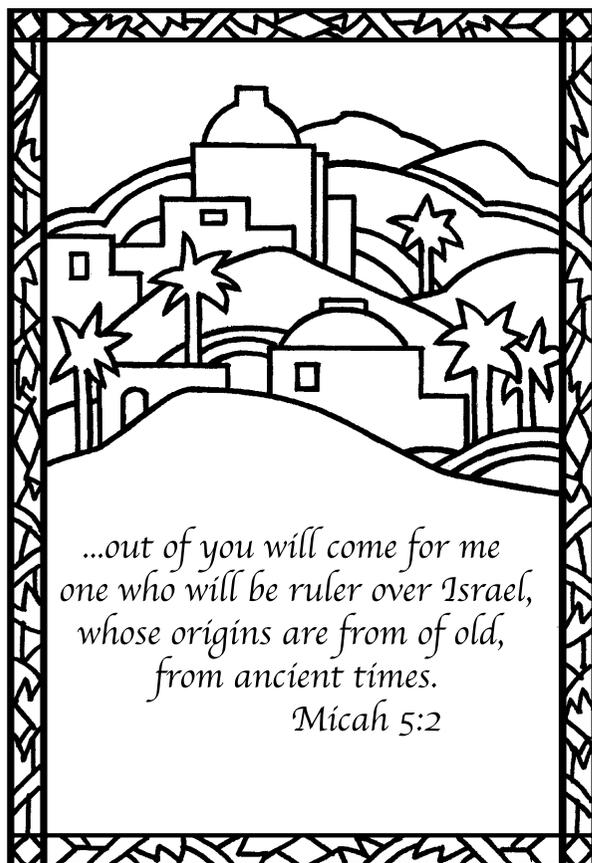


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DECEMBER 2000

The Lutheran Educator



The WELS Education Journal



The Lutheran Educator

The education journal
of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
edited by the faculty of Martin Luther College

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Anfechtung

Do you suffer from Anfechtung? I do, and I know you do too. So do your students. I've seen the symptoms. Anfechtung. It's a German word. But not only Germans suffer from it. For Luther, Anfechtung meant that death, the devil, and the world combine in a terrifying assault on man, reducing him to a state of hopelessness and helplessness. For Luther, Anfechtung meant that the believer is assaulted by temptations. He is put through tests. He experiences anxieties and doubts.

Think of what our students are going through today. The lifestyles and the attitudes of the world assault them. Many come from broken homes. Many experience loneliness and isolation. Many wonder whether they'll fit in, whether they'll make friends, whether they'll be successful. They question whether what the church has always believed and taught is really true.

Ultimately, it is God who is behind Anfechtung. It is foreign to his nature, but he does it so that he might destroy our self-confidence and complacency and reduce us to utter despair and humiliation. God wants us to look solely to Christ and the cross. For there alone is hope. There alone is assurance. There alone is confidence. There alone is forgiveness. There alone is life, now and forever. That's why Luther could speak of Anfechtung as a "delicious despair." Despairing of self, I look only to Christ and the cross and there find delicious peace and forgiveness.

Through the gospel, which is God's very nature, God strengthens our feeble arms and our weak knees so that we in turn can strengthen the feeble arms and the weak knees of our students. So that we can make level paths for their feet. So that they who are lame, they who are full of questions and doubts and concerns, may not trip or fall, but may be healed and made strong and be able to walk through life with confidence. It's the gospel alone that can do that. Thus it's the message of Christ and the cross that needs to pervade our teaching and all our dealings with our students. Maybe it's a servant attitude in the classroom. Maybe it's sacrificing ourselves, giving selflessly of our time and our talents in the interest of our students. Maybe it's a willingness to talk in private about whatever might be troubling them. Maybe it's just being friendly.

Our students are getting plenty of Anfechtung. We don't need to add to it. What they need, more than anything, is the message of forgiveness and life in Christ, as they hear it from our lips and as they see it reflected in our lives.

MJL

As Long as They are Reading

Paul Kaiser

“As long as they are reading...” (You finish the sentence.) “... we’re happy.” “...they are learning something important.” “...we certainly should not interfere.”

Reading is seen as the universal key to a good education. It receives the major emphasis in the primary curriculum and becomes the chief vehicle for imparting education in later grades. If a school teaches reading skills well enough so that students do well on standardized tests, the school is considered successful at one of its essential purposes. If reading skills are not being taught effectively, the school may be branded a failure. Educators know that children who read widely and regularly of their own volition will reinforce and extend the skills learned in the school’s reading program.

Wise teachers know it is important to foster the lifelong reading habit. Christian teachers know that reading skills and habits are important for developing Bible readers. So it sounds right to say, “As long as they are reading...”

And yet reading is neither good or bad in itself. What you read and the use you make of what you read determines whether reading is good or bad.

As Christian teachers we need to teach a skill which goes beyond decod-

ing and comprehending. We need to teach our students to make evaluations and applications of what they read with Christian principles in mind. We need to teach our children to recognize themes and discern a writer’s purpose. We need to teach them to be on their guard so that their faith is not endangered by what they read (1 Co 16:13).

Too few students (and I fear teachers) understand that what we read has the power to change who we are and that authors often have the subtle purpose of shaping our opinions, attitudes, and character. Bias is good. Without it literature is insipid. We want our students to read widely and grapple with authors, but we must arm them. We must put them on their guard.

There is a special danger when they are led to literature by us, when they take it out of our school library, or obtain it on our recommendation. If their guard is usually up, they may let it down. “A book from our school library must be good for me. If my teacher reads it and recommends it, ...” Remember Jesus’ warning about offending one of his little ones.

So what are we to do? We should err on the side of caution when recommending or providing literature to our students for independent reading. Can

we provide literature about an appealing boy who studies at a school for witchcraft and uses his sorcery to produce good when we teach in the second commandment that “using witchcraft” is sin? On the other hand, we might want to read such a book with our students and wrestle together with the author. Finally we need to make a concerted long term effort to teach our students to be discerning readers since we cannot filter everything they obtain from other sources. This should be a constant fea-

ture of our reading lessons. We teachers also need to apply those lessons to ourselves so we are not taken in by the popularity or craftsmanship of authors whose themes may be a detriment to ourselves or our students.

As long as they are reading ... reading with Christian discernment ... reading without danger to their souls.... ❧

Paul Kaiser is principal of Immanuel Lutheran School, Waupaca, Wisconsin.

Herod Plans

And so the Magic-worker comes at last!
 Three years He's shown His wondrous might to men.
 They say His touch has power, that fever flees
 Before His fingers, even blind eyes see;
 Today perhaps He'll show that power to me.
 Youth slips from me, my body's growing old,
 Older than my years warrant. I have lived
 With wine and song and merry Roman girls
 And merry Roman boys in Caesar's house,
 And now I pay the price. Perhaps this Man
 Will touch me and will bring my youth again.
 I'll try Him, seek a sign, and then I'll draw
 Him close beside me, offer Him His freedom,
 All He desires as well, if He will work
 The miracles that brings me youth again.
 He has His price, I'm sure, like any man.
 Then Rome once more, while Caesar stares agape
 At my new strength—and nights of wine and song!

He stood and looked and answered not a word.
 But, oh! how deep He looked within my soul
 Past places where I had not looked for years.
 Such men as He and John would drive me mad;
 And so He goes to Pilate—and His end!

William E. Brooks

Survival Skills: A Real Life Simulation

Craig R. Sonntag

Do you find it difficult teaching students with a wide range of abilities? If you do, you are not alone. One possible solution is to teach using simulations. Simulations use real life activities and problems to enhance learning. Simulations are valuable because they can be used for remedial purposes with less gifted students while challenging the most gifted ones in your classroom at the same time. I use a simulation to teach basic life skills to my less gifted students, while introducing new and more difficult concepts to my most gifted students.

The Survival Skills simulation idea originally came from Kenn Kremer, current editor of *The Lutheran Parent*. When I student taught at Gethsemane, Milwaukee, Kenn gave me a brief out-

line of his life skills simulation. The simulation has grown and undergone quite a few changes over the eleven years I have used it in my classroom.

The simulation sets up a self-functioning society within your own classroom. Students are given background, education, and training in many areas including budget, job applications and interviews, checking and saving accounts, insurance, taxes, real estate, stocks, credit, legal issues, and, most important, Christian stewardship. Each week a new topic is introduced, and a community speaker (sometimes from within our congregation) having expertise in that area makes a presentation to the students. That guest speaker will also interview any students that have applied for that particular occupation within our classroom society. The guest speaker will ultimately hire the candidate(s) that seem most qualified for the job.

Students receive weekly paychecks and pay weekly bills. Parents are involved as they charge their children for items such as food, rent, utilities, phone usage, clothes. These bills, as well as weekly church offerings, are paid

The program Mr. Sonntag describes in this article was also chosen as a finalist in the AAL Lutheran Educators Award for Financial Fitness programs. If you are interested in more information on this simulation, please visit www.aal.org/LifeResources/Youth-Resources/LEAFF/2000/ or contact the author at csonntag@ivlnet.com.

using the individual student's checking account. Hired bankers use financial software to maintain accurate account records. Ledger books could also be used. I also hire tutors whom I use within my classroom and in classrooms throughout the school. I find this helps build caring, nurturing relationships between members of our school family.

Each week students draw "chance cards." These are similar to the community chest cards in Monopoly, but they have been updated to reflect more typical real life expenses and situations. As the simulation progresses, students are introduced to more involved real life skills. Some students will not be able to use the advanced skills, but your gifted students will.

The benefits for my students and their families have been tremendous!

- Many former students have come back and told me how Survival Skills encouraged them and helped them get their first job.
- Less gifted students benefit by learning basic life skills they will need for the rest of their lives.
- Parents have commented that children have become much more conscious of the value of money and the results of hard work.
- Christian stewardship—the opportunity to teach and apply principles of Christian stewardship is the most important benefit of the program in my opinion. These students are the future leaders of our congregations, and we need to teach them stewardship principles that will benefit their local churches as well as the Christian

church at large.

I don't want anyone to think that using simulations doesn't come at a price. It is very time consuming for the teacher. The teacher must also be organized and willing to put in the extra effort. From my experiences, which are quite normal, I truly believe that the benefits for students, families, the school, and the church itself are far greater than any small sacrifice that must be made. ☺

Craig Sonntag serves as seventh and eighth grade teacher, athletic director, and technology coordinator at St. Matthew's Lutheran School, Janesville, Wisconsin.



Home School Support Groups

Rachel Mendell

Home school support groups began to emerge in the early 1980s, perhaps in response to the growing number of requirements that various states were placing upon home schools. During this time home educators were rare, so when one home schooling family found another, a bond was naturally formed.

Today new support groups spring up yearly. The home education movement is growing quickly, and with it the need for veterans to help rookies grows also. New home educators are often lost in a sea of curriculum choices, legal issues, and unsupportive family and friends. They seek guidance from parents and teachers who know the ropes.

Support groups are for everyone, even those who have been working in their school for years. They continually seek out new methods and better materials, as each year of education brings its own challenges.

Each support group has its own personality. It is shaped by the people involved, the legal and local atmosphere, and trends in the movement. A beginning group will need to have a purpose, a location, and a plan.

The purpose, of course, is to support, to educate, and to encourage; but as the

group is formed, decisions need to be made. Who can join the group? What types of activities will we offer? Will we have a Statement of Faith? Will we have a Code of Conduct? Will we have monthly meetings and field trips? Will we exchange addresses and phone numbers? Will we have someone in charge of reporting changes in legal matters? Will we develop a written Statement of Purpose? Many of these questions cannot be answered in the first year and it is likely that the group will change as time progresses.

The support group can meet in a church, a home, a community room in the library, or even a local restaurant. There may need to be an agreement about whether children can be at meetings. Some groups determine that each parent is responsible for their own children; this alleviates confusion and the “baby-sitter crisis.”

The group will have to decide on a plan or schedule. This may change as reality hits, but it is an important place to start. Will there be monthly meetings? Who will be in the leadership? Will there be organized group field trips and other activities? Is there a need to collect dues and have a treasurer? Will there be a newsletter? Should there be a phone tree for reminders or last minute

changes?

Monthly meetings can be planned one month at a time or annually. They can include a short business meeting and some planned activity, such as a video or audio tape, a speaker on a particular subject, or some other activity that the group can enjoy together. There can also be time for announcements, legislative updates, schedule changes, concerns, and ideas.

Leadership is important, but following a traditional leadership structure with president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer is not. Some groups form leadership “teams” that divide responsibilities according to talents and time. Good records are important for future reference and to avoid disagreements and repetition.

Another advantage of a support group is group rates. Field trips are fun to plan, but there should be one person in charge of making the communications and setting up dates, times, and collecting money. Most locations ask for an accurate head count and money in advance or on arrival. New support groups may want to keep field trips to a minimum the first year.

There are numerous other activities in which a home school support group can become involved. Each parent has a strength or area of expertise. These can be used to form a school co-op, where scheduled classes are planned in certain areas such as music, art, science, creative writing, photography, drama, crafts, and state history. Some co-ops are large and successful enough to offer four to six classes once a week. Art and

talent shows, sports teams of all kinds, science fairs, used curriculum book sales, spelling bees, BOOK-IT or other reading programs, chess clubs, drama clubs, geography bees, international dinner nights, school picture days, 4-H club, track and field days, student newspapers, and many others can be included from year to year. These augment a family’s program and build bonds of friendship. Many groups also offer group times for standardized testing, which is sometimes easier than going through the local school or hiring a private teacher.

As a group grows (or wishes to grow), a newsletter is a great way to communicate, especially to those members who cannot make every meeting. Besides announcements, the letter can contain tips and hints, articles by its members, student work, and even advertisements from member to member. At this point it may become necessary to appoint a treasurer and collect dues. Reminders for field trips or special events can be made by post card or by an organized phone tree.

Is a home educator’s support group a possibility for your church? Do you have home schooling families in your congregation? Do they want a group that is in doctrinal unity? Is there a place where they can meet? Are there others who are willing to help with the organization and leadership? What does your church or school have to offer that would be a help and encouragement to local home educators? Is it possible to see this as a mission outreach tool?

There are some estimates that the

Mendell

number of children enrolled in home education programs doubles each year. Many of these families, who have removed their children from what they consider an amoral situation, are on their own. As this population grows, the need for support also grows. Perhaps

the church has an opportunity to be of assistance to home schoolers. ❧

Rachel Mendell is a certified teacher in Ohio. Currently, she is teaching co-op classes to home educators in music, art, and Shakespeare. She home schools her six children.

Comments from the 2000 SEM Alumni Survey (see page 53)

“

I agree that there is a common core of learning that everyone needs to know, yet I think MLC has a bit too much of that and not enough classes centering on actual teaching and topics (like multicultural classrooms and special needs) that will be useful to teachers in the classroom.

”

“

I almost missed out on a great experience because I almost went to a different college than (D)MLC. My wife also cherishes the moments spent in New Ulm. God has richly blessed our synod and us as individuals. We remember you in our prayers and thank God for the opportunities he gave us as we grew in our studies, in the Word, and in each other.

”

“

Since I've graduated so recently, I can tell that the atmosphere at MLC is becoming more and more accepting, compared to the first two years of amalgamation.

”

“

I think chapel is a very important part of campus life. I still miss it. The attendance policy didn't play much of a part in my attending class. I learned by being in class so I would've gone anyway. I believe the college needs to do more to prepare graduates to live after college. Deal with living alone, adjusting to new congregations, doing taxes, and the other things that go along with being a first year teacher.

”



Paul L. Willems

Attention Deficit Disorder, ADD, and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, ADHD, have recently been recognized as diseases of the mind (Hammer 1999). However, it is interesting to know that Dr. George Sill identified this disorder in 1902. He called it, “abnormal deficits in moral control.” It was also labeled MBD or “Minimum Brain Damage” (Juern 1984,3). In 1937 C. Bradley reported that administering an oral amphetamine is an effective pharmacological treatment for such individuals (Sudderth and Kandel 1997,5). Later other central nervous system stimulants such as Dexedrine (dextroamphetamine) and Ritalin (methylphenidate hydrochloride) were used to help treat ADD. The first ADD conference in the United States was held in 1978 in Scottsdale, Arizona, but it attracted little attention. Many people then and even now find it difficult to accept ADD/ADHD as a “real” disorder in

humans. In October 1995, Thomas Armstrong published an article in *Education Week*, in which he stated “ADD is a mythical fantasy” used by an unjust society to legitimize itself and allow special education to de-mainstream minorities seeking access to educational resources (quoted in Sudderth and Kandel 1997,32-33). Individuals who subscribe to this view of ADD see psychotherapy or medication either as a short-term emergency intervention or as a cop-out to excuse problems (Kelly and Ramundo 1995,306).

However, Cynthia Hammer believes ADD is a mental illness in which a flawed genetic inheritance leads to brains that do not function well (Hammer 1999). Mental health is viewed as a continuum of difficulties in how well our brains allow us to function. While most people (over 90%) have minds “healthy enough” to allow them to function well in society, others with less than “healthy enough” brains run the gamut from mild disorders to those

that require major treatment and life-time hospitalization. About 5% of humans suffer disorders such as ADD and still others live in a “gray area” between “normal” and having mild dysfunctions. The problem mental health care givers have with ADD is that it does not fit into the two main categories of mental health care: 1) chronic disabilities of severe mental illness in which there is no cure or 2) less severe mental and emotional individuals who can be cured. The ADD individual is not severely mentally ill, but neither is there a cure for ADD (Kelly and Ramundo 1995,304).

Most diagnosticians believe ADD is a complex disorder involving not only inattention, but including impulsiveness, distractibility, and hyperactivity (Sudderth and Kandel 1997,3). The disorder results in poor management of everyday life situations. This is because sequencing—the ability to handle information in a step-wise manner, despite distractions; drive—the ability to accomplish the task at hand; executive control—the ability to deal with social issues without awkward frankness; and impulsiveness—the tendency to produce “verbal howitzers” instead of correct replies, are not under control in the ADD individual (Sudderth and Kandel 1997,8-10, 21). These disorders express themselves in reading problems, difficulty in writing, poor organizational skills, confusion within language, poor short term memory, and the like. The mind of an ADD individual appears to be in constant motion; always looking for novelty and high stimulus; never

pausing to focus on one object or concept for more than a few seconds. Whatever this individual does is done rapidly, contains many foolish errors and it is often obvious the individual did not follow instructions (“The Feeling of Having ADD”). A poem may help explain what goes on in such a mind:

I felt a Cleaving in my Mind—
As if my Brain had split—
I tried to match it—
Seam by Seam—
But I could not make them fit.
The thought behind, I strove to join
Unto the thought before—
But Sequence raveled out of Sound—
Like Balls—upon a floor.

Emily Dickenson [1864] (Oates 1996, 93)

The ADD individual is often viewed by others as being self-centered, immature, and a general pain in the neck. If everyday life situations are daunting to the person with ADD, the formal, structure-demanding environment of school and the work place contain formidable barriers, often demanding more effort than the individual can consistently produce. What is viewed as “normal” by most people appears as a straight jacket or a stranglehold to the person with ADD who cannot calmly sit and concentrate on one task for many minutes. A psychologist once asked to talk to high school teachers about ADD began his presentation by turning on a stereo, running a film, playing a video, and turning on a radio. After adjusting their volumes to a speaking level, he placed a transparency on an overhead projector and began to give his oral presentation.

This example illustrates the everyday life of an individual with ADD. Now ask that person to take notes in class or to perform well at work. To succeed he or she must work twice as hard as “normal” individuals (Hallowell and Ratey 1999, 17). People with ADD frequently assign blame for their disabilities on outside factors or on their own lack of character because they are not able to remain with their feelings long enough to conquer their emotions. There sometimes are explosive outbursts or periods of depression during which the individual can barely function at all (Kelly and Ramundo 1995,43). The character Robin Williams plays in the title role of *Patch Adams* displays symptoms of a person with ADD.

Before help can be given to an ADD individual, the cause of ADD must be understood. It is only since the early 1990s that much progress has been made. Currently there are five theories about the cause of ADD, but none of them can be identified as the one explanation. Sudderth and Kandel (1997, 23-29) list these theories:

Catecholamine Theory

Since chemicals that stimulate the central nervous system, called catecholamines, bring relief to those with ADD, it is thought that neurotransmitters, chemicals that carry nerve impulses across nerve synapses, such as norepinephrine, serotonin, dopamine, or some thirty less-known chemicals, may be in insufficient supply in the brains of people with ADD.

Frontal Lobe Failure Theory

Since some head injuries may lead to a loss of executive control, and since recent medical technologies (e.g. MRI, PET and CT scans, and EEG “brain mapping”) reveal abnormal blood flow or diminished glucose metabolism in the anterior frontal lobes of the ADD brain, and show the frontal lobes of ADD individuals to be more narrow than normal, it is thought that this area of the cerebrum may play a critical role in ADD. The reticular activating system (RAS) consisting of neurons deep in the interior of the brain and the locus coeruleus in the brain stem likewise may affect ADD. Their neurons appear to be “firing” too rapidly in the ADD brain. This theory is the most widely accepted explanation of the cause of ADD today.

Dopamine Deficiency Syndrome Theory

The study of human DNA has indicated that an ADD individual may have a defective D2 receptor gene, which causes the dopamine (a neurotransmitter) system to behave abnormally in the ADD brain. The D4 receptor gene may also be involved. The end product of dopamine used by the body, the metabolite homovanillic acid, appears more frequently in the urine of ADD individuals than it does in non-ADD people (Ingersoll 1998,80). The dopamine deficiency syndrome theory is linked to alcoholism, drug abuse, food bingeing, pathological gambling, and an impaired ability for the affected

individual to achieve an overall sense of well being, as well as being a suspected cause of ADD.

The Social Invention Theory

Some people believe ADD to be a fabricated fiction proposed by a conspiracy of educators, social scientists, parents, and drug companies as a “crutch” for problem children in schools and in the home, as a justification for the proliferation of observed antisocial behaviors in today’s society, and as a profiteering scam used by drug company stock holders. Some media have promoted and added credence to this opinion.

The Genetic Predisposition Theory

Studies among adoptive children and their new families and studies between twins separated shortly after birth show a much stronger correlation of those individuals diagnosed with ADD and the behaviors of the biological parents or siblings than with the adoptive/foster parents. Some environmental causes (e.g. head trauma, birth complications, encephalitis, and thyroid hormone disorders) may be contributing factors in ADD; however, there appears to be little evidence to implicate “bad parenting,” upsetting school experiences, or a poor home life as a cause of ADD or significantly contributing to the development of ADD in any individual.

Sudderth and Kandel (1997,35) state, “ADD is probably a nonspecific biochemical and developmental response to a wide variety of disease causing pro-

cesses.”

Since the cause of ADD cannot be identified with precision at this time, neither can a diagnosis for ADD be exact. There is no specific test for ADD as there is for diabetes or a brain tumor. This brings about the paradox that often people with ADD have not been diagnosed as such, while at other times people have been diagnosed as ADD who are suffering from other problems. Several diagnostic criteria are used to identify potential ADD individuals. Medical technologies of MRI, PET, and CT are also helpful in the diagnoses, but HMOs and insurance companies often balk at the expense of using such measures. Some research suggests ADD is best diagnosed by a neurologist who is well trained in brain physiology and neurological disorders. Hallowell and Ratey list several diagnostic criteria for ADD. The following twenty statements are characteristic of ADD and indicate possible ADD if an individual meets fifteen or more of these patterns of behavior (Hallowell and Ratey 1999,73-76, 201-202). These are also found in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Edition IV, or DSM-IV (APA 1998).

- Difficulty in getting organized
- Chronic procrastination
- A sense of underachievement, regardless of accomplishments
- Involved in many simultaneous projects, but without having follow-through in any
- Uncritical, reflexive responses to any stimuli
- Frequently searches for high stimula-

tion and novel or engaging pursuits

- Intolerant of boredom
- Easily distracted, yet shows hyperfocus at times
- Often creative, intuitive, intelligent
- Trouble in following established procedures or a chain of command
- Impatient, with a low tolerance for frustration
- Impulsive in speaking leading to frequent changes in career plans or in careers
- Tendency toward needless worry
- Sense of insecurity
- Mood swings, but less pronounced than in bipolar individuals (manic depressives)
- Restless—fidgety, drumming fingers, feeling edgy while at rest
- Tendency toward addictive behaviors such as alcoholism or pathological gambling
- Chronic self-esteem problems
- Inaccurate self-observations
- A family history of ADD, alcoholism or similar disorders

There are other flags associated with the ADD individual. They have often been often called “crazy,” “not trying,” “stupid,” or “lazy.” And their behaviors have been labeled as childish or sophomoric (Hallowell and Ratey 1999,17).

Sudderth and Kandel (1997,38-40) list these criteria also found in the DSM-IV:

- A. At least six of these nine behaviors must be present:
1. Fails to give close attention to details or makes many careless mistakes

2. Has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities
 3. Does not follow instructions
 4. Is a poor task organizer
 5. Avoids tasks requiring mental effort
 6. Loses things needed for the task at hand
 7. Is easily distracted
 8. Does not listen to what is said to him or her
 9. Is forgetful in daily activities
- B. At least four of these six behaviors must be present:
1. Fidgets with hands/feet
 2. Cannot remain seated
 3. Experiences a restless feeling often demonstrated by restless actions
 4. Is incapable of quiet leisure activity (sings, hums, whistles, makes noises)
 5. Often blurts out answers before the question is completed
 6. Has extreme difficulty waiting in lines or in taking turns

In addition, other more sophisticated diagnostic tests may be given. They often are used to rule out dysfunctions that are not ADD related. These include

1. The Wender Utah Rating Scale, a type of questionnaire (Hallowell and Ratey 1999,199)
2. Intelligence or I.Q. tests
3. Continuous performance tests administered on a computer, such as the T.O.V.A. (Test of Variables of Attention), Conner’s Continuous Performance Test or the Gordon Diagnostic System (Ingersoll 1998,56)

Finally an experienced, trained diag-

nostician, or an “M-team” in consultation with others (e.g. medical doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, educators, social workers) using multiple criteria, including counseling techniques, family history, medical technologies, and behavior specific tests make a decision whether or not ADD is indicated (Juern 1984,9-13).

After an individual is diagnosed as ADD a treatment regimen is begun. It is currently thought that while ADD can be managed, there is no cure. Because a child with ADD may be observed to gradually become better at controlling some of the behaviors common to ADD as He or she matures physically, it was once thought a person “grows out” of ADD.

However, in the 1980s press reports began to appear suggesting adults also have ADD. In 1992 Lynn Weis authored the first book on ADD in adults for non-professional readers (*Attention Deficit Disorder in Adults: Practical Help for Suffers and Their Spouses*). We know the symptoms of ADD do not suddenly appear after age thirty, but have their roots in childhood (Sudderth and Kandel 1997,6-7). This is one reason a medical history is a part of ADD diagnosis. Coping with ADD is a long-term investment. The ADD individual must work collaboratively with his or her doctor. Feelings of denial, refusal to take medications, or other recommended treatments will be counterproductive. Psychotherapy or cognitive therapy may help eliminate self-defeating and inappropriate behavior patterns. Self-education through attending lectures and

support groups, or by reading books and articles will also help explain, but not excuse, ADD behaviors. Biofeedback and similar methods may be helpful too (Sudderth and Kandel 1997,108-124). In addition the ADD individual should pay attention to his or her general health or wellness, acquire a pocket calendar, organizer, or recorder to assist in keeping appointments and to help with short-term memory problems. Finally, a life coach can help the ADD individual to better organize his or her life (Sudderth and Kendall 1997,157).

Individuals with ADD are often smart, but in different ways than other people. When the positive aspects of ADD are recognized and understood, such as creativity, life-of-the-party personality, the ability to hyperfocus, and the ability to see a global view of problems, as well as the ability to visualize actions before taking them, managing ADD can become easier.

Medications are often helpful in resolving ADD problems. They are often the first line in the treatment of ADD. Medications include:

1. Central nervous system stimulants:
 - a) Ritalin (methylphenidate hydrochloride)
 - b) Dexedrine (dextroamphetamine) [Dexedrine has the street name, “Speed”]
 - c) Cylert (pemoline) which may stimulate the dopamine system
 - d) Adderall (obetrol) which is also used as a weight loss medication
 - e) Cocaine, a dopamine stimulant with street names of “Coke,”

“Snow,” or “crack”

2. Tricyclic antidepressants:
 - a) Tofranil (imipramine)
 - b) Elavil (amitriptyline)
 - c) Pamelor (nortriptyline)
 - d) Norpramine (despramine) is the most common antidepressant used to treat ADD, probably because most antidepressant ADD research has been done with this medication (Hallowell and Ratey 1999,240).
3. Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors:
 - a) Prozac (fluoxetine hydrochloride)
 - b) Zoloft (sertraline)
 - c) Paxil (paroxetine)
 - d) Luvox (fluvoxamine maleate)
4. Atypical antidepressants:
 - a) Wellbutrin (bupropion hydrochloride)
 - b) Serzone (nefazodone hydrochloride)
5. Other medications, less used, may be found in Sudderth and Kandel (1997,97-107).

ADD individuals also need to keep a sense of humor, learn performance management techniques to add structure to their lives, such as the use of color coding, rituals, making lists of things to do or using an appointment or assignment book. Learning about mood management is also important. It should be noted that ADD individuals respond very well to praise and to encouragement and will often work harder for the individual who gives them positive reinforcement than they will work for themselves.

Even after understanding of what ADD consists, the cause(s) of ADD, ADD diagnosis, and resolving techniques for ADD, including the use of medication, problems still exist in the treatment of ADD. Hallowell and Ratey (1999,262-268) describe additional challenges for the person with ADD:

- Key people in the life of an ADD individual, including the person with ADD, will not accept an ADD diagnosis.
- There is usually an initial burst of success when treating ADD, but then there is slow progress that can be frustrating.
- If the ADD individual refuses to take medications or chronically forgets to take prescribed medications, many of the behaviors of ADD will continue and result in the all-too-familiar problems of ADD.
- ADD medications may not appear to be working, either from the viewpoint of the ADD individual or from the viewpoints of key people in his or her life. Often this is only a perception and discontinuing the use of medication results in continuing ADD symptoms. Even having the perception of the medication not working may result in frustration.
- The ADD individual may be made to feel his or her medications are illegal drugs and the stigma of drug addiction may be perceived.
- An appropriate ADD support group may be lacking, reinforcing the feeling that the individual is “weird” or “different.”
- It is often difficult to tell others about

ADD. How do you tell them? Who do you tell? Again isolation and frustration may result.

- Occasionally an individual cannot find information on ADD or people who can diagnose and treat ADD. Internet access can help resolve this issue.
- The structuring set up to resolve ADD problems may fail and inappropriate behaviors may resurface in the individual with ADD.
- The ADD individual may experience feelings of shame and embarrassment.

Internet sources may be helpful

There are chat rooms, such as at <http://www.chadd.org>, for C.H.A.D.D. (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder) that can ease the pain.

The person with ADD should understand ADD is not a disease of the will or a lack of moral character. It is an organic dysfunction in the brain, probably due to some chemical imbalance. He or she should also realize ADD does have a positive side. It has strengths as well as liabilities. The ADD individual is often seen as active, creative, open-minded, compassionate, curious, enthusiastic, and a person with a sense of wonder and a sense of humor (Kelly and Ramundo 1996,207). These are all admirable qualities. Kelly and Ramundo, (1996,385-404) explain the advantages of inattention and distractibility:

- The ADD individual is a generalist in a world that applauds the specialist. However, the generalist can shift

focus easily and is a source of trivia. These can be coping tools in adulthood.

- The ADD individual is creative and can discover connections between seemingly unrelated and divergent thoughts. They shine in brainstorming sessions designed to find solutions where there are no wrong answers.
- The hyperactivity of ADD can be used to accomplish more than others can do.
- Impulsivity, with its risk taking and dynamic optimism, adds sparkle to the personality of the ADD individual and draws people to them because people with exciting personalities are more interesting than those with calm temperaments. This also helps the person get things done. The inventor needs a restless, curious mind that is never satisfied and that leads to “Aha!” experiences.
- The forthright style of the ADD personality can be admirable if the individual can inhibit hurtful words. This style helps build charm and an outrageous sense of humor.
- The writer with ADD can flow many uncensored thoughts onto a computer to arrange them later and edit them for fine tuning after the manuscript has had a chance to cool. Typing uninterrupted words can be useful in expressing an idea before it is lost.
- The entrepreneur and the scientist exploit the restless, insatiable ADD mind. They need vision to design experiments and to work through dif-

ficult years of apprenticeship and early failures and the trauma of giving presentations. The endless details of their work can be handled by an assistant or by a secretary.

- Teachers with ADD insert a sense of humor, enthusiasm, and acting ability into their instructional that can create lessons that mesmerize students. They often enjoy asking the “why” questions of their students and are not constrained by rigid lesson structures.
- The salesperson with ADD uses fast-talking and charm to make sales. He or she generates a continuous excitement about the product or service being promoted. Required travel often satisfies the stimulus change the ADD individual craves.
- Plumbers, machinists, electricians and other trades people are implementors who understand the world, but who express themselves in actions, and not in words. The intuitive understanding of how machines work or how something should be designed or constructed is a plus the ADD individual brings with him or her to the job market.
- While some people view success as an orderly climb up the career ladder, the ADD individual sees success as figuring out what he or she was born to do and then figuring out a lifestyle that enables him or her to accomplish it.

ADD/ADHD individuals should remember, “When someone gives you that ‘boy are you strange’ look, consider

it a compliment. It is a testimony to your uniqueness. People who look down their noses at anything out of the ordinary are to be pitied rather than censured, for they suffer under the constraints of a narrow mind” (Kelly, Ramundo and Ledingham 1998,250). It may be difficult to quell the urge to show such individuals how wrong they are, but resist the urge. Clear from your mind the images of those who say, “You can’t do it. You are different,” and make room for the thoughts of the successes you have already achieved or are now enjoying. You are in this for the long haul. There are no quick fixes.

People who work with ADD/ADHD individuals should remember such a person has an organic brain dysfunction. The behaviors they may witness are not due to rebellion, learning problems, social aggressiveness, attitude problems, immaturity, being lazy or having a low I.Q. Jerry Mills and Impulse Presentations (Mills 1993,37) see the answers to the following questions put to an audience of educators as the bottom line to working with individuals with ADD:

- Would you say to a student who has a visual impairment, “Look at the board! Can’t you see what it says on the board?” Would you do that? And the audience said, “No, we wouldn’t do that.”
- Would you say to a student who has a hearing disability, “Listen to me when I’m talking to you! Can’t you hear what I’m saying? Would you do that? And the audience replied, “No, we wouldn’t do that.”
- Would you say to a student with a

physical handicap, "Get up and get it for yourself!" Would you do that?

And everyone responded, "No, we wouldn't do that."

Treating a student who has ADD like He or she is a behavior problem, an academic problem, a learning problem, a social problem, an attitude problem, an emotional problem, a discipline problem, or just a problem in general is doing just what you said you would never do. You cannot hold the individual with ADD personally responsible for a neurological chemical imbalance in his or her brain! This is not something they chose for themselves!

Remember to be patient and understanding with those suffering from mental illnesses just as you are patient and understanding with those who have a physical disorder or suffer from a physical illness. ❁

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How is MLC Doing? The Alumni Respond

John R. Isch

The survey

Martin Luther College conducted a survey of the graduates of the Studies in Educational Ministry for the years 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999. These years include persons who received their undergraduate education at Dr. Martin Luther College, Martin Luther College, or both institutions. All graduates from these years who were teaching in WELS schools in 1999-2000 were included in the survey. There were 387 questionnaires mailed (155 males and 232 females) in the spring of 2000. The return rate on the questionnaires was 79% (305 returns). The male return rate was 74% and the female return rate was 82%. This return rate is typical of graduate surveys and the college believes the results accurately show the perceptions of all the graduates surveyed.

The complete report of the 2000 SEM Alumni study can be found on the MLC website (www.mlc-wels.edu/News-Events/frames.htm). The college appreciates and thanks the alumni for the time and thoughtfulness they put into their responses.

How many of the alumni are currently teaching and where?

The 305 returned questionnaires represented 79% of those graduates who are currently teaching. There were 517 graduates from the SEM during the five years of this survey. The number of those who are currently teaching is 387, which means that 75% of the graduates are still teaching. This is about the same percentage we found in 1994. In 1994 we found that 86% of the men who graduated in the previous five years were still teaching; in 2000 we found that 92% of the men who graduated in the previous five years were teaching. These percentages may provide an indication of teacher needs. In recent years, over a five-year span of graduates, about three-fourths of those graduates will continue to teach. Naturally, the number for a particular year will not necessarily be 75%. A class one year removed from their graduation may have 90% of its graduates still teaching; a class five years from graduation may have 60% of its graduates still teaching. After eight or nine years, the percent currently teaching stabilizes.

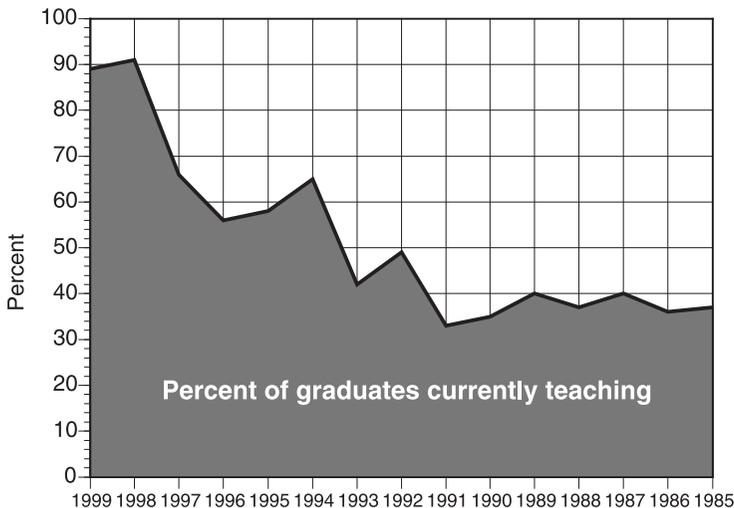
Every graduate from the Studies in Educational Ministry has training in elementary education. Within that one program a student can add a specialty such as early childhood education, secondary education, or staff ministry. These specific programs from which our graduates matriculated are still the areas, for the most part, in which they are teaching. Three fourths of the alumni surveyed had graduated from the elementary (only) program. Ninety percent of the teaching graduates are still teaching in the elementary grades. Five percent are in a childcare setting and five percent are in a high school. One third of the respondents who said they were currently teaching in a high school said they had graduated from the elementary (only) program. Half of those who graduated from the STEP program are currently teaching in a high school. Of those few who had graduated from

the ECE program, three out of five are teaching in a childcare setting.

When these numbers are broken down by major (or area of concentration), the data indicate that mathematics, English, and science are the three areas where STEP majors are most likely to be teaching in a high school. Phy ed and music are the least likely. On the other side, science and English are two areas where elementary education (only) graduates are likely to be teaching. The conclusion is clear: Shortages in STEP graduates are particularly seen in the areas of science and English.

Considering that all graduates have the same basic elementary school training, the substantial proportions of persons who are in their specific area of training and the small numbers who are teaching in an area where they have not trained is noteworthy. Such numbers tend to validate the importance of the

Graduates by Years



dual training option and these numbers would seem to provide a good recruitment point that undergraduate preferences are often realized after graduation.

How many alumni continue their schooling?

We asked the graduates how many semester hours of credit they had earned since graduation. Not surprising, the longer a teacher had been out, the more likely he or she was to have taken courses and earned credit. There were also male/female and high school/grade school differences in the number of credits earned after graduation. Female teachers are more likely than males are to take courses within three years of graduation. Only after the third year of teaching are men more likely than women to have taken courses. By the end of five years, three out of four men and two out of three women have taken course work after graduation. The number of high school teachers who completed the survey was quite small in our sample (41). The high school teachers in our sample were less likely to have taken courses in the first three years than were elementary school teachers.

Whether a graduate has obtained state licensure or is working toward it depends on where that graduate is teaching. Nebraska and Wisconsin have the largest number of teachers having such licensure or seeking it. Yet nearly four out of five (D)MLC alumni cur-

Table 1
Out-of-class Responsibilities of Teachers

	1989-93	1995-1999
Organist	29%	19%
Choir	15%	20%
Phy Ed	17%	26%
Coaching	60%	66%
Principal	23%	19%
Remedial	9%	7%
Sunday Sch		12%
VBS		34%
Technology		12%
Youth		10%

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 because most teachers listed more than one responsibility. The 1994 Survey did not include Sunday school, VBS, technology, or Youth as choices.

rently teaching have no state teaching license nor are they seeking such licensure. Even in a state such as Wisconsin, where teachers are encouraged although not required to have licensure, 90% of graduates do not have licensure nor are they seeking it.

What other responsibilities do our alumni have?

The data we gathered suggest that nearly everyone who graduates from the college can coach some kind of sport or activity. Nearly 70% of our alumni listed coaching as one of the out-of-class responsibilities they had. Nine out of ten respondents listed one or more responsibilities and six out of ten listed two or more. One fifth of the respondents were principals, one third said

they had VBS, and one fifth conducted a choir or played the organ. Obviously, teachers are still expected to be responsible for a number of things besides teaching in the classroom. (See Table 1)

What do the alumni think of the current curriculum?

The college asked the alumni several questions about their experiences with the curriculum. For each subject area (music, English, religion, history, mathematics, physical education, and science) the college wanted the alumni to say how intellectually stimulating the courses were, how prepared and knowledgeable the instructors were, how much they studied for the courses, the extent to which the courses in a particular area encouraged life-long learning, and how much the courses contributed to their personal growth.

The instructors in all subject areas listed in the survey were rated highly for their preparation and knowledge of the subject. The alumni rated faculty more positively than they did the intellectual stimulation these faculty and courses provided them, how much they studied for the courses, whether the courses encouraged them to be a life-long learner, or whether the courses contributed to their growth as a person. In sum, they seemed to be saying, “The person up in front knows what he/she is talking about and is prepared, but the rest of what is going on isn’t as good.”

Religion, science, and history courses in the general education curriculum receive particularly positive ratings

“

I appreciate the fact that I was able to attend a college that was small and in a sense a family more than a campus. I appreciate the fact that many of the professors took the time to know you as a person and not just another student in your classroom, as happens at many larger colleges. And most of all I appreciate the fact I was able to attend a college where God and the study of His Word is the focus, a focus that I will carry throughout my life.

”

across all dimensions asked in the survey. Our alumni reflected on these courses and found them intellectually stimulating, contributing to personal growth, and encouraging them to be life-long learners. They studied for these courses and they looked back on their instructors as particularly prepared and knowledgeable. Nearly all the

ratings in all the subject areas were also positive.

The survey also gave our graduates a series of statements on curriculum issues and asked them whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement. Respondents had five choices: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree.

The graduates tended to agree that the courses they took at MLC created an attitude of accepting special needs children into their classrooms. Particularly those who had graduated in the last three years were positive about their undergraduate training that related to special needs children.

There was also overwhelming agreement that daily chapel services were an important part of the graduate's spiritual life and growth. The graduates also believed that an awareness of other cultures (cross culturalism) should be more consciously taught. This particular response is further supported when the respondents disagreed with another statement that their college training imparted an outlook that helped them work with cultures other than their own. The graduates are giving a clear message about the importance of cross-cultural training and their sense that MLC did not provide it for them.

The MLC graduates of the SEM program still support the concept of an education in the liberal arts. More than four out of five believe there is a common core of learning (besides religion courses) that educated people need to know. And—no surprise—three fourths of the graduates believe college students

need more active learning in the classroom.

We also asked our graduates about their preparation to work with and use technology in learning. One out of four felt they were prepared to use technology. More than half, however, felt they were not well prepared. The responses, those that were positive about their preparation for technology and those who were negative, did not differ by year of graduation.

How far in debt were are alumni?

There has been some concern that students are leaving MLC with a considerable debt. We included three questions that address this issue. "Approximately what percent of your college costs (tuition) was paid for through financial grants or scholarships? When you graduated from college, how much were you in debt from your college expenses? Which of these statements best characterizes how you saw that debt at graduation (The debt was a small amount and I was not concerned about it. The debt was manageable and I was not overly worried. The debt was a major concern. The debt seemed overwhelming to me at the time.)"

About one-fifth of the SEM graduates said they received no financial grants or scholarships for their college expenses. The median percent of college expenses paid through scholarships or grants for students who did receive such monies was 20%. When they graduated, one-third of the respondents said they had no debt; one out of ten had a debt

of over \$15,000. The others had debts below \$15,000.

The third question we asked in our survey was how concerned the graduate was about the debt. About 70% of those who did graduate with a debt are not particularly concerned with that debt. The other 30% saw it as overwhelming or a major concern. Not surprising, there is a relationship between the amount of debt and the concern a graduate has: the larger the debt, the greater the concern. There were graduates, however, who said they were not overly worried with a debt of over \$15,000 and there were graduates who said a debt of between \$5000 and \$9999 was overwhelming.

What did the alumni think about life on campus?

We asked our graduates to reflect on their perceptions and experiences when they were at (D)MLC. We realize memories are not always accurate and the halo effect (and its converse, the horns effect) color impressions and memory.

We gave two statements on campus life and asked for a strongly agree/agree/neutral/disagree/strongly disagree response.

- Dormitory living (as compared with off-campus living) provided a better environment for me at college.
- In retrospect, the attendance policy helped me meet my responsibilities as a student.

Nearly a third of the respondents had no opinion on either statement. These two items may have been non-issues

with many of our graduates. Those who did express agreement or disagreement with these statements tended to either agree with both or disagree with both. These views were dependent neither on the year a student graduated nor on the graduate's gender. About half the students tended to agree with each statement, regardless of graduation year or gender. One gets the impression that attendance policies and dormitory living were not particularly important (at least in retrospect) with most of our graduates.

Persons enroll at college with certain expectations. More than three of four who graduated from the SEM track were very certain or somewhat certain that they wanted to become a teacher when they entered this college. One in five was undecided. More women tended to be very certain while more men tended to be somewhat certain or undecided. It is, of course, likely that many more who came as uncertain or undecided never graduated from college because their uncertainty and indecision were changed to certainty that teaching was not for them. Obviously, these persons never completed this survey.

Students also come with expectations about the social life and the academic requirements of college. Two thirds of the respondents said the social life was pretty much or exactly what they expected and four out of five found the academic side pretty much or exactly what they expected.

The number of hours per week graduates report that they studied during

their college years has declined from the previous survey. The number of study hours reported by the men is particularly low. Over half of the male graduates of the SEM track said they spent fewer than 20 hours a week studying while they were in college. We also asked the graduates to estimate the number of hours per week they spent working at a job. Ninety percent said they spent less than 30 hours a week working at a job. Nationwide, 79% of undergraduates work while enrolled at college. In our 1994 survey, 76% of our graduates said they worked during their undergraduate years. The average number of hours worked per week by undergraduates in all colleges was 25. The median number of hours that our undergraduates worked was between 9 and 16 in the 1994 survey and fewer than 20 in the 2000 survey. Unfortunately, these categories and definitions are not very comparable among our two surveys and the national surveys. One could conclude, however, that the percentage of our undergraduates who work at jobs has remained fairly stable over the past ten years and it is similar to undergraduate rates in general. Our students, however, may be working fewer hours.

Over half the men and one third of the women said that extra-curricular activities were very important to them when they were students. Their listing of the non-required activities they participated in is similar to the results we found in the 1994 survey.

Conclusion

We would not expect dramatic changes in a ten-year span in the way in which our alumni view their college experiences and education. But there may be trends in the Studies in Educational Ministry track. Amalgamation, at least through the questions we asked, has not as yet had a substantial impact on the way alumni of the SEM track reflect on their experiences at MLC. They are responding pretty much the same as they were before amalgamation. Persons enrolling in the SEM track seem to have slightly less of a commitment to the teaching ministry, but that is only relative to a strong commitment found in previous surveys. Students may be putting in fewer hours of study, particularly the men. The alumni of SEM seems fairly comfortable with the current curriculum, at least in the number of total credits required and the course load per semester. They are also positive about the effects of general education on their lives. Such responses could suggest that the alumni do not expect or advocate major changes in the general education component of the college curriculum. The results of this survey appear to be an affirmation of the college's mission and how it carries out this mission. ❧

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Poets in the Classroom

“Poetry is the journal of a sea animal living on land, wanting to fly in the air.”

Carl Sandburg

“The reader exists on the horizon of the poem. The message in the bottle may seem to be speaking to the poet alone, or to God, or to nobody, but the reader is the one who finds and overhears it, who unseals the bottle and lets the language emerge.”

Edward Hirsch, *How to Read a Poem*

Greetings, friend and rescuer! Weeks ago I sent out this message in a bottle—as an attachment to my editor. He copied it on to finer parchment and threw it back into rough waters. Now my prayers have been answered, and I have what I need. A reader, a listener—you!

Poets fling their poems into the future also, hoping that someone, anyone, will pluck meaning out of this vehicle called verse. Some poems almost beg for a response from readers. They’re a cry for help, a dialogue waiting to happen, a question seeking an answer.

We may pick up such poems, peering past the sand and dampness, and read

Beached, Grounded—Send Help!

Ramona Czer

awestruck. How did these exact words happen to arrive today on my shore? It’s like the poet took dictation from my heart—I’m the one beached and thirsty, grounded and longing for wings. How did he know?

Other times a poem may contain messages so full of pain we’re embarrassed to hear the voice on the page. We’re tempted to slip his or her words back into the bottle, mumbling, “Not for me, no way!” and heave it as far away as possible. I wonder why we never save it for another day, when we may become the one who understands.

In this first poem the persona is battling depression. Although the amusing title proves he has won, so far—twenty volumes is a lifetime’s worth of writing!—it also warns us we trespass on very private ground. Would you willingly pick up such a note, written in a stranger’s hand?

Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note

Lately, I’ve become accustomed to the
way

The ground opens up and envelops me
Each time I go out to walk the dog.

Or the broad edged silly music the
wind
Makes when I run for a bus—

Things have come to that.

And now, each night I count the stars,
And each night I get the same number.
And when they will not come to be
counted
I count the holes they leave.

Nobody sings anymore.

And then last night, I tip-
toed up
To my daughter's room
and heard her
Talking to someone, and
when I opened
The door, there was no
one there . . .
Only she on her knees,
Peeking into her own
clasped hands.

Leroi Jones

The last image affects
me deeply. I get the feel-
ing the persona post-
poned his suicide just
because of that gift-
glimpse of his daughter's
faith. He has no faith to
go on himself, but he can use her faith
to help him remember day by day, vol-
ume after volume, that hope exists.
Someone was listening to her prayer
that night. Somehow the father learned
to count the cost of leaving behind such

a gaping hole in his daughter's life.

This next message expects us to par-
ticipate actively. In fact, unless we read
the poem out loud, it's hard to make
sense of. And it's great fun to imagine
shouting out answers to the poet's ques-
tions over mountains of space and
time—or is the voice me just talking to
me?

A complex, clever poem. It teaches
me that a conversation, even with
myself, is dangerous, full of half-heard

An Echo: Sonnet to an Empty Page

Voice:	Echo:
How from emptiness can I make a start?	Start
And starting, must I master joy or grief?	Grief
But is there consolation in the heart?	Art
O cold reprieve, where's natural relief?	Leaf
Leaf blooms, burns red before delighted eyes.	Dies
Her beauty makes of dying, ecstasy.	See
Yet what's the end of our life's long disease?	Ease
If death is not, who is my enemy?	Me
Then are you glad that I must end in sleep?	Leap
I'd leap into the dark if dark were true.	True
And in that night would you rejoice or weep?	Weep
What contradiction makes you take this view?	You
I feel your calling leads me where I go,	Go
But whether happiness is there, you know.	No.

Robert Pack

words and obscure meanings. Am I only
making the echo say what I want to
hear? Or is my subconscious leading me
to truth through the words I pause on?
We journey onward, looking for the
secret of happiness in ravines and mead-

Czer

ows, calling out to others our questions. Finally, we discover we've been carrying the answers with us all the time, curled up in the bottom of our backpacks — the potent tail ends of our words and actions.

For some people, the search for happiness seems fruitless. They've given up calling for help from anyone, except God. If you overheard the following poem-prayer from the mouth of a deformed girl, how would you react? Is heaven her only rescue? Or if you could listen like the earthen walls to the coal miners' complaints, what would you want to do?

Hunchback Girl: She Thinks of Heaven

My Father, it is surely a blue place
And straight. Right. Regular. Where I
shall find
No need for scholarly nonchalance or
looks
A little to the left or guards upon the
Heart to halt love that runs without
crookedness
Along its crooked corridors. My Father,
It is a planned place surely. Out of coils,
Unscrewed, released, no more to be
marvelous,
I shall walk straightly through most
proper halls
Proper myself, princess of properness.

Gwendolyn Brooks

Caliban in the Coal Mines

God, we don't like to complain.
We know that the mine is no lark.
But—there's the pools from the rain;

But—there's the cold and the dark.

God, You don't know what it is—
You, in Your well-lighted sky—
Watching the meteors whizz;
Warm, with a sun always by.

God, if You had but the moon
Stuck in Your cap for a lamp,
Even You'd tire of it soon,
Down in the dark and the damp.

Nothing but blackness above
And nothing that moves but the cars...
God, if You wish for our love,
Fling us a handful of stars!

Louis Untermeyer

Though this terrible environment for coal miners has faded into history, other prisons of the mind and body remain. Countless people stumble along blindly, burdened and hungry for the light, and often they have no eloquent words or artful bottle to gain our attention. What do we do with the desperate message we read on page ten of the newspaper or observe in the haunted face of a newcomer slumped in the last pew at church? Reseal the bottle and throw it back?

Reading poems like these I've shared today can help us become more sensitive and courageous listeners. They invite us to participate actively, to explore others' pain and doubt, to simply care. If we brave such poems often, perhaps they'll help us to turn more readily to our friends and acquaintances with open faces and ears. We won't flinch so much in embarrassment and

denial, or chatter, bustle, and try to fix things. Remember, it may not be the time to shove such people into living waters or to force them to wear our customized pair of eagle wings. Feel no compulsion to find answers or heal pain. Just sit calmly, spread out the page you're offered, and listen between the lines.

Writing Ideas

- What if you did discover the journal of a sea-animal living on land and wanting to fly? Imagine its contents and form.
- An Echo Poem. Ask a question that ends with a word of one or more syllables. The answering echo will repeat the very last syllable of that word, and this syllable should *be* a word all by itself. Also, the last syllable can lose its initial consonant, if you like, creating an entirely different word. The trick to creating a clever echo poem is to sometimes have the answer make sense and

sometimes have it argue with or confuse the speaker.

- A Class Dialogue Poem. The teacher should select a topic the whole class cares about. Then begin the poem by having a student write down a question about this topic. This student passes it on to the next one who will answer the question in a surprising or vivid way and also write down a new question. The dialogue continues to be added to row by row until the last person answers the last question. Of course, the poem could also end with a question. Then the reader who "finds" the poem will be left with something to do!
- Imagine being someone enduring a hardship, such as having a hunched back or working as a coal miner. Write an honest and revealing prayer in this person's voice. ✎

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REVIEWS

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Kremer, Kenneth. *From the Ground Up*. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 2000
Kenn Kremer, editor of *Lutheran Parent*, has expanded the topic of his heart into a fine book, well worth the reading. Using the metaphor of con-

structing a building, Kremer describes the necessary components of a Christian family. From God, the architect who established the human family, through digging the well, laying the foundation, constructing the frame-

work, providing light and an open hearth, and living in the house the author weaves in the message of sin and salvation. There is a liberal use of stories, his own and other's, that illustrate and highlight the points he makes. Kremer's point is that by God's grace and with his help, people can build a Christian family; they need not despair or bewail to demise of the family and they don't need to put their trust in secular psychology or worldly advice. God's Word describes the kind of family and the way to build that family. In one of the chapters Kremer talks about the competency a Christian has, not a competency of intellectual ability of inherent goodness. The competency of a Christian comes from knowing Christ and his salvation. He then goes on, "You have those same resources. In the

privacy of your own home or on the job, at the health club, or on a playground, you are competent to instruct others. You have what it takes. You have Jesus' own goodness...and you know Jesus in your heart of faith! You can instruct those who are nearest and dearest to you. You are competent. You are good in God's eyes because Jesus is good. You have the knowledge you need by virtue of your faith. You have the right stuff to do the most important job you will ever have. Go. Do it."

Kremer has a gift for writing directly to the reader. The book is a good buy for your own home or as a gift to a couple starting a home.

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