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The Lutheran Educator

The WELS Education Journal

“ Philip ...
preached the
GOSPEL
in all
the towns. ”

ACTS 8:40

The Lutheran Educator



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

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Encouraging Behaviors

How well do the following headlines from the New York Times reflect the children you see today?

“Research Finds a High Rate of Preschool Expulsion”

“Thirty-three Philadelphian Kindergarteners Suspended”

“With Mayhem at Home, They Call a Parent Coach”

Some people attribute this behavior to a lack of parental involvement. Many educators would contend they have witnessed a change in family dynamics and involvement over the years. Children spend more waking hours in school buildings than in their own homes. This is happening at a younger age. Some feel parents have abdicated their roles and expect the educational system to fill that void, teaching the social skills needed for success in a school setting.

Others argue that the headline behavior mentioned above is a result of the media. Children imitate the stereotypes, aggressive behaviors and violence they witness on television and movies. David Walsh refers to TV watching as a “full-time job without benefits” for the majority of American children. Those spending time passively in front of a television don’t have the opportunity to practice social skills that are needed for building successful relationships in a peer group.

Still others are pointing to the structure of a child’s day as a cause for misbehavior. More children than in 1970 are spending time in after school care programs. Some children return home too late at night to be able to play outside. Others live in areas where safety prohibits them from outdoor play. Cities across the country are building new schools without playgrounds. Recess has been modified and in some places cancelled. Children need time in unstructured outdoor activities to invent their own games and solve their own problems.

Early childhood researchers are looking at play to make an improvement in children’s behavior. Play is essential to childhood. Diane Levin, author of *Teaching Young Children in Violent Times* refers to play as “the developmental domain of joy and satisfaction.” She believes we are robbing children of their childhood when the press for academics eliminates play time in America. Children of all ages need unstructured time to grow and flourish. Imagination, creativity, and problem solving are skills learned through play. These skills will carry children through adulthood.

All behavior communicates. What messages are being sent to children who are expelled from preschool? Educators need to take a close look at school policies governing child behavior. Professionalism involves knowing what is best for children. Advocacy is acting upon what you know is right. When educators speak up for what we know to be true, all children will have the opportunity to practice the behaviors needed to be successful in learning in a school environment.

CAL



Joy In Remembrance

John R. Schultz

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" Philippians 1:3-6

We can forgive teachers and principals this time of year for being overly happy. After all, stresses are somewhat relieved as we anticipate the summer. Certainly, rest for the body, mind and spirit is a circumstance which legitimately produces joy. However, as Christ's own we know that true happiness is not dependent upon mundane circumstances. It doesn't fluctuate, but is constant because of what Christ has done for us.

In his short letter to the Philippians, the Apostle Paul uses the word joy or its various forms sixteen times. It is often referred to as the New Testament letter of joy. In it Paul expresses a special kind of Christian joy. Paul writes of the joy he felt because of their faith in Jesus and how that faith motivated them to Christian action. In our text we read

how he remembered their "partnership in the Gospel" from his first days among them until "now". How could he forget the gift the Philippians had sent him upon learning of his detention in Rome?

As we read of Paul's ministry in Philippi in Acts 16, we might imagine that Paul could have remembered with depression the slave girl with a spirit by which she predicted the future—but he didn't. He could have remembered her owners—but he didn't. He could have remembered the beating from the city officials and subsequent unfair jail time—but he didn't. No, he remembers with joy and thanks God in prayer for those the Lord gave him as first fruits of his labor and partners with him in the Gospel. Does that include Lydia, the seller of purple cloth who appreciated the Gospel message of Jesus so much she invited Paul and his companions into her house at Philippi? Don't you think he remembered with joy baptizing her household? How could Paul forget the conversion of the jailer and his trembling question, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul's answer, "Believe

in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved —you and your household,” Acts 16:30-31. Perhaps Paul remembered the joy in the faces of the jailer and his household as they were baptized.

Paul’s message of joy through the Gospel created a special bond of respect, love, and joy between Paul and the Philippian church. They sometimes cared for his needs as he ministered in other parts of the Roman world. They even sent one of their own, Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25), to him while he was in prison. He served as their personal representative to take care of his needs. As Paul remembers his beloved Philippians, he is filled with confidence that God who brought them to faith would fill them “with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:11) and keep them “blameless until the day of Christ” (Philippians 1:10). Paul’s joyful remembrance teaches us that God initiates salvation, continues it, and one day will

bring it to fruition in heaven.

What sticks in your memory as the school year ends? The irate parent who misjudged you? The troubled student who jerked away from you and called you nasty names? The unthinking colleague who has a “power problem”? I would encourage you, like Paul, to remember with joy the Lydias and the jail keepers the Lord gave you this school year. And you have them! Take your joy and focus your remembrance on them. You work for Jesus and you take pleasure in that work because you serve God’s people.

Read some more: I Thessalonians 5:16-18

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, may we all take our joy in you and what you have done for us and through us to others. Amen ✠

John Schultz served as principal/administrator of Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School. He is currently retired and living in New Ulm, MN.



Commencement Concert and Service, Martin Luther College

May 18

7:30 pm—Commencement Concert

May 19

10:00 am—Commencement Service

2:30 pm—Call Service

Are Our Students' Values "Postmodern"?

Jim Norwine¹

If God does not exist, everything is permitted.
(Dostoevsky paraphrased, *The Brothers Karamazov*)
Anything goes.
(Feyerabend)

Introduction

A recent study revealed surprisingly modest percentages of church-affiliated college faculty who affirmed the goals of developing students' moral and ethical values (52%) and developing students' own religious beliefs (42%).² (The respective figures for secular-institution faculty were frankly appalling, 25% and 8%, respectively.) A separate Zogby International poll of college seniors in 2002 found that while 97% of the students surveyed said that their professors had "prepared them to behave ethically in their future work lives," 73% added that those professors taught that "uniform standards of right and wrong don't exist."^{3,4} These reports suggest the disturbing possibility that a significant number of Christian teachers, and even more (a majority?) of secular teachers, are naïve about the possible nature, degree and significance of "postmodern" student values; worse, they may

well reveal the influence of that same worldview on contemporary teachers' attitudes and practices.

On the other hand, I suspect that in these pages I am preaching to the choir. Most readers of TLE have, I believe, noted with dismay a growing extreme toleration—judgmentalism is made a social sin comparable, say, to smoking—combined with what I shall term an exaggerated "self-referentiality" among their students. One example may serve to make my point. In my advanced geography seminar last term, a bright female senior, in response to a question about "honor killings" of young Muslim women by brothers and fathers in France and elsewhere in Europe, argued that while she thought honor killings "are terrible, I don't feel that I have the right to impose my values onto another person or another culture." This kind of student attitude, now commonplace, sends shivers up the spine of even the most jaded teacher. Does a civ-

izational worldview have a future, if its vitality has eroded to the point that its young are unwilling to defend civilization's core values?

Student worldviews and values: my project

Since 1990 my colleagues and I have been exploring the values of college undergraduates. We believed that we had observed sufficient changes of student attitude (e.g., "Whatever!") and even behavior (e.g., wandering in and out of class at will) that our working hypothesis was that at least some degree of a shift from traditional and modern to a postmodern outlook had occurred or was occurring among many students. What do I mean by these terms? Briefly, values in a traditional worldview originate with God and are passed on. Personal identity and meaning are derived from one's place in and contribution to a group or collectivity like tribe or kinfolk. The sources of authority are sacred and learned texts/persons. Obedience is more than a mere value, it is essential to survival. (A demand for a "right" to "self-expression" would have seemed not so much heretical as pitiable.) Traditional values such as familial duty are non-negotiable because to do otherwise is to rebel against the obvious, true order of things, and is foolhardy, even crazy.

In a modern worldview, the source of authority is objective evidence, and the source of values is science and reason. Personal meaning and identity are discovered (e.g., finding one's true calling

or vocation) and the self has become central. Technology, progress, and individual worth and merit as positive goods are as unquestioned as the air one needs to breathe.⁵ Older values like obedience and self-abnegation, so vital in traditionality, come to feel outmoded, quaint, and silly.

It is important to note that, while different, *absolute values are assumed* both of these worldviews. In neither a traditional nor a modern outlook would the toleration of "all cultures are equal, we have our values, they have theirs"⁶ make sense.

But now, in postmodernity, things *don't* make sense. Nothing or hardly anything is self-evident. Identity is no longer inherited or even discovered but is provisional and shifting, like grazing over a salad bar, in an endless quest for personal authenticity. Values are not absolute. Now, according to the philosopher of science Paul Feyerabend, "the only principle that does not inhibit progress is 'anything goes'."⁷ This idea, the antithesis of Dostoevsky's "If God does not exist, everything is permitted."^{8,9} captures and conveys a sense of what is meant by a postmodern worldview. No "privileged" perspectives are permitted, there is no unitary truth "out there," and life must consequently be essentially meaningless. Finally, in postmodernity, the source of authoritative answers is self-referential, that is, based on individual, personal experience.

Although a bit simple-minded, one way to characterize the manner in which we have endeavored to apprehend and assess student values is to

imagine a worldview scale with Dostoyevsky at one end, the “traditional” end, and Feyerabend on the other, postmodern, end. (A “modern” position—say, that of someone like Charles Darwin, who was confident that there is in fact one truth “out there”—would fall roughly in the middle). Where, we asked ourselves, do contemporary undergrads fall on this spectrum and, so what?

When I first became interested in this question in the late 1980s, I surveyed the social science literature and was surprised to discover that although sociologists and others had conducted many studies of ethics, very little had been done on values per se. (Later I found out why: It is one thing to ask an ethical-behavior question like, “Would you return a wallet you found in the lavatory?” Worldviews and values are a whole ‘nother thing. They are so rich and deep, ambiguous and elusive, that although the fundamental bases of ethical decisions, they do not readily lend themselves to empirical study. Hence, rather than truly scientific I think of our work as “exploratory,” which seems quite appropriate for a venture led by a geographer...)

I then assembled a multi-disciplinary team which began our project in 1990 with the development of a questionnaire of about 100 statements to which surveyed students would respond on a strongly agree-to-strongly disagree scale. Each statement was designed to reflect a traditional, modern, or postmodern worldview, such as:

- Traditional: “On my own, I am noth-

ing.”

- Modern: “The problems of society can be solved through the application of science and technology.”
- Postmodern: “Every idea is equally valid.”

This questionnaire was administered to about 1,600 undergraduates at three public universities in Texas in 1991. Among the findings we reported^{10,11,12} were strong identification with “traditional” values such as honor and family as well as “modern” values like self-expression and confidence in technology. However, we also found that 50%-70% of the respondents agreed with expressions of two postmodern themes: (a) the radical equality of all ideas and values, and (b) the celebration/elevation of personal choice and autonomy (e.g., “all ideas have equal worth” and “happiness is whatever makes me feel good”).

Since that beginning, through four distinct cycles (we are currently conducting a fifth phase) we have surveyed thousands of undergraduates at about 30 colleges and universities around the world (but mainly in the US). Nearly half these institutions have been church-affiliated colleges while most of the others were large, secular state universities, with a few private, secular schools (e.g., Harvard University) mixed in. Each phase utilized a unique questionnaire instrument designed to plumb a specific value-theme, such as personhood and environment.

In the interest of space, I shall here only attempt a very brief summary of some of our most important findings. (I

invite those readers interested in more details to contact me at kfjrn00@tamuk.edu for a copy of an extensive monograph now in preparation.

Readers may also inquire about our current, ongoing phase, the focus of which is religious diversity and pluralism.)

Consistently through four cycles of surveying and across a multiplicity of locations and institutions, four principal patterns have emerged:

1. Nearly everywhere, undergraduate worldviews tended to reflect traditional and modern values to a considerable extent;
2. Nearly everywhere, some evidence of a self-referential “postmodern turn” was found in the worldviews of many if not most contemporary undergraduates;
3. This “turn” to self-referentiality was in general much more pronounced and accelerated among students at state universities, who tended in general to be “more postmodern” than students attending church-affiliated colleges; but,
4. A smaller but clear degree of a shift to postmodern values was evident among many students at even the most conservative or “traditional” of church-affiliated campuses.

Each of these patterns was repeatedly and consistently revealed across all our survey phases. A few representative examples of typical response-patterns in each instance may serve to make the point:

- *Traditiona*l values such as family, honor, duty, and hard work were affirmed by 80-90% of students

regardless of locale or institutional type.

- *Modern* values such as individual merit, technology, progress, change and science were typically affirmed by majorities, usually sizeable majorities.
- *Postmodern* values tended to be validated by many more undergraduates at public universities than at parochial or church-affiliated colleges. For example, nearly 70% of the former compared to less than 40% of the latter affirmed that “everybody’s point of view is equally valid,” and where a majority of the former agreed that “my only duty is to be true to me,” 96% of the church-college students rejected this statement. I was particularly struck in our 2001-2002 and 2003-2004 studies by a clear impulse toward what might be called radical toleration or anti-judgmentalism: although overwhelming majorities everywhere affirmed that, indeed, “some values are superior to others,” fully 50% of public university undergraduates agreed that “teaching any particular value as better than another is wrong,” while only 27% disagreed. (For the church-college group the respective percentages were 13-67.) Here we seem to encounter a worldview in which in principle some values are absolute but in practice nearly anything goes...
- *Postmodern* values have made inroads everywhere, including the most “orthodox” (conservative) Christian colleges. For example, forty percent

of parochial college students agreed that “human and environmental well-being are equally important”; over 20% agreed that “heaven is the here and now”; 23% “opposed any limits on my personal freedom/choice” (another 21% was undecided); 26% affirmed that “humanity is the center of things”; and, as noted earlier, nearly as many of these students agree as disagreed (39-47%) that every point of view is equally valid.

There were, of course, other intriguing patterns. I’ll mention only three of particular interest. First, we found that nearly all of these college students, regardless of institutional type, “think environmentally.” For example, only 13% of the students at even relatively conservative church-affiliated campuses agreed that it “doesn’t matter if I mess up Earth if I have a relationship with God” and 75% of both the secular and the parochial students agreed that “environmentalism is good for people.” However, environment is clearly a more “sacred” value to the secular than to the church-affiliated students: 75% of the state university undergrads, versus only 40% of the Christian-college students, agreed that “environmental well-being is as important as human well-being.”

Second, we discovered in 1992 (perhaps somewhat presciently?) that *only the Palestinian students at the College of Science and Technology, Gaza* had a coherently traditional worldview. In contrast to the roughly 50-50 response nearly everywhere else to the statement, “I am willing to die for my country,” for instance, 100% of the Palestinian stu-

dents agreed, and most strongly agreed. Where the worldviews of students at every other institution we have surveyed over the years reflected admixtures of traditional, modern and postmodern values (the specific proportions of each varying considerably, of course), traditional values were uniquely dominant in Gaza.

Finally, it is fascinating to compare and contrast the average statement-responses of the undergraduates at some distinctly different kinds of institutions. The appended table provides one such comparison, this from our 1992 international study. I invite the reader to reflect for a few moments on the near-unanimity in some cases (e.g., the importance of friendship and the affirmation of hopefulness over despair) and of extreme difference in others, such as the necessity of children for a happy life or the equality of ideas.

Reflections

I have returned—not entirely unscathed—from my years of exploring the thickets of student value-scapes with a few hard-learned lessons. First, every young teacher who aspires to a successful vocation in the 21st century must, I think, accommodate the fact that, like it or not, the worldviews of most college students—and, I suspect but cannot prove, students at all levels—are at least somewhat “postmodern.” Second, we need to acknowledge that up to a point this is good news. Much more than their predecessors, for example, students today believe that all voices must be

heard and valued, particularly those which have been marginalized. To identify with the other is no small thing, as I am reminded when my grandsons root for the Indians rather than the cowboys as we watch an old western.

I am, of course, referring to a genuine enlargement of outlook. A rejection of the known in favor of the unknown or the other as an expression of mere cultural fashion is precisely the opposite, a narrowing of vision and experience. In other words, it is my hope that my grandsons' identification with "the Indians" is not because the Indians were better than the cowboys. It would be patronizing and demeaning to consider native peoples as anything other than fully human, i.e., less than angels, more than beasts, just like you and me. I hope they identify with them, rather, because they were different, interesting and, as with all human souls, more than valuable: precious.

There is another important way our students' shift of perspective may be good news. To paraphrase philosopher Charles Taylor,¹³ the impulse on the part of many young postmoderns to seek their unique personal authenticity is, so long as it is grounded rather than exclusively self-referential, worthy of respect, even admiration. Surely it is the case that our God, who has cherished and nurtured our freedom at such great cost, is unlikely to be displeased should our children manage to be less *faux* than we.

More pragmatically, many of us have been asked how a college or other student might appropriately respond to a

teacher's aggressive unbelief. My answer is to speak—quietly and with a smile—in terms meaningful to the members of the class, most of whom will be contemporaries. Say, something along the lines of "With respect, Professor X, my own experience of faith has taught me otherwise." The key phrase here is "my own personal experience." I am confident that most of the other students will be open to at least hear and consider such a formulation because, as I have said, the locus of authority for them is experiential and individual. In contrast, the pedagogue would be shocked, I suspect, to discover that their instinctive take on the more "modern"—but one could just as reasonably say "more traditional"—impersonal, this-is-how-it-is declarations will feel as quaint as fairy dust.

Having conceded these points, however, we must also be clear about the disturbing downside of a student value-shift and what it means for us as teachers. We find ourselves challenged to share our experience of certainty itself with students who are discomfited by any hint of "privileged" perspectives. Because we know through experience that some values are in fact absolute and thus some voices, or at least some ideas and opinions, are superior to others, our duty is to endeavor to subvert that aspect of postmodern culture which assumes that all such claims are illegitimate. I believe that this is a soul-test of our vocation, even our faith.

How to do so? The final lesson I gleaned from my ventures into undergraduate mindscapes is this: the only way for many, maybe most, young post-

moderns to find their way back to obedience is via a freedom that is at once personal and tethered. This is not to claim, with the brilliant 20th century philosopher Leszek Kolakowski (but somewhat *contra* Martin Luther) that "...freedom is divine, however it might be exploited by the devil."¹⁴ Luther might well have rebutted that while absolute personal freedom well-serves the ego, it dooms the soul. (Incidentally, this question—whether freedom is always good, or if there can be such a thing as “bad” freedom—cuts right to the heart of our current “culture wars.”)

Earlier I have claimed that our knowledge of the absolute nature of the deepest values—the superiority of compassion to cruelty, for example—owes not to the evidence of empirical data nor because we have been persuaded by reasoning from abstract principles. Such knowledge is firstly personally experiential and only afterwards logically obvious. A newborn in her mother’s arms does not translate. Our teaching needs to reflect this primacy of experiential knowledge.

I realize that at first this seems counter-intuitive: aren’t we all about overarching principles and concepts, from the law of gravity to why there are seasons? Yes and no. I confess that I would be prepared to argue that each of creation’s wonderful particularities are just as interesting and important as its great universals. Setting aside that philosophical debate, however, it is simply the case that if you as a teacher want to inform and persuade contemporary stu-

dents neither revelation and sacred texts alone nor scientific evidence alone, nor even the two combined, will cut it. This is true regardless of how “traditional” or “modern” your students might consider themselves. (Think I am exaggerating? Just try telling a class to “sit down and shut up!”...)

I believe that to teach successfully now one must *think personal* something which is after all second nature to Lutherans, for whom faith is a personal experience of divine grace.¹⁵ As Luther explained about the Third Article, “I cannot by my own reason or strength believe...but the Holy Spirit has called...and enlightened me...”¹⁶

By “think personal” I mean share the authority of your own experience—which, I trust, is not exclusively or even mainly self-referential—with theirs, which quite possibly is. Rub your own experience against theirs as transparently and sympathetically as you can. Much of the good stuff will stick, Velcro-like, because, well, because it *is* the good stuff.

The futurist John Naisbitt has put this in terms of what he calls a new “experience economy.”¹⁷ In the future, Naisbitt says, businesses must think of their customers individually in order to personally engage them. Is this risky? Yes. Thinking personal is in Naisbitt’s words “potentially chaotic”¹⁸ because in post-modernity each person considers his/her own experience authoritative.

Is this “doable” for the readers of TLE? I am convinced that it is, that in fact for many Lutheran teachers this is old news, that just as they have incorpo-

rated the Internet and PowerPoint into their pedagogy, sharing their own stories and experience has already become as everyday and natural as calling roll.

They, we, enjoy the profound advantage of rootedness. We are created and we know it. Our teaching is merely one aspect, one important part, of a particular way of life and being which at once constrains and is the source of our freedom, and informs our entire experience of existence.

On the other hand, can secular education successfully respond to the challenge of postmodernity? I don't know. Certainly much, even most, of our enterprise is negotiable and often improved by even radical criticism. And a great deal of what might be thought of as Christian worldview and values benefited enormously from secular or non-religious sources, from the ancient Greek understanding of the Absolute to modern science's contribution to material well-being. I happily concede the possibility that the radical personal freedom and choice of a postmodern cultural condition might for some lead to a more personally authentic obedience.

However, to the degree that secular teaching is grounded at all it seems to be in the assumption that, finally, it is about us. Consider the truism "only education (or knowledge) will save us," a notion with which we found a plurality of state university students concur. "Only education/knowledge will save us" seems just another way of saying there is no limit to human greatness: we can perfect and protect ourselves, from ourselves, by ourselves. Can such an

untethered pedagogy successfully withstand, much less rectify, a similarly rootless worldview?¹⁹ ♣

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ENDNOTES

¹With: Michael Preda, Professor, Department of Political Science, Midwestern State U., Wichita Falls, TX; Allen Ketcham, Professor of Management and Marketing and Philosophy, Texas A&M University-Kingsville; Michael Bruner, Professor, Department of Communications, Humboldt State U., Arcata, CA.

²Scott Jaschik, "The 'Great Divide' in Religious Studies," *Inside Higher Ed* November 20, 2006. Retrieved December 6, 2006, from the *Inside Higher Ed* website: <http://inside-highered.com/news/2006/11/20/religion/>

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- ⁴John Zogby et al., Survey of College Seniors (A Report to National Association of Scholars, 221 Witherspoon St., Princeton, N.J., April 26, 2002).
- ⁵Jim Norwine et al, "Personal Identity: Postmodern or Transmodern? A Study of College and University Undergraduates at the Turn of the Millennium," *The Self: Beyond the Postmodern Crisis* Paul C. Vitz and Susan M. Felch, eds. (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2006), 203-204.
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- ⁷Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method* (London: Verso, 1988).
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- ⁹As David Cortesi has explained, this is an accurate capsule description of the belief espoused by Ivan Karamazov even though he nowhere says those precise words in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. See David E. Cortesi, "Dostoevsky Didn't Say It," Infidels.org. Retrieved January 16, 2007, from the Infidels website: <http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/features/2000/cortesi1.html/>
- ¹⁰Jim Norwine and Jonathan M. Smith, eds., *Worldview Flux: Perplexed Values among Postmodern People* (Lanham, MA: Lexington Books, 2000), 21-61.
- ¹¹Michael Bruner, Jim Norwine, Micheal Preda, Allen Ketcham, "The Meaning of Meaning in a Post-Meaning Age," *International Journal of Social Science* Paris, 1994.
- ¹²Jim Norwine 2007, "Contemporary College Student Values: Traditional, Modern, Postmodern or Transmodern and, So What?" currently under review.
- ¹³Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).
- ¹⁴Leszek Kolakowski, *Modernity on Endless Trial* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 188.
- ¹⁵Leszek Kolakowski, *Modernity on Endless Trial* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 101.
- ¹⁶Daniel Preus, *Why I am a Lutheran: Jesus At the Center* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004), 54.
- ^{17,18}Thomas Frey, "Experience the Future," *Rocky Mountain News* Denver, Colorado, Saturday, January 20, 2007, 2c.
- ¹⁹I wish to express my gratitude to Rev. Craig Patterson for his helpful reading of an early draft of this article. I am deeply grateful to the following mentors without whose guidance this project and article would have been much less adequate: Dr. Alan Wolfe, for his inspired National Endowment for the Humanities Seminar, "Religious Diversity and the Common Good," Boston College, 2005; Dr. Ilan Troen, heroic glass-is-half-full director of the Brandeis University Summer Institute for Israel Studies, 2006; Dr. Ellen Charry, keeper-of-the-

flame exemplar and Director, "Taste and See That the Lord is Good: Liturgical Participation and the Dynamics of Happiness" Seminar, Calvin College, 2006 (Lilly Endowment); and, Dr. Robert F. Mulvihill, indefatigable director of the Rosemont College/Lilly Foundation Seminar, "Christians and

Power," Philadelphia, 2005. True-believers all, albeit of varying stripe: thank you for your faith-keeping. "*Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.*"

APPENDIX

Phase II. International Student Worldviews 1992:

Comparative Responses at Five Distinctive Institutions College/University* % Agreement**

| Statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|----|----|----|-----|----|
| "Live free or die" is a motto that I accept. | 42 | 33 | 85 | 100 | 54 |
| Merit should be the basis for status in society. | 31 | 18 | 74 | 82 | 62 |
| Cigarettes should be banned. | 62 | 55 | 55 | 70 | 50 |
| Sometimes violence is necessary. | 57 | 72 | 45 | 80 | 41 |
| Personal sacrifice is essential for happiness. | 64 | 58 | 93 | 90 | 33 |
| A white person can understand a black person. | 40 | 94 | 97 | 94 | 28 |
| A man can understand a woman. | 47 | 62 | 92 | 65 | 56 |
| Friendship is important to me. | 88 | 98 | 97 | 92 | 96 |
| My ideas are as good as...an authority's. | 82 | 71 | 98 | 16 | 38 |
| I am more hopeful...than despairing. | 80 | 80 | 91 | 82 | 80 |
| I would be willing to live in poverty if...content. | 14 | 68 | 56 | 94 | 75 |
| One must have children to have a happy life. | 4 | 8 | 87 | 81 | 18 |
| (Sex before) marriage is morally wrong. | 39 | 88 | 37 | 84 | 40 |
| All ideas have equal worth. | 67 | 36 | 82 | 18 | 10 |
| I am willing to die for my country. | 7 | 58 | 56 | 100 | 27 |

*1=Grambling State U., LA, USA; 2=Colorado Christian College, CO, USA; 3=Vina del Mar University, Chile; 4=College of Science and Technology, Gaza; 5=University of South Korea, Seoul, S.K.

**Where agreement = % strongly agree + agree.

Get Smarter!

Kurt Gosdeck

Technology has changed dramatically since my college graduation. At the time of my graduation, only one classmate owned a computer and most were assigned to schools without computers. Now it is hard to imagine life without a computer, Internet access, a cell phone, or MP3 player.

I began my Divine Call at St. Lucas Lutheran School in Kewaskum, WI in 2001. I was called as the athletic director, but as the Lord willed, I soon served as our technology director. During the 2003-2004 school year, I had the opportunity to visit the Northern Ozaukee Public School System. Our Board of Christian Education chairman was the principal at Northern Ozaukee High School and informed me about their SmartBoards (interactive whiteboards). I was intrigued at the concept and after viewing the SmartBoards and talking to the teachers integrating them into their classrooms; I was convinced this was an awesome educational tool.

St. Lucas purchased two SmartBoards for the 2004-2005 school year and has continued to purchase one each year. For the purpose of this article, I will refer to an interactive electronic whiteboard as a SmartBoard. This is the interactive whiteboard product used at St. Lucas Lutheran School.

What is a SmartBoard?

It is a presentation device that interfaces with a computer. The computer images are displayed on the board by a digital video projector, where they can be seen and manipulated. Users can control software both from their computer and from the board. Teachers can add notations, and emphasize by using a pen and or highlighter tool. By using his/her finger as a mouse, the teacher or student can run applications directly from the board. Another user at the computer can also have input. Any notes or drawings can then be saved, printed out, and distributed to students. You can convert the notes to HTML files for publication on your website, JPEGs or PDFs for emailing, or .XKB files for reuse in the Smart Notebook software, or any other purpose you wish.

“The SMART Board interactive whiteboard connects to a computer with a USB cable (older models use a serial cable) and draws the power it needs from the computer. The SMART Board driver automatically starts when the computer is turned on, and the interactive whiteboard becomes active once the driver is running. When you connect a digital projector to your computer, you can project the computer image onto the SMART Board interactive

whiteboard. The SMART Board driver converts contact with the interactive whiteboard into mouse clicks or digital ink. This feature enables you to use your finger as a mouse or write overtop of applications.” (Smart Technologies 600 Series FAQs January 2006 <http://www2.smarttech.com/st/enUS/Products/SMART+Boards/Front+Projection/600+Series/FAQs.htm>)

What types of SmartBoards are there?

The first series of Smart Boards was the 500 Series. It is no longer in production as Smart Technologies has introduced the 600 Series. The 600 Series provides a larger board with more active screen area, a redesigned pen tray, and optional USB speakers or Bluetooth wireless module.

Smart Technologies introduced the 600i Series in January 2007. This SmartBoard has integrated the interactive whiteboard, video projector, and audio system into one product.

The 600i Series has the same active screen size, but the built-in projector’s position above the board and new design reduces shadows and keeps the light out of a teacher’s eyes. Smart has incorporated a technology hub that enables users to connect six audiovisual devices such as a DVD player or video camera.

How easy is it to clean and maintain the SmartBoard?

The SmartBoard is clean and easy to

maintain. There is no messy chalk dust or dry erase marker residue. While the board can be used with regular dry erase markers (I wouldn’t suggest it), it is more likely to be used with electronic marking, which employs either stylus pens or your finger, and thus requires no cleanup. The SmartBoard surface should be cleaned with a very mild detergent (diluted dishwasher soap) or dry erase marker board cleaner.

Is there software that comes with the SmartBoard?

The SmartBoard comes with Notebook Software. The following is a list of Notebook Software tools and applications from Smart Technologie’s website.

Intuitive interface:

- *Simplified toolbar* Find what you’re looking for easily. Tabs and drop-down menus help you stay organized while maximizing your whiteboard space.
- *Quick tool access* Access every tool within two clicks of your mouse. No need to search through endless menus to find what you need.
- *Accessible workspace* Keep tools within reach for all users by moving the toolbars to the bottom of the screen. Move file menus out of the way when viewing in full-screen mode.
- *Tab views* Select the Gallery, Page Sorter, or Attachment tabs to switch views easily and access the features you need.
- *Page Sorter* View page thumbnails with

the Page Sorter. Drag and drop the thumbnails to reorder pages in your presentation, clone pages, or add a page name and a time and date stamp.

- *Full-screen view* Make the toolbar and tabs disappear to provide the greatest whiteboard page area possible. The small, movable presentation toolbar appears, making it easy to navigate through your Notebook pages.

Object control

- *Screen capture* Write over any application and capture both the notes you've written and the background. All elements of the screen capture become objects you can move and change. Use the freehand capture function to select an exact outline, regardless of the object's shape.
- *Edit object* Move or resize objects, lock them in place, change their color, or make them transparent, all by clicking on them.
- *Lock object* Limit students' ability to change files by controlling their editing rights. Lock an object in place, or lock it so the object can be rotated or moved, but not edited.
- *Move object* Make, move, copy, paste, and clone objects or groups of objects by dragging them from Notebook pages or other software applications.
- *Flip object* Create mirror images of objects by flipping them horizontally or vertically.
- *Rotate any object* Click an object to view its rotation handle, then drag the

handle to rotate the object or group of objects to a new position.

- *Link objects* Create easy to use non-linear lessons by attaching a hyperlink to an object to link to Web pages, whiteboard pages within the file, attachments or documents on the computer.

Text and drawing

- *Handwriting recognition* Write notes in digital ink, and then turn your handwriting into text.
- *Format text* Change fonts and colors, add bullets and change paragraph styles.
- *Special fonts and scientific notation* Include superscript and subscript to your text, or add scientific symbols and notation.
- *Spell check* Use the spell check to make sure your spelling is accurate.
- *Tools and drawing styles* Choose from a variety of drawing tools to add connectors, shapes, dotted lines, creative pen styles, and more to your drawings.

Content Library

- *Gallery* Choose from more than 6,100 free learning objects to illustrate your ideas, including images, backgrounds, dynamic Macromedia Flash, video and audio content. Use music-notation sheets, clocks, maps, sports fields, solar systems, shapes and tools, and much more.
- *Search Gallery content* Use a keyword search to find learning objects in the

Gallery. Your search results are organized by file type, so you can easily select the type of content that best suits your needs. Enter keywords with a pen, On-Screen Keyboard, or external keyboard.

- *Standards-correlated lesson activities* Save time and get ready-made lessons that are already correlated to local learning standards, directly from the Online Resources area in the Gallery or from education.smarttech.com.
- *Online Resource* Access country-specific lesson activities, curriculum standards and classroom resources from within the Gallery. The Online Resources area is customizable for you to access materials made available by other teachers on your local network and allows administrators to add additional online content.
- *Add your own images* Simply drag photos, pictures, video, Flash files and animated .gif files from other applications, and add your own learning objects to the Gallery.
- *Create images and backgrounds* Draw pictures in digital ink and save them to the Gallery to make your own personal collection of artwork.
- *Create collections* Customize learning objects by grouping them into new collections that you name yourself.

Video, Flash, and audio support

- *Multimedia file* Add audio, video, or Flash to any lesson activity by placing it into your Notebook file, or store in the Gallery for easy access.
- *Flash support* Add and save Flash files

into Notebook pages. You can drag interactivities from the Gallery, or include Flash files from other sources. Several Flash files are optimized to recognize handwriting, so you can also write into these animations.

- *Control video* Resize, move, and write over video you play within your Notebook pages, then store it in the Gallery for easy access. Find video content from CellsAlive, Espresso Education, and more.
- *Play any audio file* Use any type of audio recordings on your SMART Board interactive whiteboard. Play MP3 files in Notebook software, or attach them directly to objects. Find famous speeches, animal sounds, phonics, instruments, and more in the Gallery.

Sharing information

- *Take-home privileges* The take-home privileges of Notebook software make it easy to share files with anyone. Teachers and students can use the software at school or at home.
- *Import and export PowerPoint files* Bring existing PowerPoint software content into Notebook software's more interactive format. Or export your Notebook file to a PowerPoint presentation for users who know this format better (Windows only).
- *Export file* Save Notebook files in various formats, including .pdf and .html. You can also save individual Notebook pages as separate image files, e.g., .jpeg, .png, .gif, for easy

sharing.

- *Print file* Print from one to six Notebook pages on a single sheet of paper.
- *E-mail file* Send files as e-mail attachments from Notebook software.
- *Attach file* Access additional files directly from Notebook software, including websites, documents or any other file on your network. Click an icon for quick access to the files you need, without having to open new programs or search through folders.

(Smart Technologies SmartBoard Software January 2007 <http://www2.smarttech.com/st/enUS/Product/s/SMART+Boards/Front+Projection/600+Series/Software/Notebook+whiteboarding+software.htm>)

How can I use the SmartBoard?

The interactive electronic whiteboard is great for demonstrations. At St. Lucas Lutheran School our staff sees visible enthusiasm for the SmartBoard when showing PowerPoint presentations, viewing United Streaming videos, or in a computer class to show students how to use a particular application. Because the presenter can run the application from the board, using his finger like a mouse, it is easy to show the important features of particular software. The ability to mark on the board by writing with the stylus pen or using one's finger makes it possible to point out important features of any program.

The board is wonderful for faculty or church board meetings where the participants need printed copies of the pro-

ceedings. At the end of a brainstorming activity, for example, copies of the resulting document can be printed and distributed, as well as saved for future work.

One-computer classrooms can maximize the use of limited computer access by using the whiteboard. Students can work together with individuals contributing at the board, other participants at the computer, and whole group discussion on the activity. While it is true that acquiring the board and the projector is an added expense, this can save our smaller WELS schools time and money.

The interactive electronic whiteboard is a colorful tool. Research indicates that students respond to displays where color is employed, and users can customize the stylus pens and the highlighter features to display a number of different colors. Width of lines can also be adjusted to add flexible marking choices.

The board can accommodate different learning styles and assist the exceptional children we have in our classrooms. Tactile learners can benefit from touching and marking at the board, audio learners can have the class discussion or listen to sounds attached to words, shapes, or pictures on the board, and visual learners can see what is taking place as it develops at the board.

All ages of students respond favorably to board use. Interactive whiteboards were originally used in the business world for group meetings. As they have gained popularity in schools, teachers have reported success with the youngest

learners through students in high school. I currently use the board in my third and fourth grade classroom. Students can hardly contain themselves in their seats when using the board in a lesson. Does that happen with an overhead or whiteboard?

Distance learning is an excellent setting for interactive whiteboard use. Since they can be connected for distance communication, they have value to users at more than one site concurrently.

It interfaces well with other peripherals. One is able to use the board to display images from a digital camera or a video camera. With the digital camera, the teacher can show an object such as a butterfly and then mark on the board to point out features or label parts. Scanned images can also be shown to great advantage on the board and then written text added.

How am I using the SmartBoard tools and applications?

I use the SmartBoard on a daily basis. In ChristLight I am able to place the aim of the lesson on the board along with the questions pertaining to the key points. This enables my students to focus on those key points as they read, listen, or work in groups. Afterwards I can write or type questions the students may have on our lesson to facilitate discussion.

In hymnology I can have the words of the hymn on the board. As we learn the stanzas, I can have questions written

right next to the line of interest or attach an audio file to words my students may not understand. Once the word is clicked, the meaning is spoken. While this is going on, one can stream or play a cd of the hymn in the background.

In one of my science lessons on circuits I was able to use an interactive Flash document on parallel and series circuits. Students were able to design and construct the circuits and understand how each worked. Students had to click and drag the bulbs, battery, and switch onto the circuit. By trying different combinations, students were able to see what would and wouldn't work and also notice the brightness of the bulbs in each combination. On the next day the class then had a lab to practice this concept hands on. Due to the previous day's lesson, I had to give less direction and students were self-motivated during the lab.

I use the SmartBoard to correct PowerPoint presentations and write comments directly on them. I can save this as a separate file and the students can use this file to see how their PowerPoint was evaluated. You may use the Smart Video player to write annotations over a frame of United Streaming Video and capture your notes to the Notebook software. If you have an important portion of the video you wish to discuss, you can place a comment or question right on the video.

Language arts is a curricular area where I implement the SmartBoard the most. Each day my classes complete a daily language activity on the

SmartBoard. Students come to the board and edit the examples given. One of the tasks I have begun recently is to scan students' writing. I, myself, struggle to come up with model writing examples. One way to solve that problem is to let students see their writing on the board. I am able to point out wonderful examples of topic sentences, supporting sentences, or conclusions. Students can not only edit and proofread their classmate's writing, but they can also assist with adding or improving vocabulary, and manipulating sentences to improve sentence fluency. While this is happening students are helping each other improve individual writing skills, learning that God has given each one of them different gifts and abilities, and finally demonstrating Christian love and humility during the whole process.

Imagine creating all your math lessons in the Smart Notebook software. I have undertaken the task of writing my Saxon Math Grade 3 lessons with the Notebook software. The majority of my lessons are typed and problems are prepared. Students are able to manipulate coins or shapes on the Smart Board, read word problems and solve them at their desks, or complete addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division examples on the board. I then can print them for the students or post them on my webpage for parents to see the work completed in class. As I review my lesson plans, I can edit them to students' learning styles or level of understanding.

Another additional tool that teachers, especially in math, could take advantage

of is the Smart Airliner. "As a computer input device, the Smart AirLiner is an 11" x 10" (8" x 6" active area) wireless tablet that works with or without a SmartBoard. The AirLiner is a nice add-on peripheral for your main computer workstation.

"The AirLiner can be used without a SmartBoard. Because the AirLiner is wireless, you can position the tablet wherever it is most comfortable, such as on your desk, next to the computer screen, or on your lap while reclining back in your chair.

"If you don't have much typing, you can launch the virtual keyboard in Smart Notebook Tools, to enter in a file name to save, for example. As an input/output device with *any* software, it can be used, for example, with drawing packages, Smart Notebook, "the desktop," web page design software, web browsers, athletic analysis software, Mapquest, and an audience response system with a sketchpad drawing window for doing on-the-fly questions.

"If you've ever used any tablet input device, the AirLiner works the same way. Once you get it set up and communicating with your computer, if you touch the middle of the tablet, that point corresponds to the middle of your screen. The upper left edge of the AirLiner is the upper left corner of the screen, etc. No orienting is needed.

"There's also lots of ways to use an AirLiner with a SmartBoard. One way is as a great manipulative device, where the user 'grabs' a virtual device and does something with it. Using the protractor tool in the Smart Notebook

'Angles' gallery to measure angle degrees is a simple example of this.

"Teachers who use SmartBoards always say that students really like to go up to the SmartBoard and manipulate software with it. They like to click and drag, clip and annotate. One great way for a teacher to use an AirLiner is to let the students 'have at it' with the SmartBoard in the front of the room, interacting with students closer to their physical space.

"And then when she wants to manipulate the SmartBoard, add annotation or make notes, she says 'now let me take over for a minute,' and uses the AirLiner from anywhere in the room, selects a software pointer, pen or eraser from the AirLiner, and manipulates the SmartBoard by using Smart Notebook Tools software.

"Or she hands the AirLiner to a seated student, and says 'you show us the solution to the next problem, George,' or 'you circle the correct city on the map, Mary,' or 'you draw out the chemical structure, Wanda' and from right from their desks, students also interact with the SmartBoard. Although I haven't tried it, it's possible to have four AirLiners interacting with one SmartBoard, and AirLiners can be 'paired' with receivers so there's no interference between classrooms.

"With a skilled teacher, using an AirLiner can be a unique method of further engaging students in the learning process.

"People sometimes ask me, why not just use a chalkboard or whiteboard... isn't it just the same thing? Yes and

no... *yes* adopt best practices on chalkboard teaching: note taking, reinforcement, problem solving, repetition and student engagement. *no*, chalkboards always look like chalkboards. With Smart Notebook software and an AirLiner (or SmartBoard), the background on which you write over can change, as often and quickly as you desire.

"With adequate preparation, you can make far better use of instructional minutes and thoroughly teach a concept to mastery by using a SmartBoard (or AirLiner). The AirLiner solves one of the major hurdles of "adequate preparation" in using a SmartBoard, because almost *no* teacher has a SmartBoard and projector in his home (or wherever he does lesson preparation). With an AirLiner, if you want to sit on your living room sofa with your WiFi laptop on your coffee table, an AirLiner on your lap, and your favorite beverage at your side, ready to create a highly inspired Smart Notebook lesson, it's now possible." (Smart Choice AV Solutions 2007 <http://www.smartchoiceav.net/1072323.html>)

I foresee teachers using the AirLiner to have students solve math problems right at their desks, proofread daily language activities, write sentences, or engage in classroom spelling bee.

The use of the AirLiner in the classroom is another additional tool that can be used with the SmartBoard.

I always teach my students that you must conclude your writing with a summarization. So ... the SmartBoard is a tool. If there is one tool besides the

Gosdeck

computer that I would incorporate into my classroom, the SmartBoard is it. I sincerely believe that this tool will become as common as the computers in our classrooms. The uses are endless and only limited by the imagination and creativity of the user.

For those interested in the SmartBoard you may go to Smart Technologies website at www.smart-tech.com . Another site you may visit to

learn more is www.smartchoiceav.net . You may schedule a demonstration at St. Lucas Lutheran School or email me at kgosdeck@stlucaswels.org ✉

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Science in Mind's Eye
Emily Buck

Can you see,
the Mind's Eye in mine eye?
What's inside?
And Why?

If you should ask,
since you do not know,
I suppose I'll tell you
so...

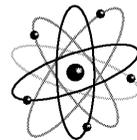
It's Science in Mind's Eye!
For, there's almost too much there to see.
But theories, facts and figures,
are not what pushes me.

It's rain
And plants
And birds
And space.
It's germs
And muscles
In a face.

It's sound
And sight
And smell
And why?
Its questions
Looking
One more try.

It's wind
And light
Dinosaurs
And snow.
It's all the things I do not know.

It's Science in mine eye!
Because there's always more to see,
And that's what keeps me looking,
quenching curiosity.



Emily Buck is a senior at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, MN. Emily will graduate in May 2007

The Storms of Life

Cheryl A. Root

Ahh, summertime. For many it brings thoughts of warm, sunny days, picnics and basking in the sun. It is a welcome change after the cool, wet days of spring and the frigid cold that winter can bring. However, even though the summer months can be filled with sunny days, pleasant temperatures, and blue skies, oftentimes they are plagued by periods of violent, even deadly, storms. Between these extremes are days marked with rain as well as drought, or unseasonably cool spells contrasted with hot, humid temperatures oppressive to young and old alike. Our lives are like the summer season, oftentimes happy without a care in the world, at other times dripping with sadness or bombarded by the storm-filled clouds of affliction, depression, anxiety, or worry.

What kind of weather are you experiencing in your life right now? If sunny, give thanks to God. If cloudy, give thanks to God and, yes, if stormy, give thanks to God. Now you might be thinking, "Give thanks to God? I can understand giving thanks on the good days, but on the cloudy and stormy days, too? Wouldn't I rather ask, 'Where is God—perhaps curse God and die?'"

My father died a few months ago after a 17-year battle with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and cancer. It was difficult watching my father lose not only his ability to walk, but also the use of his arms to feed himself or even wipe his nose. Most would agree that my father's life and my mom's, since she was the

sole caregiver, were rocked by stormy, gloomy weather.

Yet, did they give up? No. At a time when many would see 'Dr. Jack' (I mention Jack Kevorkian because 20 of the first 120 patients that he helped assist with suicide were MS patients) my parents fully relied on God to help them through each day and appreciate each day's blessings. They looked to God's word for promises and hope and, yes, learned to find joy even in affliction.

How could they find joy in affliction? To begin with they trusted the words of Romans 8:28 "All things happen for the good of those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose." Just as rain gives needed moisture to the earth, and storms bring people together to help one another out, so affliction brings blessings. Affliction helps one to appreciate what is important in this life and, most important, to look beyond this life to life eternal.

You see, when life is going great people don't think of their own mortality or life hereafter—heaven and hell. The fact is we are sinners and live in a sinful world. "The wages of sin is death but," the passage continues, "the gift of God is eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

That gift of eternal salvation is offered to all mankind—it is offered to you. That gift of salvation and the sure hope of heaven gave peace to my father during strife and will give peace to you also. Will the affliction go away? Maybe

not. In second Corinthians 12 the Apostle Paul prayed to God three times to remove an affliction that he had. The Lord didn't remove the affliction; instead, he answered him, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Each time my father tried new treatments he, too, prayed that his affliction would be removed. However, it never was. Still he clung as Paul did to that wonderful gift of grace and used a stormy situation to share his faith with others.

Even though my family and I learned to accept God's plan for my father's life and make the most of it, there were times, especially during the final years when my father was in constant pain, when I needed to come to grips with why God would allow my father, a God fearing man, to suffer so. I'll admit that there were times that I was angry with God for seeming to be so unmerciful. As I struggled with these thoughts, I turned to God's word for peace and comfort. There were two portions of scripture that I found especially comforting—Romans 5:1-8 and I Peter 1:3-9. Both of these speak of God's grace and mercy and rejoicing in our sufferings. Romans 5:3-5 reads " ... but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us." I Peter 6-7 adds this about suffering: "In this (God's mercy) you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may

have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trial. These have come so that your faith-of greater worth than gold, ... may prove genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."

These passages remind me that our sufferings help us to focus beyond this life. You see our life is a race. It has beginning and an end and, as in all races, there is a prize. The prize is the 'crown of victory' given to those who finish the race in faith. That crown of victory is heaven. So as we run this race of life it is important that we 'fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). Our sufferings help us to do just that.

Fixing our eyes on Jesus and the crown of victory won for us through his suffering, death, and resurrection will help us to find joy in all circumstances. As our Lord says through the Apostle Paul, "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus (I Thessalonians 5:16-18).

So what type of weather are you experiencing? If sunny, give thanks to God. If cloudy, give thanks to God, and yes, if stormy, give thanks to God. Let us confess with the Apostle Paul, "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Ph 4:12-13). ✪

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First Day of “Real School”

Erik Parsons

It happened on a bright day in early spring of my junior year of college during an early field teaching experience that I had my first day of “real grade school.” Now after many early field experiences, and two student teaching experiences, I can finally say that I have attended “real school.” Thinking back to that day three years ago has given me the opportunity to compare and contrast my early education with my transition into becoming a teacher.

For example, my friends say they went to real school and claim I didn’t. As a six year old, my first day of school included no bus ride, no parents leaving me in unfamiliar territory, no first day of eating in a cafeteria, and no introduction to a new teacher.

The first day for me, included a familiar teacher and principal, a known school setting, and a recognizable lunch table. Home schooling was the instrument that educated me from kindergarten to high school graduation. The school house was my home, the teacher was my mother, the principal was my dad, and the school lunch program was run by the students, but with all these dissimilarities between home schooling and private or public schools, the aim of the education was the same. The goal for all three is to give the best education to the individual student and serve the

needs of the family.

Home schooling is just another form of education used to allow a student the chance to have the best education possible, and also fit the individual needs of the family. As with any form of education, one system might work well for one student and family and not for the next. The same can be said for home schooling. For me, home schooling was the choice that fit my family and me best. My parents’ decision to home school my siblings and me included many rationales, but the main reason was that my parents wanted to give us a religious education. My town had no Lutheran elementary school so the only choice was a Christian home school setting. Besides the religious reasons, my parents thought that home schooling would be an adventure for us to undertake. A traditional school setting did not fit the needs of my family. My parents saw that private or public school would not have allowed enough family time. Home schooling offered my parents the flexibility of being able to spend time with my brothers and me. This was the reason that many families in our area chose to home school. The parents wanted the education of their children to be a major part of both their children’s lives and also their own. My parents wanted to learn along side my siblings and me. Looking back I am not sure who got the better education, my

parents or me.

My home state has very few laws to block my family from home schooling. This is not the case in all states. The local public schools were very helpful in getting my parents started in home schooling. Along with my local community being supportive, other home schoolers and educators in the WELS assisted my parents in getting home schooling started. Another valuable resource that my parents used over the years was the WELS Homenet Site. This site serves as a sounding board and a question and answer site for many WELS home school families.

One thing about home schooling that is neat to watch is the exchanging of advice between home school families. Home school families actively seek out other home school families. The growth of home schooling in my community was amazing. In my early grade school years, there were only four other home schools to do activities with us. By the time I graduated, there were two separate home school groups that included over 150 families.

One of the main questions that I am asked when people learn that I was home schooled is: What is the biggest difference between home schooling and traditional educational systems? This is hard to answer because each home school is as different from the next even as each private or public school varies from school to school. I will share some of the differences I've seen in my transition from being home schooled to becoming a teacher in a more traditional setting. However, these variations are

unique to me, and I cannot say that all home school students have the same background.

In my early field experiences in the lower grades the thing that stood out was the structure of the schedule. Home schooling, from my experience, was far less structured. One reason for less structure is that there are fewer students. According to my mother the flexibility in our schedule stemmed from a curriculum goal that emphasized school as occurring at all times. My mother described our learning as, "We tried to take advantage of the various learning windows around the home school and it was often in the less formal times when our home school family learned the most." There is also less need for the school day to be extremely prearranged seeing that a home school student has a very individualized program that allows him to learn at his own pace. As I began my teaching experiences, I had to get used to responding to bells that alerted me to a need to change to the next class period. In home schooling there were class periods, but they were very flexible. If there was a need for an extra thirty minutes for a subject then it was fine to take it because there would be somewhere else to pickup the other subject. There were days that I would spend the whole day working on math then the next day working on science or history. All that my mom demanded of me was that the material was finished by the end of the week.

I am sad to admit finishing the required materials during the week was not always accomplished. Because the

teacher was my mother it was sometimes easy to “pull the mother card” and get out of the assignment deadlines. In early grade school this was the case, but as I progressed, the realization came that education is a personal experience and that the student has gifts and opportunities to get the most out of the material as possible. Some educators have noted that home school students are very good at teaching themselves. This makes sense because many of the subjects that a home school student takes are learned while teaching himself or herself. This style of student teaching happens only after the student has learned self-monitoring skills which is one of the most valuable life skills that home schooling can offer.

Cooperative learning is another area where I had to make a transition. Because most subjects in home schooling have only one student per class, cooperative learning with others of the same level is not possible. In my early college years, it was sometimes hard to want to work with a group because I just wanted to do the project by myself and get it done. As I began to teach, I recognized that cooperative learning is a helpful tool in learning. I will not forget that individual self-discovery is also very valuable.

Probably the most frequently asked question I get about home schooling is: Is there a lack of socialization? As mentioned earlier, my area had a large home school population so opportunities for peer socialization were present. The practice of socializing was different from that of private or public schools.

My parents and the parents of my home school friends stressed the importance of multiage socializing. I had many friends in grades above and below me. I also had friends at my same age level. As I grew up it was fun to watch all the different ages play and learn together. The various ages that socialized together is a wonderful aspect of home schooling and one reason why I am thankful that I was home schooled.

Peer socialization in home schooling is unique. During the school day there isn't much socializing unless there are multiple siblings in a home school which is the case for many home school families. The socializing occurs after the school day is over. Knowing that friend time occurred after required assignments are finished was a big motivating factor in getting things done. Not having other students around was actually a good thing because the focus was on the subjects and not friends. After the home work was done there was plenty of time to be with friends. There was actually more time to hangout with friends because my friends and I did not have to spend time riding a bus home from school.

Along with much time to hang out with friends after school, there was a large push for field trips in the local home school groups. It seemed that there was a field trip a week during my grade school years and also in my high school years. These field trips were organized by the home school groups and then the families picked which ones they wanted to attend. A typical home school excursion could include up to

fifty students and parents. These activities were both a wonderful educational tools and a gathering for parents to share theories about home schooling.

Along with socializing opportunities during free play with other home school families, many home schoolers took advantage of extra curricular activities. Home school groups formed sports teams and played both other home school groups and private schools. The public schools allowed the home school students to play on sports teams and participate in extra curricular activities. So peer and multiage socializing came in two fronts, within the home school families and with the local community. Sharing this relationship with the community also changed my town's view on home schooling from negative to posi-

tive.

My final hope is that home school students are looked at as normal students. As I trained to become a teacher, one question has been asked of me many times... "If the Lord blesses you with being a teacher and with a family would you home school your own children?" I answer the question in this way... I would choose the educational system that best fits the needs of the child. This might mean a private school, a public school, or even home schooling. The better question is not which school system is better, but which educational system will best serve the individual needs of the student and the family. ♣

Erik Parsons is a fifth year senior who will graduate from Martin Luther College in May 2007.

What Science Means to Me
(to the tune of 'These are a Few of my Favorite Things')

Sara Marggraf

Mammals and rainbows
And Spring time and roses,
Deserts and glaciers
And kids with cold noses,
Birds in the air
And fish in the sea,
This is what science means to me.

Neptune and Venus,
And stars in the sky,
Dinosaur bones
Left from times gone by,
Comets that soar
And leaves on the trees,
This is what science means to me.

Magnets and forces
And compounds and ions,
Chemical form'las
And experiments tryin'
Newton and Einstein,
Found gravity the key
This is what science means to me.

When the hail hits,
When the bugs bite,
When the birds won't sing,
I simply remember God formed it all,
That's the joy that science brings.

Sara Marggraf is a senior at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, MN. She will graduate in May 2007.

It's Not Yours

Jonathan Balge

The following message is adapted from a chapel meditation delivered at Martin Luther College during the first semester of the 2006-07 school year. (Ed)

1 Corinthians 3:6-9 “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, But God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building.”

Fellow Servants,

If God is willing, some time between the years 2007 and 2014 hundreds of you will enter the gospel ministry. As our students anticipate that moment, I trust that they are often thinking about how they will serve. Our students say to themselves or to others “In my classroom, I’m going to do this” or “in my congregation, I’m going to do that.” “In my pulpit” — you get the idea.

In general, this sort of thoughtful anticipation is wonderful. I’m convinced that congregations and classrooms will benefit in the future from the thought students give to the ministry now. So keep making those mental notes and perhaps even written notes during your classes and on Sundays in

church. Keep compiling your personal “Do’s and Don’ts” for future ministry.

With one caution. If you are in the habit of saying “my congregation” and “my classroom,” you may be fostering the misconception that you will one day have a classroom or a congregation. You will never have either. I don’t care what your grades are. I don’t care what your gifts are. You will never have a congregation or classroom. You will never have a choir to direct or a team to coach or a member to minister to. You will never have them because they will always belong to God, not you.

Which is not to say that it is a sin when we use common expressions like “my members” or “my students.” But rather it is to emphasize the truth that the Apostle Paul was explaining to the Corinthians. They had been dividing along personality lines – some saying “I follow Paul” and others “I follow Apollos.” They seemed to be suggesting that they owed their salvation to these men – or, if not their salvation, at least their allegiance.

Paul set them straight. “I planted the seed. Apollos watered it., but *God* made it grow. Neither he who plants nor he who waters is *anything* but only God who makes it grow. For we are *Gods* fellow workers, and you are *Gods* field and

Gods building.” (1 Co 3:9) In misguided human reasoning, the Corinthians were trying to build their hopes and faith on these people.

But Paul tells them, “I am not anything. I am nothing. I don’t create faith. I don’t save people. I don’t make the seed of the gospel grow. I’m a servant. I was just allowed to be here on earth for a little while and allowed to do a few things in a few places for Christ Jesus.”

I don’t know the degree to which any tensions exist between the different training programs here at MLC and out in the WELS. I guess we would be naïve to say there is perfect harmony, and I guess we would be too pessimistic to say there is raging enmity between programs here and service “out there.” But to whatever degree any tensions or jeal-

ousies exist in others and in ourselves, these verses show us the foolishness of it. All are servants, only doing what God enables, All have *one* purpose – the salvation of souls through the gospel.

May Paul’s viewpoint inform and shape ours, so that we don’t think of future or present classrooms and ministries as *ours* but as Christ’s. So that when we think about where we are now serving or will one day serve we do not so much say “My” as we say “someday when God lets me serve in one of his classrooms.” “Someday in one of God’s mission fields;” “someday in one of God’s congregations when he lets me serve there;” this is what I hope to do. ✪

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