope for the future.

Parents of this generation are accustomed to receiving specialized attention for their children. Consider their perspective. Most restaurants they attend have a menu just for their child’s taste. These children are valued customers. Generation X had no such

children’s menus in the 60’s and 70’s. Effective churches today are ministering to children as a main menu feature and not as some side dish. They are careful not to portray children’s ministry as some “cutesie” babysitting activity which happens while their parents receive the real ministry. Instead children’s ministry has as much validity as any ministry to any other age group. Highly valued children’s ministries communicate their mission as a matter of eternal life and death, heaven and hell, the church of today preparing itself to be the church of tomorrow. Just as Jesus said, these children are not valued as merely second-class citizens of the kingdom.

Consider as well the change in terminology. Now we often hear the term children’s ministry which refers to a broad scope of activities which disciple children. Entrepreneurial churches have left the label of Sunday-school, opting for other ministry titles not laden with old stereotypes. Even the title of Sunday-school, they felt, conjures images of passive children sitting through some type of school setting. Now using titles like “Promiseland” or “Kids Church” or “Celebration Station,” new models of discipling children are highly active and creative.

As a church body how is the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod doing in meeting children’s needs effectively? Sunday-school enrollment is in a 30-year free-fall drop of over 60%. The average drop-out age is as low as 5th grade.
Administrative Talk

articulated by the speaker. The listener steers the speaker toward the main thrust of the problem and away from side issues. He asks for clarification. He sums up what he thinks are the speaker’s main points, then asks the speaker if his summary is correct. He takes notes to remind himself of actions he must take as a result of the conversation.

A good listener holds up his end of the conversation but doesn’t feel he has to talk a lot or make snap decisions. He knows that the passage of time sometimes allows wisdom to surface. He also knows that simply listening well and allowing people to state their feelings are keys to finding solutions.

If he senses that an argument is forthcoming, a good administrator uses his voice and manner to keep the conversation calm and objective. He also understands that silence is better than an angry response. Silence allows both sides to become more reasonable. An effective administrator doesn’t become defensive or feel that he has to shoot down every piece of false information the speaker has uttered. He knows that an adversarial relationship is counterproductive, so he tries hard to work cooperatively toward solutions (Watkins, 1993, p. 30).

Lastly, a good administrator realizes that sufficient time needs to be devoted to the speaker. Whether an administrator has to take the time or make the time, he works to be sure that sufficient time has been invested in the speaker.

An effective listener knows that there’s a reason for the Creator giving him two ears and just one mouth.

Top Ten Indicators That You’re Not Listening Well:

10) When asked to summarize last Sunday’s sermon, your response is, “I think it was about sin.”
9) The faculty communicates to you in sign language.
8) When practicing the verse that begins “Do you hear what I hear?” for the Christmas program, the students look directly at you.
7) A faculty member’s Master’s thesis is entitled “In One Ear and Out the Other: A Case Study.”
6) The last student you remember listening to is now a grandparent.
5) Each morning a teacher hands you a memo that says hello and asks you how you are.
4) The entire student body has evacuated the building for seven minutes before you realize what is supposed to happen when the fire drill bell sounds.
3) Your standard response when you see a teacher begin to talk to you is, “No, I haven’t forgotten what you told me yesterday.”
2) The board of education has voted to pay your tuition for a summer class at the American Listening Institute.
1) A teacher faints when she senses that you actually listened to her.

References


The New Face of Children’s Ministry

When we hear the familiar term “Sunday-school,” what pops to mind? Do we see a class of fifteen children, well-dressed and behaved, sitting quietly in their seats? Is the teacher doing most of the talking? Are the students interested? Involved? If this is a stereotype from the Sunday-school lore of yesteryear, let’s take a look at the new face of children’s ministry today. What will it look like as we reach for the new millennium?

Before we peer into the future, let’s gather a glimpse of our present. As a church body how is the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod doing in meeting children’s needs effectively? Sunday-school enrollment is in a 30-year free-fall drop of over 60%. The average drop-out age is as low as 5th grade. Yet, few realize that in growing churches children constitute one-half or more of the entire attendance. In many large churches, it is common for there to be multiple hundreds and, in some cases, in excess of a thousand or more infants, toddlers, and children who gather for Christian learning and nurture. In congregations that are reaching young adults with families, an effective children’s ministry is often the “front door” to the church and the primary reason parents choose that church. These churches have kept pace with
providing appropriate access for children in the worship setting. Families of young children receive messages of welcome and accommodation (or the lack thereof) from the small ways in which accommodations for children are made in the environment, the planning, and the worship itself. In addition, children and their families receive messages of welcome or non-welcome from the attitudes caught through glances or comments in response to the wiggles or noises of a young child.

If Westerhoff’s theory is correct, as the researchers believe, then Lutheranism must reexamine its worship practices in regard to children. In Westerhoff’s theory, children are not to be relegated to a children’s church or a “developmentally appropriate experience.” Rather, they are to be welcomed into a truly inter-generational worship experience in which both the setting and the worship rituals themselves are planned with believers of all ages in mind.

It is incumbent upon church leaders to examine the value for children of corporate worship as it is currently practiced.

References

SW: Please give a brief overview of the content of this publication and its cost.
G: Hymnal Supplement 98 will contain approximately 120 hymns (including several canons and Taize responses). Liturgical materials will include hymnic settings of the Divine Service and Evening Prayer, a new Responsive Prayer setting, and daily prayer suggestions for families and individuals. Finally, about a dozen psalms will be included which provide congregational refrains. The final cost has not been set, but it will be around $6.00.

SW: How do you see Hymnal Supplement 98 being used in a parochial school setting?
G: There will be all kinds of uses. Responsive Prayer, for example, would serve as an outline for a school chapel service. The psalm settings would be ideal for all age levels. Because the refrains are short and easily learned, even the youngest children will be able to participate.

There are a number of hymns with refrains that can easily be sung by young children. Many of the hymns are based on specific biblical texts and can be used in conjunction with lessons on those stories. The responses and rounds will also provide children with something new to sing.

SW: There are already a number of hymnal supplements on the market. What does this one offer that the others do not?
G: One thing that it offers are settings of the Divine Service and
Evening Prayer that attempt — successfully, I think — to lay out the liturgy in a straightforward and clear manner.

As is the case with any new hymnal, our supplement will contain a number of new hymns that will appear in print for the first time. Additionally, the supplement will feature some hymns that are not readily available to churches in this country (e.g., a beautiful hymn from Ethiopia that was published in a small collection almost 30 years ago). Finally, there will be some hymns that don’t appear in TLH or LW but should be available to our people (e.g., “Children of the Heavenly Father” and “We Know that Christ is Raised”).

SW: The ethnic population of a school is often far more varied than that of a congregation. Does the selection of materials in the supplement address the needs of our very diverse student populations?

G: Whether the supplement will adequately address these issues, I can’t say. But there is a representative sampling of hymns from a number of ethnic backgrounds. There are spirituals, hymns from Africa, South America, the Hispanic traditions, the Caribbean, and China. I think the supplement will provide a nice balance that most schools will find helpful in introducing children to the contributions of Christians from other parts of the world.

SW: Are there any plans to create instructional materials to go with the supplement? Many teachers might enjoy having lesson plans and reproducible handouts for new hymns to complement their religion curriculum.

G: At present, there are not. We are looking into producing Bible studies for adults that are based on some of the hymns. Your suggestion is a good one, something that I will bring to the Commission on Worship!

SW: One good feature of With One Voice* is its accompaniment book. It offers suggestions for rhythm instruments, guitar chords, and stylistically appropriate accompaniments for many ethnic hymns. Will the LCMS publication give us something comparable?

G: The accompaniment edition for Hymnal Supplement 98 will contain several features that will be of interest and help. For about a quarter of the hymns, simplified accompaniments will be included, geared especially for organists who don’t use pedals, and for other keyboard players who may find standard accompaniments too difficult. A number of hymns will include guitar chords. Other things like stylistic accompaniments and suggestions for rhythm instruments are not planned at present.

SW: Some attendant instrumental publications for the hymnal supplement are already planned. Would their level of difficulty make them appropriate for use by school-age children?

G: Concordia Publishing House will be individually and as groups, in the corporate worship of this congregation.

13. How are children welcomed into the worshipping community?

14. What accommodations are made for families with young children?

15. Are young children being taught to tune out before they have even tuned in?

16. What are the messages of welcome which would tell children and their parents that they are not simply tolerated, but welcomed and provided for?

Each congregation will need to assess its accommodations for and welcoming of children for itself. Each congregation will need to determine if there are practices and attitudes which can be modified in order to move worship for children from a “spectator activity” to a meaningful experience in which children, too, can celebrate their relationship with God and grow in that relationship.

Closing Thoughts

In many congregations, worship appears to be a performance rather than a celebration. Lutheran theology regards worship as a sacrificial and sacramental celebration of God’s story of love and redemption. Worshipers of all ages need to understand that dynamic.

If congregations are to truly include worshipers of all ages, they need to provide for the needs and perspectives of those varying age levels. For children, this means that children need to be encouraged to worship, even if their form of participation is noisier or more boisterous than that of the adult. It means that congregations need to structure worship so that children’s participation and style of participation are included and valued. It means considering children’s participation valuable and important, not a disruption to the worship of adults.

The environmental elements of worship, such as changing colors, changing paraments, banners, even wreaths and Easter crosses, need to be explained. Children, especially, need to know what the environment and the liturgy of a given Sunday or season of the church year are teaching. However, it is quite possible that the reason children don’t know the significance of elements of worship is that their parents also do not know!

Church leaders, worship planners, and parents all bear responsibility for

Children are not to be relegated to a children’s church or a “developmentally appropriate experience.” Rather, they are to be welcomed into a truly inter-generational worship experience in which both the setting and the worship rituals themselves are planned with believers of all ages in mind.
kinds of other intentional provisions have been made for children and their families.

From the perspective of the worship ritual, the messages of welcome include specific references to children in the main sermon, whether or not a children’s sermon is also present. It includes intentional greetings to children on the part of the pastor and parishioners. It includes predictability of liturgy which children can follow and are taught.

From the perspective of planning, worship planners need first of all to consider that children are members from the moment of their baptism. As members, they deserve the same consideration as members of other ages—not greater consideration, but the same attention and regard.

Questions to Consider

As congregations consider the importance of including children in worship there are key questions which can inform and guide that consideration.

1. What are we doing for worship education? Can “field trips” to the sanctuary be planned for Saturday morning family outings?

2. Do we “celebrate” or “perform” worship? What are the evidences of each in the weekly worship of this congregation?

3. What is the appropriate movement from “formation” to “instruction” for the children in this congregation? Are we giving them enough affective experiences on which to base their cognitive understandings?

4. How and when do we articulate the shared meanings of the elements of worship? How and when are the rituals and practices explained even to adults?

5. How and when are children allowed and encouraged to explore the worship environment? Would that Saturday morning field trip help them to feel comfortable in the environment?

6. Do the banners we display include real enough representations for young children to understand? Are the meanings of abstract banners ever explained?

7. Do we have icons and artifacts of the essential tenets of Lutheran theology (e.g., cross, Trinity, key Bible stories, etc.)?

8. Do we display symbols and signs of the church year to remind both children and adults of the faith story we celebrate?

9. Do we consider the participation of children in worship to “mess up” worship for adults?

10. If we have a school or early childhood center in our congregation, what is the relationship of worship to the life of that educational and/or caregiving enterprise? How is the ministry of the entire congregation carried out in the schooling of children?

11. If we do not have a school or early childhood center, what are we doing to intentionally reach out to children and their families through the worship practices of this congregation?

12. Do we encourage the participation of members of all ages, both

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**Children at Worship**

publishing a number of musical volumes that will support the supplement. There will be separate volumes of vocal descants, instrumental descants, and handbell descants/arrangements. Congregations or schools will need to buy only one set of each item, and then will have permission to reproduce them as needed.

There will be handbell arrangements for 50 hymns, none of which will be very difficult. Two instrumental descants (in C and B) have been written for each hymn and can be played separately or together. The difficulty level varies from easy to moderate. Melody lines in a number of keys will be included for each hymn. The variety that school bands can achieve with these resources will be amazing! What a convenience for those in charge of instrumental ensembles.

SW: Give us a bit of a preview.

**Choose 5 hymns from *Hymnal Supplement 98* that you can’t wait to hear being taught in Lutheran schools.**

**G:** Only five!? Here they are:

1. *Jesus on the Mountain Peak* (a new tune for this Transfiguration hymn by Brian Wren);

2. *Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia* (a great Easter hymn from Tanzania);

3. *God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say It* (a powerful baptism hymn set to a charming melody);

4. *When I Behold Jesus Christ* (a compelling hymn from Ethiopia);

5. *All You Works of God* (a great new text to the tune LINSTEAD).

We thank Dr. Grime for this interview and look forward to *Hymnal Supplement 98*. Teachers who wish to learn more about it, or to order copies for examination should contact Concordia Publishing House for further information.

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“My education was the liberty I had to read indiscriminately and all the time, with my eyes hanging out.”

Dylan Thomas

“You don’t have to suffer to be a poet. Adolescence is enough suffering for anyone.”

John Ciardi
How Could Anybody . . . ?

I don’t know about you, but it seems to be my experience that whenever I ask this question, it is undoubtedly from high upon a precarious perch of personal judgment! Oh, I may appear to be expressing concern or on the verge of offering intriguing intercessions, but God knows my heart and center. God knows my underlying thought process is closer to the pious pronouncement, “You’d never catch me . . . ” There have been times I’ve gotten away with this. Thankfully, in other instances of proverbial finger pointing, God, in that special way only he can, gently reminds me of the remaining three digits pointing back toward me!

A few months back, a radio story caught my attention because it seemed nearly unbelievable. A mother left her child in its car seat on the roof of her car and drove away. The baby fell off as the car accelerated. Thankfully, another person saw this happening and was able to save the child from further harm. Only minor bumps and bruises resulted.

I could not fathom how a mother could be so rushed, so stressed out, that she would leave something as near and dear, something as precious as her own child, on the roof of her car. Where was her mind? Where was her heart?

I brought this woman and her child to my intercessions, offering thanksgiving for the child’s safety, and trying to put myself (unbelievably) in the position of the mother. The words were fine; the attitude was not. Almost immediately, I was faced with the horror of my own personal guilt for the many times I, too, in moments of stress and faulty focus, had left something just as precious lying about, unattended, forgotten.

Fanning the Flame

As teachers of the faith, it is our role to call others to fullness, to be catalysts to creativity. Paul encourages Timothy to “fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you” (2 Tim. 1:6-7). We must take heed and with intentionality see to the fanning of our own personal flames before we reach out to fuel others. The interior life we lead will, by God’s grace and blessing, become the light which shows a way, perhaps even ignites a fire in those placed in our charge. We pass on to others what we have first experienced ourselves — God’s love in Jesus. And, the more we ourselves allow and even seek out opportunities for such personally intimate experiences with our Lord, the better, more clearly, and more meaningfully we will be able to communicate and motivate others to do likewise. Emmanuel Cardinal...

Children in Worship: Findings and Implications

- physical provisions for children, such as booster seats and “church bags”;
- explanations of the environment from a liturgic standpoint;
- references to changes in the liturgic environment so that children can understand their meaning;
- seating expectations which assure that children can see the focus of worship and begin to participate more fully.

Recommendations — Planning

Planning for the inclusion of children in worship needs to include the intentional planning of a pattern of participation which will be experienced by children. It also involves assuring the inclusion of role models who, by their participation, communicate the message that children, too, can aspire to participation. This is especially important for the regular and frequent inclusion of adolescents as acolytes, ushers, and readers. Younger children will be more likely to interpret their participation as “accessible” than that of adults or clergy.

Worship planning also needs to include the intentional provision for worship education. While some of this worship education may be placed in the children’s sermon, other outside-of-worship time needs to be planned for such experiences.

Specific recommendations for worship planning include:
- intentional planning for frequent participation of pre-confirmation children in worship activities;
- planning for messages of welcome, both verbal and nonverbal, to families with young children;
- utilizing school-age children as acolytes and assistant ushers;
- providing for role models of varying ages in worship leadership; also attending to questions of gender and ethnic diversity as possible;
- planning for bulletin and/or newsletter inserts which sensitize congregational members to the children in worship;
- providing intentional accommodations for young children that give messages that they are expected in worship (such as booster seats, front-row reserved seating, a “children’s corner” bulletin board, etc.).

Conclusions and Implications

From the data reported in the previous four articles in this journal volume, it is clear that the perspective of children in worship was not strongly considered in the majority of the congregations included in the study. Yet, if Westerhoffs’s theory (1992, 1996) is valid, these congregations have missed an important opportunity.

The opportunity to welcome children into worship begins with small but powerful messages that children are expected to be present. These messages would include where children are expected to be seated if they are to participate, whether special seating accommodations, such as booster chairs for preschoolers, are available, and what kinds of other intentional provisions have been made for children and their families.

From the perspective of the worship
greater provision for children on the weekend? Or was the provision for children on the weekend a motivator to find ways to also provide programming for young children during the week? More research will be needed to answer these questions. However, the lower levels of participation for children in worship in settings with only elementary schools (and no early childhood education component) or with no formal weekday education enterprise would seem to indicate that children were not as great a concern in these settings.

Recommendations — Worship Rituals

Worship rituals which support and extend children’s participation unto understanding of worship will include predictable elements which children will recognize each week. These elements need to include:

- prayers and prayer postures
- the exchange of peace in which children are intentionally greeted
- the sign of the cross, made by congregation as well as clergy
- specific addresses to children in the sermon of the day
- responsive liturgy which is predictably present so that it will be learned by children.

The children’s sermon is a worship element which must be used to teach children, not the adults who are “listening in.” For children, this means opportunities to hear the worship experience explained in language they can understand. This includes:

- explorations of the symbolic and theological significance of elements of the environment, such as the cross, the candles, and the baptismal font;
- explanations of pieces of the liturgy in a series of children’s sermons;
- discussion of the parament colors and their meanings;
- consideration of the banners, windows, and icons and of their meanings;
- discussion of “words to listen for” in the main sermon which will encourage attention to the message;
- exhortations to tell others the good news of Jesus as child evangelists.

Worship Environments

Church environments which are planned with children in mind will “speak” to the pre-literate child in powerful ways through the visual images of color and symbol. They will also “speak” to the child through auditory messages beyond words, such as through bells, language cadences, and loud/soft sounds.

These aspects indicate whether worship is considered an adult or an intergenerational activity. These aspects also indicate whether children are expected to learn to worship by worshipping. The analysis of the CIW Study One results indicates that, for most children, worship is a spectator activity. This is true, at least in part, to the messages of the environment.

Positive messages which welcome children and their families include:

- realistic banners which communicate the faith story to young children;
- elements which must be used to teach the faith story to young children;
- theological significance of elements of the environment, such as the cross, the candles, and the baptismal font;
- explanations of pieces of the liturgy in a series of children’s sermons;
- discussion of the parament colors and their meanings;
- consideration of the banners, windows, and icons and of their meanings;
- discussion of “words to listen for” in the main sermon which will encourage attention to the message;
- exhortations to tell others the good news of Jesus as child evangelists.

Suhard has said, “To be a witness does not consist in engaging in propaganda, nor even in stirring people up, but in being a living mystery. It means to live in such a way that one’s life would not make sense if God did not exist” (L’Engle, 1980, p. 31).

So Where Does the “Baby” Come In?

Especially for one in church work, it can be exceedingly tempting to become so involved in the activity of our ministry that we are fooled into believing we do not need the time away. When we are in the Word, it is for preparation of a Bible study lesson. When we are in prayer, it is to ask God’s blessing on all our plans to carry out God’s will, perhaps with a few petitions regarding those people in our lives who are in need of help and healing. These words of Sir Thomas Browne serve both to warn and warn:

“If thou could’st empty all thyself of self, Like to a shell dishabited, Then might He find thee on the ocean shell, And say, ‘This is not dead,’ And fill thee with Himself instead.

But thou art all replete with very thou. And hast such shrewd activity, That when He comes He says, ‘This is enow Unto itself—’twere better let it be, It is so small and full, there is no room for me’” (L’Engle, 1980, p. 24).

And so, ask yourself, as a teacher of the faith, a catalyst to creativity, “How do I fan the flame without getting burned in the process?” If this ministry is about relationship building, first and foremost must be my relationship with Jesus as personal Lord and Savior. It means being on intimate terms with him, knowing his voice, and recognizing his ways with me.

Do I teach about Jesus or do I teach Jesus? Am I reading books about Jesus and not spending much time in Jesus’ words for me? What about daily and regular conversation time with Jesus? After I do the talking, do I expect and allow him time to respond?

Learn more about yourself. How is your own faith flame best fanned? What energizes you for ministry and story sharing? What heats your coals and sets the spark? Are you making time, assigning calendar time, to take advantage of these moments? If you don’t, no one else will do it for you! Evaluate your communal spiritual life. Are you aware of who feeds and nurtures your spirit, holds you accountable for personal gifting and self-care? If so, are they a part of your regular routine? Make a commitment to schedule yourself into some of those slots. Time not blocked off is easily filled, often by others, with nonessential activities and interruptions. Prioritize some “Mary-time” in your daily planner. If you don’t, you may soon find yourself feeling more slave than servant, more livid than alive, and more anguished than anchored.

References

Most students like to play games. One way to stimulate interest during drill and practice activities is to put them into a game format. When I was a youngster, my friends and I would spend hours playing a card game called “War.” Why not modify this game into an exciting fraction game? You will need to make a deck of sixty-six cards. You can use index cards but cut them down to an 8 cm by 6 cm size. On each of these cards write one of the following common fractions, being careful not to simplify the fractions to lowest terms:

\[
\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{3}, \frac{2}{3}, \frac{1}{4}, \frac{3}{4}, \frac{1}{5}, \frac{4}{5}, \frac{1}{6}, \frac{5}{6}, \frac{1}{7}, \frac{2}{7}, \frac{3}{7}, \frac{4}{7}, \frac{5}{7}, \frac{6}{7}, \frac{7}{8}, \frac{1}{8}, \frac{2}{8}, \frac{3}{8}, \frac{4}{8}, \frac{5}{8}, \frac{6}{8}, \frac{7}{8}, \frac{1}{9}, \frac{2}{9}, \frac{3}{9}, \frac{4}{9}, \frac{5}{9}, \frac{6}{9}, \frac{7}{9}, \frac{1}{10}, \frac{2}{10}, \frac{3}{10}, \frac{4}{10}, \frac{5}{10}, \frac{6}{10}, \frac{7}{10}, \frac{8}{10}, \frac{9}{10}, \frac{1}{11}, \frac{2}{11}, \frac{3}{11}, \frac{4}{11}, \frac{5}{11}, \frac{6}{11}, \frac{7}{11}, \frac{8}{11}, \frac{9}{11}, \frac{10}{11}, \frac{1}{12}, \frac{2}{12}, \frac{3}{12}, \frac{4}{12}, \frac{5}{12}, \frac{6}{12}, \frac{7}{12}, \frac{8}{12}, \frac{9}{12}, \frac{10}{12}, \frac{11}{12}
\]

Once you have created the deck you are ready to play.

Shuffle the deck and deal out the cards to the players face down. Each player keeps the cards face down in front of him. To begin play each player turns his top card face up. The player with the fraction that has the highest value takes all of the cards that are face up. (Scrap paper can be used by the students to help in determining which of the fractions has the highest value.) When there are fractions played that are equivalent a “war” is declared. To win the war each player involved in the war plays two more cards. One is face down and the second is face up. Once played the players in the war turn over the cards that were face down. The player with the highest value on these cards wins all of the cards that are now face up. (The war I described is what has been used in my experiences. You and your students may know of a different procedure to win the war. Use the method common in your area.) The play continues in a similar manner until one player has lost all his cards or until time is called. If time is called the player with the most cards is the winner.

There are a number of easy extensions to this game. You could eliminate the cards with thirds, sixths, ninths, elevenths, and twelfths and substitute cards that have the decimal representations of the remaining deck. You could leave the original deck intact and just use all the decimals that you wish. You might want to add a few percents into the mix and now you could have a deck that includes fractions, decimals, and percents.

As you consider the card games that can be played by children, think of others that can be modified for use in your classroom. Games like “Go Fish” and “Rummy” have some interesting possibilities.

In fully 10% of the congregations visited in the CIW study, a cross – the centerpiece of our theology of substitutionary atonement – was not present. What is the environment saying to children in that case? How can elements of the faith speak to children nonverbally if they are not there?

The Power of Planning

The intentionality of experiences provided for children are also important. Children learn most powerfully and effectively when adults provide experiences which take the child’s capacity to comprehend into account. For children, this means that there are regular patterns of participation which can be remembered and understood. It also means that there is a frequency of participation beyond the “high holiday” approach to including children in worship.

The “psychological visibility” of children in the planning process is critical if the full power of planning for children in worship is to be experienced. This would seem to indicate the need for an active concern for children’s perspectives and comprehension of worship events. Children sense when they are considered important by adults. They know when they are being ignored or taken for granted. They are fully aware whether they are visible or invisible in the congregational context.

The Power of Participation

Yet another factor to be considered in children’s corporate worship experience is the presence of an early childhood education center as a part of the congregation’s ministry to children. Congregations offering early childhood programs as a part of their ministry (with or without the presence of a full elementary school) appeared to provide a greater range of participatory experiences for children in corporate Sunday morning worship. This is not to be confused with weekday chapel experiences which were also a part of the offerings in most of these congregations. Study One of CIW looked only at corporate weekend worship experiences and their provision for children’s participation.

It is the conclusion of the researchers that the presence of early childhood weekday programming, both with an elementary school and in freestanding centers, was a strong indicator of greater participation and “visibility” of children in corporate worship. Was the visibility of children during the week the cause of...
For children, the shared meanings of corporate worship need to be experienced and explored within the context of that worship. They need to know the meaning of the cross and of the candles. They need to be told the reason for prayer and confession. They need to understand the elements of worship and their importance to the historic and ongoing telling of the faith story.

The Power of Ritual

Liturgy is ritual. It is the repeated and repetitive telling of the faith story so that all understand. For children, this means the predictable points of participation to which they can look forward from Sunday to Sunday are important. For all Christians, this shared ritual is powerful beyond the experience in communicating their membership in the church universal.

For liturgy to be predictable for children, it must have an element of sameness and structure. While this sameness can be dynamic, it needs to contain sameness to be accessible to the child (and to the visitor or new Christian).

For children, the opportunity to participate in prayers by folding hands and kneeling is a powerful point of entry into liturgy. So, too, the exchange of peace and making the sign of the cross. These acts become children’s early entry into the liturgy of the Church. For many children, the presence of familiar verses and responses sung by the congregation is an opportunity for participation. For the non-reading child, the opportunity to participate in liturgy is solely dependent on the presence of those predictable elements.

While adults and older children can follow a new or creative liturgical pattern, young children cannot. If they are to be considered as members whose needs, too, are to be served, then liturgy must be predictable. The absence of many of the historic elements of the liturgy in many of the churches surveyed indicates to the CIW team that children’s needs may not fully be served by the diminution of ritual and predictability in those worship services.

The Power of Environment

Appropriate worship environments for young children teach children about worship. Are there visual images of faith and faith stories for children to see and study? Are there symbols which depict the key elements of the faith of the worshipping community? Are there objects to touch which tell the faith story? Are there sounds which appeal to and can be understood by young children? Are there smells and aromas which signify “church” and “worship” for the child? Each of the senses can potentially be used by the child to learn more about the faith story of the worshipping community.

Appointments in the environment may quickly indicate whether young children are even expected to be or to stay in the worship setting. How accessible is the environment for the family with children? Are there items such as booster seats or children’s bulletins which would say that young children are expected in this place? How well will children be able to view the activity at and near the altar without obstruction?

"Ta Dah!"

A little boy came home from Sunday school on Easter Sunday with some exciting news. “Mom and Dad, I learned today what Jesus said when he broke out of that tomb on Easter Sunday!”

“Tell us, son, what did Jesus say?”

The boy was so excited that he got in front of his parents, raised his hands, and shouted out, “Ta dah!”

May you have a “ta dah” day today also. A “ta dah” day means that we continue to celebrate the good news of that first Easter Sunday — that Jesus Christ indeed is alive — in us! Watch for those boys and girls around you who will bring “ta dah” experiences to you this day. Listen for the “ta dah” remark at the staff meeting or when you get home in the evening. And you may even get a glimpse of the “ta dah” faith of some people today that you would have never guessed would come from them!

In one sense, the Lord takes our “dah” days and turns them into “ta dah” days, because of his death and resurrection for us. The sainted Henri Nouwen, author of many books on spirituality, once wrote, “I have a friend who radiates joy, not because his life is easy, but because he habitually recognizes God’s presence in the midst of all human suffering, his own as well as others’ . . . My friend’s joy is contagious. The more I am with him, the more I catch glimpses of the sun shining through the clouds. Yes, I know there is a sun, even though the skies are covered with clouds. While my friend always spoke about the sun, I kept speaking about the clouds, until one day I realized it was the sun that allowed me to see the clouds. Those who keep speaking about the sun while walking under a cloudy sky are messengers of hope, the true saints of our day.”

As we get ready for the summer months, as we try to assess ways to spend our time more wisely, as we make plans for the fall season, the Spirit of the Lord brings the “ta dah” experience to us each day.

Once again, little children help us to sense the power of Christ’s presence in our lives as well as the presence of Christ’s power in our lives.

Watch for the “ta dah” experiences that will come to you today. Perhaps in the hug of a child, the phone call of a friend, the friendly note from a peer, a word of thanks from a grandmother. And look for ways that you can bring a word of “ta dah” to that special person in your life today, also.
There are still too many people around us who are living joy-impaired lives. We live in a society reeking of chronic seriousness. And it is to this world that the Lord sends us with the message of Easter, the message of hope, the message of joy, forgiveness, and celebration!

Celebrate with others today the message that Christ is alive — in you, in them!

May you have a “ta dah” day in the Lord!!

WHAT I'VE LEARNED . . .

I've learned that I like my teacher because she cries when we sing "Silent Night." Age 6
I've learned that if you want to cheer yourself up, you should try cheering someone else up. Age 14
I've learned that silent company is often more healing than words of advice. Age 24
I've learned that brushing my child's hair is one of life's great pleasures. Age 26
I've learned that wherever I go, the worlds worst drivers have followed me there. Age 29
I've learned that if someone says something unkind about me, I must live so that no one will believe it. Age 39
I've learned that there are people who love you dearly but just don't know how to show it. Age 41
I've learned that singing "Amazing Grace" can lift my spirits for hours. Age 49
I've learned that making a living is not the same thing as making a life. Age 58
I've learned that if you want to do something positive for your children, try to improve your marriage. Age 61
I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catchers mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back. Age 64
I've learned that whenever I decide something with kindness, I usually make the right decision. Age 66
I've learned that everyone can use a prayer. Age 72
I've learned that it pays to believe in miracles. And to tell the truth, I've seen several. Age 73
I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one. Age 82
I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love that human touch-holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back. Age 85

(Source unknown, received via e-mail)
For the church, the topic of worship, and especially children in worship, has merely begun to be explored. In most congregations, according to the recently completed Study One of the Children in Worship (CIW) project, children are taken for granted and are almost invisible. Congregations rarely use an “impact on children” index when considering new programs or congregational policies. For most leaders in the church, children belong to members. Yet the Lutheran understanding of baptism would indicate otherwise. Children are members!

The task of studying children in worship and the congregation’s role in enriching that worship has just begun. More work is needed. And plans for such work are underway at CenSCED. Study Two of Children in Worship is already proposed and seeking funding. The completed study is descriptive, identifying what current practices, attitudes, and environments exist in Lutheran congregations across the United States. This baseline study is critical to future work and provides the foundation for continued understanding of the impact of congregational practice on children in worship.

As a result of the work of Study One, it has become apparent that three separate but related contexts impact...
vagaries and challenges of existence. Regardless of the speed of our lives and even if we were unfettered from the monsters of media, we all still face the basic questions of existence. Who am I, and why am I here? If busy enough and if bold enough, it seems that the facade of attitude can be a place of refuge, but it is only made of straw.

In an earlier age the salient characteristics of attitude might have been simply and even accurately termed a lack of grace, or a lack of manners. Could this still apply? Is it possible that we, dedicated Lutheran teachers, can confront the severely flawed imaging of some sports/political giants by returning to the basic teachings in the book of manners? James Morris in "Democracy Beguiled," (The Wilson Quarterly, Autumn 1996), suggests this very obligation for society as a whole. He says, "Manners are a legacy of education, and the society’s failure is in its reluctance to provide education, in and out of the classroom, that can be trusted to instruct the young about the world and its history, the nation and its context, to instill critical discrimination and an ease with nuance, to set the terms for everyday conduct, and to rank bad, better, best. An adequate education should leave you on perpetual alert, accustomed to raising the possibility, like a flare at a disaster site, that what you are being told is nonsense, even if it’s hardbound and best-selling."

Fortunately, we educators who have still retained that element of professional distance granted long ago by the rules of social decorum may rely upon the functional titles Mr. or Mrs. or Miss or Ms., as in Goodbye, Mr. Chips, and To Sir With Love. No honorific title here. Simple respect will do. The stage is set for leadership into ideas, thought provoking disagreement, and teamwork toward a common end. Why not include the basics of silverware functions in a mannered setting. Why not gustatory delight without gustatory sound effects? Why not do unto others as you would have them do unto you as the glue that makes society work? Why not the highest order of things as the motivator to good behavior? Why not the response of love for the Love that God showed us first? Why forget to link the everyday Thank you to the Eternal Thank you? Why not rise above the commonplace with the timeless gratitude of the forgiven sinner?

Who needs an attitude? Only the poor sap who is denied the eternal sense of who he is and why he exists.

Pardon me, but would you please...? Thank you."

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The Role of School Ministry in the Church

diverse people the full stature which Christ gives to all his followers who accept one another even as they are accepted by him.

These three concerns seem to me to be important opportunities for the school’s ministry in the church—if, in fact, the church is to have any strength and vision for the next century: We need to broaden our perspective of our historical and spiritual foundations; we need to create patterns of formation which are more affective, and thus convince children that Christian profession is not whistling in the dark; and we need to celebrate through actual and intentional programming that kind of appreciation for diversity which undermines conflict and establishes those bonds which allow us to see Jesus in one another.

By and large, the messages I hear coming from the church’s agencies and parochial schools call for strengthening the family, teaching sound moral principles, opposing abortion and teaching the liturgy! Those themes seem to be repeated in a “Johnny-one-note” fashion, and they often fail to appreciate the larger social, cultural, theological and political contexts in which such topics need to be framed. The three issues I have raised are very personal, and were each of you to prepare these remarks, you might add many others to the list — and I invite you to do so. Whatever is added, however, needs to take into account those broad contexts and the implications they have for making meaning. As an adult learning theorist, I would be particularly interested in the ways in which your own transformations may bring reinterpretations in these matters. All that we say, however, should never be construed as negative or destructive for us who love the church and its schools.

The potential for improving the way in which we minister through the church’s schools is given anew to each generation. We who believe in excellence and intentionality as gifts and opportunities provided by the Gospel’s power at work in us should carry the torch for such a possibility no less confidently than the runners who last year brought their convictions and dreams to Atlanta. After all, for us as well, the race is not over.?

References
understand how we are to deal with such an awareness given our Biblical backgrounds on the subject, but I am convinced that Christians who claim to be claimed by different orientations must be partners in the discussion about how we are to regard one another in Christ. I am also convinced that much of what is said on the issue in churches and the church's schools is sometimes not helpful to children who struggle with the complexities of maturation. We have a long struggle ahead of us in this area.

This was a transformational change for me. What I had grown up with in the church and in the church's schools was often piously contrived and simplistically portrayed, and it did not deal with the realities which I had come to understand. While the church struggles to make up its mind on a variety of thorny issues, it seemed clear to me, the students in its schools dare not be held hostage to perspectives which are not informed either by the best thinking of our day or by the love of Christ which agonizes for expression through us. We must — must — continue to help students to treat all who are different with respect, compassion, understanding, and a sense of wonder over the rich possibilities in our world. This is the niche for which we deserve to be known.

One of the things which continues to distress me most, given my transformational experiences, specifically with respect to issues of compassion, justice, equality and fair play, is that the interpreters of the Judeo-Christian tradition in our society have often been the courts, not the churches and their schools. Society integrated not because Christian communities wanted to celebrate diversity, but because the courts required it. Congregations gave women the franchise, finally, not because we embraced diversity, but because of the inevitable momentum resulting from the Constitutional amendment on woman suffrage. Congregations built ramps for the disabled because it became law! At what point did the church and the church's schools lead the way for society—and help its youthful learners to participate in the paving of the new road? At what point do our schools become proactive proponents of the new age which seeks to be born among us?

It is the role of the church's schools—and, in fact, a unique niche for it—to create here already, now already, that kind of compassionate and creative fellowship which anticipates among diverse people the full stature which Christ gives to all his followers who accept one another even as they are accepted by him. This was a role which, for me, the students in its schools dare not be held hostage to perspectives which are not informed either by the best thinking of our day or by the love of Christ which agonizes for expression through us. We must — must — continue to help students to treat all who are different with respect, compassion, understanding, and a sense of wonder over the rich possibilities in our world. This is the niche for which we deserve to be known.

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Building an Authentic Reporting System

In the last issue, we discussed strategies for documenting learning using portfolios and anecdotal notes. Both of those methods require a system of organization. I hope you are trying at least one of the suggested strategies. Organizing your collection of artifacts of learning is only the beginning, however. Now you need to refine (or build!) a reporting system that utilizes the artifacts you are collecting. These artifacts become the backup for the evaluation you make of each child's progress.

If the documentation system can be thought of as a map of the learning going on in your classroom, then your reports are the completed maps with a legend explaining the various symbols you have used to describe each explorer and his/her progress to a destination. You will also need to explain (and defend) the destinations that children choose. If children are different types of explorers, why would we expect them to all head for the same destination? And why should they take the same route, even if they are headed for the same destination?

Mapping Progress and Accomplishments

Reporting a child's learning involves constructing individual roadmaps. For each child, the destination on the roadmap is the same. The route to that destination, however, is highly individual. Each child's route depends on individual interests, learning styles, experiences, and dispositions. Each child's success in reaching the destination depends on a supportive teacher who blends careful observation and encouragement with the right amount of information.

Let's look at constructing the roadmap. Each child's map is a story of challenges — and reactions to those challenges. Meaningful reporting of the journey requires the teacher to document the child's reactions and
solutions to challenges far more completely than the results of the reactions to those challenges. Simply put, it means giving parents and administrators information about how children learn and discover, rather than simply what they know. It means valuing and recording persistence, problem-solving, curiosity, and wonder. It means noticing and valuing questions and creativity. It means finding ways to communicate the process of learning.

Reporting systems need to be based on the portfolios and anecdotal records which you have begun to collect and organize. Those records are more than mere backup for the same old way of reporting what children know. Anecdotal and portfolios are the triplog that will be used to create the journey story, complete with pictures (portfolios) and narrative (anecdotal).

The Learning Roadmap

Teaching the way children learn requires each teacher to find more graphic (quite literally!) ways to communicate the learning which results. Reporting formats need to be open enough to allow for a narrative which describes the child’s life. Good teachers have always taken history into account. I am suggesting that we systematize this approach.

For instance, children often want to take home paintings and other creations as soon as the paint or the glue has dried. While this may be exciting, it does not promote an appreciation of learning history. A learning history approach requires an appreciation of what has gone before, a comparison with the past. A learning history also needs to document persistence, problem-solving, curiosity, and wonder.

In teaching, as in life, we see what we want to see. We document what we expect to report. We notice what we know we will need to record.

So maybe the first challenge is to make certain that the reporting and recording system we are using makes sense. Are we documenting discovery? Chronicling creativity? Archiving artifacts that underscore the development of persistence? In short, are we teaching the way children learn and reporting that learning?

The History Approach

For anyone to appreciate progress, an understanding of the history of that progress is important. What came before will inform what is currently happening. For some children, attempts to learn have included challenges and frustrations which have been longstanding. If this is the case, any current progress is all the more significant.

On the other hand, for some children, progress has slowed from its prior rate. That history is also important. To be understood, that history may need to be informed by other circumstances in the child’s life. Good teachers have always taken history into account. I am suggesting that we systematize this approach.

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together. That same Sunday, I observed one of my pastors, tenderly escort his wife out of the service. She has Alzheimer’s. Suddenly, it hit me. This is what it’s all about! This is why I tell my faculty that I expect them to be worshipping members of a Christian community. This is why our children and teenagers participate in our educational programming. We want to incarnate Christ before their very eyes.

Sooner or later, along with what we teach students cognitively, we want them to be able to test these ideas in our Christian community effectively. There is no place in all the world like the church! Students are being prepared for life in a difficult and challenging world, and they need to know that forgiveness works — that it “rules,” as my son would say, that compassion is more powerful than destruction, that people of hope can endure all things, that to experience being loved makes you a conqueror!

Students need to know that forgiveness works — that it “rules,” as my son would say, that compassion is more powerful than destruction, that people of hope can endure all things, that to experience being loved makes you a conqueror!

Fellowship

Finally, I want to talk about the importance of the church’s schools creating student encounters with diversity. I want to explore the importance of the church’s schools celebrating and prizing diversity among humans — as one of God’s richest gifts. As you well know, this has not been our strength historically, and we still have problems with much of it. There is diversity among races, abilities, genders, sexual preferences, physical shapes and sizes. While the church enjoys quoting passages such as “in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, slave nor free,” we have not, even in our

dying of cancer to talk about her hope, or Mr. M., fighting alcoholism, to describe the way faith fought the battle. We knew about those things, however, only through rumor and gossip. It seems to me that if the school is to be a formational catalyst, a living laboratory, an affective hugger-of-the-truth, it might have intentionally exposed us to some of that. It is the role of the church’s schools to do a better job of preparing us for life — and for life in the church — by helping us to experience personally the convicting power which comes from knowing that the church’s teachings have affective power. They simply work. Oh, God, they work!

So that is why I needed to catch my breath. I tried to catch it in the Fellowship Hall by falling down and lying still. It almost worked. Until Karl Koenig jumped on my stomach, and my breath got away again. Apparently the rest of the Parent’s Day Out Kids or PDOK’s as I call them, thought that Karl had invented a new game. I believe it’s called the Jump On Pastor Phil and Watch Him Turn Blue Game.

I know what these ten chapters of Pooh are all about now. They’re about me. When I look in the mirror I see my father as he looked to me when I was young-er. And something about that is . . . unsettling. It’s not really the getting old-er. I guess I expected that. It’s that it happened so quickly. You see, I’m almost sure I was younger last year. At least I still thought of myself as young. I don’t think I do anymore, especially when six small children are using my stomach (ample as it may be) as a trampoline.

It’s not a bad thing, getting old-er. It’s just life. We’re born.
We grow up. We grow old. We die. In between there are a lot of games to play—some serious, some frivolous, some dangerous, some not worth playing at all, some that just are necessary, and a few, I hope, that are just plain fun.

Christopher Robin is leaving the Forest, and he doesn’t know how to say good-bye. So he and Pooh go to the very top of the 100 acre Wood to the only place in the Forest where you can sit down carelessly, without getting up again almost at once and looking for somewhere else. Sitting there they can see the whole world spread out until it touched the sky...

"Pooh, promise you’ll never forget about me ever."
"I promise," he said.
"Pooh, whatever happens you will understand, won’t you?"
"Understand what?"
"Oh, nothing. He laughed and jumped to his feet. "Come on!"
"Where?" said Pooh.
"Anywhere!" said Christopher Robin.

(The House At Pooh Corner by A.A. Milne, E.P. Dutton & Co. New York; 1956)

These ten chapters have been all about growing up and what we lose and what we gain and how the two really go together. You see, when the games get really serious, when you’d rather not play at all but don’t have a choice, when you can see the end coming and you know it will not be a happy one this time, that’s when Pooh, at least for me, is a gift of God.

It’s a promise really. It’s a promise that someday when all is said and done and the serious games have all been played, it will be time for fun, just plain fun. And it won’t be fun that costs more than it’s worth, or fun that is really seriousness in disguise, or fun that gets you into trouble. It will be real, honest fun, like Chase Pastor Phil and Squeal Fun. Only this time the grownups won’t get tired. And everyone will play together and no one will get hurt and everyone will win.

"And (God) will destroy the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces..." (Isaiah 25:7-8)

The last words A.A. Milne wrote about Pooh and Christopher Robin go like this:

So they went off together. But wherever they go, and whatever happens to them on the way, in that enchanted place on the top of the Forest, a little boy and his Bear will always be playing.

God, like Pooh, I suppose, is always there, wherever you are, just waiting to be remembered, waiting to be picked up, waiting to play.

meaning teachers and pastors—and I hope that as I reflect on these foundations with you, I can encourage you not to feel intimidated by such an observation, but to agree with me that narrow parochialism and myopia are not to be prized as educational objectives.

Dr. Al Sager helped me work through this concern in an Augsburg-Fortress book on spirituality. Imagine a circle with four quadrants, each a different dimension of spirituality. The Lutheran strength is in the quadrant which perceives God through language and logic, cerebral exercises which can praise God at lofty dimensions. However, other quadrants praise God through service to fellow human beings, by giving a prophetic witness to implications of the faith within society, and by developing an intense personal relationship in prayer. I have come to believe that the Lutheran genius is to intellectualize all of that.

As a result, the contribution of our parochial schools to the field of academia has been significant (Lutheranism was, after all, born in a university). There are numerous individuals in the educational world who received their starts in our schools. Our church’s schools, however, because of a too narrowly conceived view of Christian history and Christian spirituality, have not developed those emphases which might have helped us produce visible (perhaps also viable) candidates for leadership in areas of social justice, politics, servanthood, science and sainthood. Name them! You will find yourself stuttering.

Our educational programming has not been as wholistic as it could have been, and products of our parochial schools sometimes find themselves sitting painfully on the tip of an iceberg. All too often, failing to appreciate that that tip is at least the focal point of the iceberg, they simply get off and move onto something which is more comfortable. This is a loss to the church! It is the role of the church’s schools to do a better job in respecting the broader foundations of the church’s history and spirituality. We simply are not all there is of Christianity. While we may know that intuitively, we have not developed meaningful ways to talk about those other brothers and sisters in Christ who do not bear the name “Lutheran.” Our schools ought to be the places where such reflection is done lovingly and perceptively.

Formation

In all my years in parochial school, and for many years thereafter, to move now into a different area of reflection, I had not realized the degree to which the school—and the church itself—is a living laboratory in which the faith is tested and found to be defensible. It was there for me to see, but this important dimension of formation escaped me.

Last month, I had two transformational experiences which helped me in this regard. During the Eucharist on a Sunday morning in the church in which my wife and I hold membership, I observed a handsome young father, the chairman of the congregation, escort his handicapped and retarded teenage son to the communion rail and hold him while they communed...
are today. However, we may need to move beyond simplicities and enlarge the context within which we construe Christian education. In the remarks which follow, therefore, I'd like to share some thoughts about Foundations, Formation, and Fellowship, along with the transforming moments in my own life which brought me to such conclusions.

Foundations

I have been around long enough to know all the phrases. Our educational ministries "root children in the Word," they "ground them in the truth," they are "faithful to a heritage." "Missouri gets the Word out and keeps it straight!" Least that seem to be the exclusive propensity of the LCMS, I have also been struck by the fact that the corporate world, in the midst of a rapidly changing society, has a concern for organizational memory, for keeping employees attuned to the culture and the traditions which give a corporation direction and stability. There is a place for rootage, and I would never deny that.

Some years ago, however, I had an experience which sharpened and transformed my perspective on rootage. On behalf of the Commission on Ministerial Growth and Support, I developed programs for church leaders in Israel. For seven years I led study/travel programs for literally hundreds of clergy and educators which I entitled "Living Churches in Old Jerusalem." I had become aware of 22 million Christians, members of the Ancient Separated Churches of the East, which had been separated from the West in 451. I had known them only from the historical theology texts and assumed these Monophysite "heretics" had died out centuries ago. I came to learn, however, that today they are an often persecuted, certainly economically deprived and politically disadvantaged, yet vital Christian minority within the growing Islamic population of the Middle East. Although their roots go back to the earliest church, I discovered that these ancient Christians had never heard of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod—the last bastion of truth in the Christian world. They had never even heard of Lutherans. This was a transforming experience for me.

As I reflected on my rootage in the foundations which had been given to me by the parochial school system, I came to realize that it was not that the foundations were wrong, but that what the LCMS had come to call the "foundation" was often too narrowly conceived, and that its own approach to spirituality was myopic. I had been shortchanged by my well-

Our church's schools, however, because of a too narrowly conceived view of Christian history and Christian spirituality, have not developed those emphases which might have helped us produce visible (perhaps also viable) candidates for leadership in areas of social justice, politics, servanthood, science and sainthood.

A former seminary professor wrote a book on the subject, entitled, The Half-Known God. Little wonder that it is so with the Holy Spirit. Fathers we know, and sons we know, so that we can at least conceive by analogy of the Father and the Son. But a Spirit (or "Ghost" for those raised on older hymnals and translations of Scripture) is a real challenge. Our culture helps us not at all, offering only the strange exaggerations of Halloween (by turns silly and Satanic). Even what pronoun to use is tricky: the Hebrew word for "spirit" is feminine ("she"), the Greek word is neuter ("it"), but the preponderance of the church's liturgical and doctrinal tradition favors "he." How, then, to help ourselves and our students to think and speak of the Third Person in the Holy Trinity? What difference does it make for us that there is a Holy Spirit?

It is not, of course, that two millennia of Christian life and thought have ignored the issue. Indeed, the Holy Spirit has featured large from time to time. Mysticism and various charismatic movements have heavily emphasized the Spirit's role in the relationship between God and the believer and in living the Christian life. Yet Lutheran Christian doctrine and practice have often recognized significant dangers in these movements, particularly as they can lead one to rely on means of receiving God's grace outside of those promised in Scripture. The Spirit's work of conversion through Word and Sacrament receives the greatest stress.

What's essential to recall, however, is that one can fall off of a horse on two sides. The fruits of our traditional teaching can be an overly cognitive faith, even rationalistic in its tendency to work out details of doctrine where Scripture is silent or unclear. Sermons can then end too soon, before working out the application of the Truth in the lives of the hearers. To use theological and educational terms, respectively, sanctification and the affective domain are too easily ignored.

It need not be so. This year the middle day of the two months covered by this issue of Lutheran Education, Sunday, the 31st of May, is the Day of Pentecost, the one day of the Church Year when the Holy Spirit's work takes center stage. We "see red," not in anger, but in joy at the gift of God's fiery presence among his people. Pentecost, in fact, marks a crucial pivot, being both the last day of the Easter festival (when we celebrate the central fact of history and faith which gives us the sure hope of life) and the first day of the long season wherein we consider what Easter means for ourselves and our neighbors, as we live in a world still beset by the Last Enemy, Death.
In the spirit (and Spirit) of Pentecost, we can recall and teach that God remains active in our world and in our lives. Indeed, our Lord himself suggests in the Gospel of John that we are even better off with the gift of the Spirit than with his own, visible presence (16:7-15; 20:29). We are called, then, to respond with faithful teaching and faithful living. We may well continue to struggle with how to conceive of the power of God at work within us, but we join nevertheless in the ancient prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful, and kindle in them the fire of your love! Alleluia!

Lutheran Education Web Site

By the time you receive this issue of Lutheran Education, it should be possible for you to use your computer to access our World Wide Web site on the internet.

The design and contents of the web page have not been finalized at this time, but the site is likely to include the following:

- Tables of contents for each published issue.
- Text of selected articles and columns from current issues of Lutheran Education.
- Indexes for past volumes of the journal.
- Text of selected articles from the archives.
- Author guidelines for submitting articles and calls for papers for future issues.
- Links to related web sites.

One of the goals for creating this web site is to make it possible to address more specific, practical issues of Lutheran education in addition to the broader, often more theoretical and scholarly articles generally featured in the journal. To this end, we are also exploring the possibility of creating an interactive forum for discussion of issues and ideas relating to the varied areas of Lutheran education.

To access Lutheran Education online, point your web browser at www.curf.edu/-LEJournal.

The Role of School Ministry in the Church

in Elmhurst, Illinois (eight grades). I attended a public high school. I attended two Lutheran seminaries, one non-Lutheran one, and two secular universities, Georg-August at Goettingen and Columbia University. Today, as President of Concordia University at Austin, I have ultimate oversight over programs which prepare educators for both public and parochial school classrooms. Given my background, I feel I have the opportunity to be somewhat objective about my own experiences with the strengths and weaknesses of the LCMS parochial school system, and about the needs for direction in the years ahead.

Let me begin my remarks by telling you about a letter I received this week from the Harvard Medical School signed by a D.B., M.D. He had read my name somewhere and wondered whether I was the David Zersen of his childhood. If I were, he said, then I would surely remember Mrs. R., who regularly chased Billy B. through the coat closet with a razor strap, and Mr. M. who effected discipline by picking up a pile of books and hitting students over the head with them, and Mr. W. who once beat up Bruce H. in the hallway. He reflected that while our educational environment was a bit brutal, he at least had been set on the straight and narrow. In the Unitarian congregation of which he is now a member, he occasionally reminds the leadership, in their theological discussions, not to forget the Atonement! His reflections set me thinking.

I want you to know, first of all, that I am grateful for many things I received in my parochial education. I learned a phonetic approach to alphabetization which I think was helpful. I learned to read and appreciate music. I acquired some understanding of Biblical content. I learned a respect for the role of religion in society. I received some sense of the position descriptions of professional church workers (one of which I ultimately became).

On the other hand, you need to know that I received poor foundations in science and math. I was introduced to an authoritarian and abusive approach to discipline, and Dr. D. B. remembered it correctly. I became anaesthetized to Biblical stories through an overly repetitive religious curriculum (Mary and Martha were always coming around the corner over the course of eight years). We had grossly inadequate facilities. (Eighth grade science consisted of fellow student Wesley J. being permitted weekly to open the wooden box and perform an experiment, which usually ended up in disaster.) I acquired a fear of the secular world and a condescension to other religious groups which, unlike us in the LCMS, “had not been given the one true faith.”

Over the course of many years, I have had occasion to rethink the value of my own educational background at the elementary level. Although there have been some dark ages over my personal centuries, and there is much I would happily trade in for more learner-centered and balanced approaches, I nevertheless do believe that the prospects for a vital educational ministry in the church have never been greater than they
The Role of School Ministry in the Church—Today and Tomorrow

Recently, I had the opportunity to visit the National University of Physical Education in Seoul, Korea, where young men and women pursue a degree in physical education in the morning and train to be Olympic athletes in the afternoon. I have never seen such a fascinating combination of theory and practice applied in an academic setting. The commitment of the students was overwhelming, and the acknowledged inappropriateness of anything which discouraged excellence (like addictive or abusive substances) was striking.

I reflected on this again in reading the headlines with the stories about the Atlanta Olympics and the preparations for world competition in a friendly but strongly intentional climate. It struck me that we also seek to place such intentionality and such qualities of excellence at the heart of the LCMS school system and that the reflections in this article should do no less than seek to help us realize the optimum dimensions of quality for our schools—and through them for our church and our society.

My reflections here are those of an insider who became an outsider and then came back to work on the inside. I'm the product of a parochial school education.
In current educational parlance, one often hears about replacing “the sage on the stage” (the Gradgrindian conception of teaching as the act of pouring information into the little inert pitchers arrayed before us in the classroom) with “the guide on the side” (the teacher as coach or facilitator, gently helping students make discoveries on their own). On the whole, I think, this re-conception of the teacher’s role has been positive. But it’s as true in educational as in theological matters that, as George Heider points out in this issue’s “A Final Word,” it’s possible to fall off a horse on either side. Perhaps my parable can speak to these potential pitfalls, too.

Taken to one extreme, the “guide on the side” can leave a classroom essentially content-less. The teacher functions as little more than a cheerleader for the “process” of her students as they flounder around seeking answers. In our laudable pursuit of more humane classrooms, it pays to remember that we teachers do (I hope!) know things our students need to know, and it won’t do to pretend otherwise or to make them wander around needlessly in search of knowledge we might share with them. Megan would not have been satisfied had I simply said, “Keep looking, Meg. Eventually you’ll discover the source of that mysterious noise.” I knew something she wanted to know, and it only made sense that I would share my knowledge with her.

Paradoxically, in rushing to vacate the role of “sage on the stage,” it is also possible to err by moving away from our students rather than closer to them, to move from the podium to the wings rather than down among the groundlings. (Frankly, I often fear that if we aren’t careful the increasing emphasis on the role of technology in education may lead us precisely in this direction, that the net effect of “distance learning” may be to create distance between teacher and learner rather than to bridge distances.)

In this regard we in Lutheran education have a natural edge over our public colleagues: “teaching cheek to cheek” is a natural outgrowth of our schools’ concern for the spiritual as well as the emotional and intellectual development of our students. In theory, at least (and often in practice, I know), we’ve been about the joyful task of “educating the whole person” since long before it became fashionable. It’s probably true, as David Zersen cautions, that “the Lutheran genius is to intellectualize” our approach to faith and life (for reasons as much cultural as theological, I suspect).

Nevertheless, the freedom we have to engage spiritual issues with our students, along with the more intimate settings in which many of us teach, allow us to do with our students what I did with Megan as I put myself on her level and placed my cheek next to hers, bridging the gulf between father/teacher and daughter/learner and leading her to understanding.

Best of all, we follow the Risen Lord whom Mary Magdalene addressed on Easter morning as “Rabonni.” We know the ultimate Teacher, who comes to us his students at our level, inviting us cheek to cheek in Word and sacrament and prayer, that we may know and experience his will for us.
Teaching Cheek to Cheek

"What that noise, Daddy?" It's been Megan's favorite question for a few weeks now, having superceded those perennial two-year-old favorites, "Why?" and "What happened, Daddy?" We had been playing out in the backyard when the mournful cooing of a mourning dove attracted her attention. "It's just a bird," I responded.

But when the dove cooed again, Megan repeated the question: "What that noise, Daddy?" This time I offered a little more explanation. "It's a mourning dove," I said. "It's cooing.

But that still wasn't enough, and as the dove continued to coo, Megan continued to scan the sky and ask, "What that noise, Daddy?"

Pointing to the bird on the wire did little good. She was unable to follow either my line of vision or the precise direction my finger was pointing. Not until I knelt down beside her, placed my cheek against hers, and gently guided her gaze was her question finally answered.

She saw what I saw, and she understood.

Several days later, I was reminded of this experience and suddenly realized I had lived a parable. In reflecting on this routine occurrence, I've come to realize that it reveals more than the cognitive and perceptual limitations of two-year-olds and the burdens these limitations place on parents. I've come to see it as a profound metaphor for teaching and learning.

When Megan first asked, "What that noise, Daddy?" I reacted as I know I've often responded to students' questions. Her question was off the lesson plan, unrelated to what I was focused on; therefore, the question was a distraction, and I disposed of it as quickly as possible. Only her persistence convinced me otherwise: it was an genuine question. She really wanted to know something, and she thought I could help her.

Next I tried simply adding more information. Now, it's true she wanted to know a piece of factual information. Words were needed. But words themselves weren't enough. Even my gestures couldn't make the connection. Not until I put myself on her level and placed my cheek next to hers, joining her perspective with mine, was I able to bridge the gap and let her grasp this information.

It's not a bad metaphor for teaching, is it?

Over and over again, whether in the early childhood classroom where "teaching cheek to cheek" may happen quite literally or in a secondary classroom in which it may need to be more metaphorical, I've seen "eurekas!" happen just this way: Good teachers find ways to break through the distance between them and their students, to draw...
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Ode To A Parochial School Teacher

A tribute by (and to) Donald L. Deffner
Well done, good and faithful servant!
(Mar. 12, 1924 to Nov. 25, 1997)

I thank God for my faithful parochial school teachers. Together with my parents, in a warm Christian home, and the other teachers I had over the years, they gave me a solid foundation for my Christian training. They have been a profound blessing to me. And their instruction had a marked effect on my 48 years as a pastor and 36 years as a seminary professor.

At the age of 6, I was told I was going to school. I liked it at home and said I didn’t want to go. But my mother said I had to go or I’d just be a dummy. Well, I had seen them in the store windows downtown. And I didn’t want to turn into a dummy, so I went to school.

I can see the parochial school classroom as clearly as if it were yesterday. That’s 1930, Immanuel Lutheran School, 324 South Ellis St., Wichita, Kansas. There was the “little room” (grades 1-4), and then the “big room” (grades 4-8). Then there was the multicolored map of the United States which fascinated me. A pan of water on an ancient heater was supposed to balance the humidity. Vividly etched in my memory is the picture above the teacher’s desk. It showed two children about to cross a rickety bridge. A fierce-looking snake awaited them behind a bush on the other side. But an angel hovered overhead, its protecting hand shielding them from harm.

But my most wide-eyed memory is from the third grade. If we had behaved during the day, before dismissal the teacher would read to us from Fox’s Book of Martyrs. We sat there with our mouths agape at the gory crucifixions and varied forms of slaughter of the early Christians.

But that school had “an atmosphere in which grace flourished.” Christ was at the center of all instruction. And by the Holy Spirit’s blessing we daily grew in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4)

In the early years I remember Ms. Popp and a Mr. Juergensen. For the last four years Mr. Harold Leimer was my teacher. At this date, 65 years later, I don’t recall the details of doctrine or Scriptural truth which they taught me. But their instruction is deeply imbedded in my faith and life.

I thank you, my teachers. I thank God for dedicated teachers one and all! I salute you for your faithful service. As Scripture says, “Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3). And I look forward to seeing you again in heaven where Our Lord will give you your Master’s degree, “W.D.”: “Well done, good and faithful servants!”

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