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The Lutheran Educator

The WELS Education Journal

The Lutheran Educator

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INSTRUCTION: CURRICULUM FOCUS OR TEACHER CHOICE

Do teachers teach in much the same way that they were taught? Perhaps it is time to ask ourselves:

How do I teach? What influences my instructional procedure?

Let's begin by thinking about our education. College courses open our minds to varied instructional methods. There is the tried and true—the traditional way or the way we were taught. There is the new and innovative—a modern approach which holds the promise of success and excitement. There is the textbook procedure—a prescriptive plan of instruction.

In our college classes, before or after graduation, during the school year or in the summer, in a three-credit course or a brief workshop, we become acquainted with varied instructional methods. Some methods may even be promoted as the way to be the most effective teacher ever—a panacea for all ills in the world of learning!

We also need to think about the world beyond college. We are in the classroom and the real world of teaching is a busy world indeed. There are many subjects to teach and we also have other responsibilities. Time to prepare is often minimal. Perhaps the school to which we have been called has curriculum guidelines and instructional materials which do not fit “my way to teach.”

What do I do? How do I teach?

We need to answer these questions carefully and proceed wisely. Begin by searching out the choices available. Are we obligated to follow the curriculum guidelines of our school? Will our pupils and their teachers, both before and after, be handicapped if we insist on teaching only “my way” or the “new way I am so excited about?” Does our busy schedule or personal opinion give us a valid excuse to ignore established curriculum procedures?

Christian teachers need to proceed with concern and caution whenever new methods are learned, a call is accepted, or the opinions of others influence our thinking. We must remember that we are in the Lord's service in the education of his “little ones.” He expects that “everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way” (1 Co 14:40). God's Word tells us that “everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities” (Ro 13:1). Our concern as a called servant of God should be that “whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Co 10:31).

The question “How do I teach?” will be answered in many ways. There is no one best way for everyone and for every situation. Yet, we must guard against being so set in our choice of method that the curriculum of our school and the welfare of the children and teachers beyond our classrooms are given little consideration. Let us be ever mindful of the stewardship which the Lord expects of us. “Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful” (1 Co 4:2).

IRM

The Area Lutheran High School Development Director: Who is he? What does he do?

Jerome N. Kieselhorst
Neil H. Scriver
Daniel L. Krueger

The position of development director in our area Lutheran high school associations is relatively recent. We asked three persons who hold this office to explain the position and how it relates to the congregations of the association. The three writers are Neal Scriver of Shoreland Lutheran High School, Daniel Krueger of Wisconsin Lutheran High School, and Jerry Kieselhorst of Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School. What is a development director? Read on and see. (Eds.)

Jerome N. Kieselhorst

The position of the development director is definitely a *positive* influence in developing a better relationship between the area Lutheran high school and the members of the local Lutheran high school association or federation.

To launch a development program for the area Lutheran high school there must be a clear understanding of the mission of secondary Christ-centered education. Holy Scripture states that mission clearly: "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Pr 22:6). The speaker is clear: the Lord through the inspired writer. The command is clear: teach in the ways of the Lord. The audience is clear: all Christians. Although this directive may be fulfilled in a variety of ways, the Lord clearly states that training children is the responsibility of all Christians.

A Christian quality education which is *unaffordable* does not fulfill

the Lord's command. As a result of the rising costs of quality Christian education, it has become necessary for the area Lutheran high school to develop means which allow the high school to improve the current programs of education and to help relieve the financial stress such quality programs may impose.

The development director is responsible for initiating and executing those programs according to Christian principles. The development director in fact strives to develop all aspects of Christian secondary education.

The *Mission Statement* for the Development Department of Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School states, "It is the mission of the Development Department to assist the constituency of the KMLHS Federation to maximize the use of God-given and Christ-blessed spiritual and material gifts for the support and furtherance of the school's purposes and programs."

One of the development programs

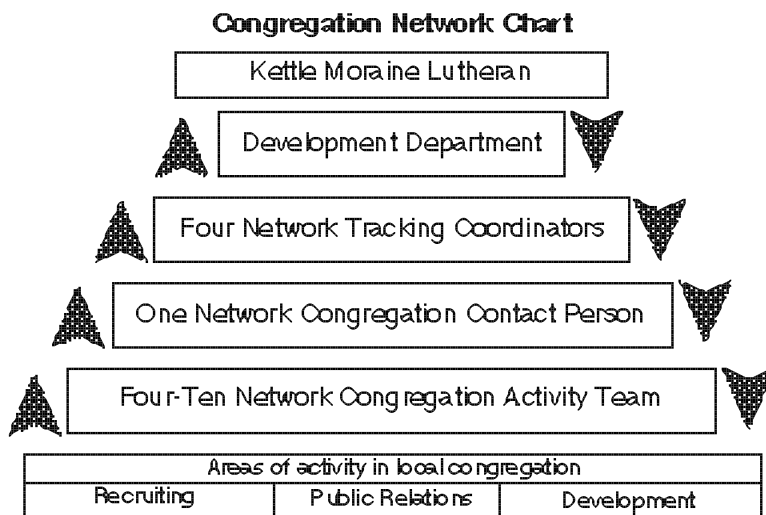
initiated by the Development Department of Kettle Moraine was the establishment of a *congregation network system*. The purpose of this network system is to encourage active participation throughout the KML federation membership and to provide a channel for communication within the federation for the benefit of Kettle Moraine and its programs of Christian secondary education. The congregation network system is illustrated in the accompanying chart.

The network system allows the development director regular contact for public relations, recruitment, and stewardship with all the congregations in the federation. The development director and the principal work together in a team ministry to maintain close public relations with the congregations of the KML Federation.

Personal visits with each pastor are scheduled annually. The role of the individual congregation in KML's programs of stewardship and recruitment is discussed. A Leadership

Meeting with congregational representatives is held at the beginning of the school year. At this meeting, federation membership responsibilities are reviewed along with the congregation's responsibility for its part of the current KML budget. A follow-up meeting with the congregation's representatives is scheduled in January or February to evaluate the congregation's stewardship progress. Each congregation is encouraged to establish a strategic planning committee to deal with long-range plans for itself and for KML.

The congregation network system has proved valuable to the recruitment efforts for Kettle Moraine. The contact persons have made an energetic effort personally to contact all potential eighth grade students in their local congregations. Some have also made contacts with parents and students at the seventh grade level. The entire K-8 recruitment program of KML is the direct responsibility of the development director. Finally,



public relations—developing a positive image in the federation and the community—is a must and a major responsibility of the development director.

As we move into the 21st century two areas of concern for launching a development program in the area Lutheran high school are apparent: (1) tuition costs are escalating to the point of becoming unaffordable, in some cases even with the help of tuition assistance; and, (2) congregations are being asked for unrealistic increases in commitments to curb the rise of tuition. The development director must identify the ALHS and its programs to the constituency of the Federation and request special gifts from individual Christians or groups of Christians interested in Christian secondary education.

Convinced of the mission of the area Lutheran high school, the development director must explore additional areas for funding the programs of quality education. These areas can include individual discretionary gifts, foundation grants; re-sale merchandise, alumni, estate planning, no-commission insurance, and matching funds.

Development is an ongoing process. We need to press on toward new areas of ministry in the Lutheran school, to which we can be certain the Lord Himself is leading us.

Jerome Kieselhorst is the development director at Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School, Jackson, Wisconsin.

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Neil H. Sriver

Development director? We have a development director? These are questions I heard when I became the development director at Shoreland Lutheran High School.

Shoreland Lutheran High School in its early years received support in two basic ways. The first was in the form of offerings from each of the congregations belonging to the high school federation. The second was tuition. The amount of tuition was determined by subtracting total congregational support from the operating budget and dividing by the number of students.

As educational costs increased and congregational support stabilized, there was a need to keep tuition at an affordable level. I was called to encourage increased congregational support and to develop other sources of income.

Support of an area Lutheran high school is the responsibility of the members of the federation congregations. I have met with the congregational boards to encourage their support of their high school. I have spoken after church services, during the service, and at every other opportunity to show people the many blessings of a Christian high school education.

We have added four congregations to the high school federation in the last four years. Our goal is to continue to add a congregation a year for the next five years; thus, if God wills, reaching twenty-five congregations in twenty-five years.

The third source of income that we encourage is from certain individuals of the high school federation. Many members have discretionary income with which the Lord has blessed

them. We give our members four special opportunities a year to contribute directly to the high school: a tuition assistance fund, a Thanksgiving offering, an Easter offering, and our annual fund drive.

Another aspect of my work is the Shoreland Lutheran High School Foundation, Inc. This foundation provides our members an opportunity to give a gift that keeps on giving. The foundation has proved to be a great blessing.

Another source of income is personal loans. In fact, our main debt is in the form of personal loans from the members of the federation. The development office regularly seeks to replace loans that are called in by the investors. Whenever the opportunity presents itself, we encourage the note holders to include the note in their will or estate to be given to the church or high school. Good stewardship encourages all of us prayerfully to consider the Lord's work when preparing our wills. As development director I offer to help anyone needing assistance in this area.

The Lord has blessed me as development director. He has given me the opportunity to meet and talk with thousands of Christians about their Savior and about his lambs. The role of the development director is not just asking for money; it is much more than that. It is thanking people, visiting with students, encouraging parents, attending federation churches, teaching, and coaching. What a blessing and opportunity he has given me.

Neil Scriver teaches, coaches, and is the development director at Shoreland Lutheran High School, Somers, Wisconsin.

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development
director is thanking
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and coaching.

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Daniel L. Krueger

Cream City Lutheran High School Board Chairman: "Fellow members of the Board, our high school is in deep financial trouble. I believe we ought to get us one of them development directors."

One member of the Board speaking the mind of the rest of the Board: "What's a development director?"

Chairman: "A development director is just a cleaned-up name for a fund raiser."

Development is often considered a synonym or even a euphemism for fund raising. Certainly no development program can be considered successful without an effective fund raising operation to provide the necessary resources.

Development in the broadest sense, however, includes much more than just fund raising. Institutions which enjoy the greatest success in fund raising are those that understand the whole concept of development and how it relates to the acquiring of resources. These institutions view development as an effort by the entire organization to realize its maximum potential and its highest destiny by continuously analyzing the organization's mission, programs and services, establishing its goals and objectives for the future, and taking the necessary action to achieve those goals.

This concept of development reaches far beyond the development office or the development director; it is shared institutional responsibility. No development program can attain its full potential without a team effort and a total institutional effort.

With this as a backdrop I intend to make two points. (1) The relationship between the development director and the calling body must be cooperative and synergistic. (2) When this is the case, everyone benefits.

It is important to recognize that the development director is not called by the high school, but rather by the conference or association of congregations which owns the high school. When the development officer implements plans which encourage and coordinate financial support from the

congregations for their ministry, he is doing so at their request. This is not unlike the apostle Paul's relationship to the Corinthian Christians. He writes to them "I am not ordering you but testing you by the zeal of others to see how real your love is. ... I am giving you advice about this because this will be helpful to you. Last year you were the first not only to do something but to want to do something. ... Now finish the job so that your eagerness to want to do it might be matched by your completion of it. ... We are trying to avoid any criticism of the way that we are administering this generous gift. ... To be sure, we intend to do what is right not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of the people" (2 Co 8:8, 10, 11, 20, 21).

The development director's relationship to the individual contributors must be the same. He must truly be the minister of development, the servant of all. His approach to donors must be based on matching the organization's goals for ministry with the donor's interests. Rather than "begging," or "fleecing the flock," the development officer presents contributors with opportunities for investment. Contributors willingly give as committed partners in the ministry. I believe the development director should use personal contacts, direct mail, and media techniques so that he can be as persuasive as possible in assisting contributors to make generous financial decisions for the ministry. He should be allowed and encouraged to do anything necessary to advance the ministry in a God-pleasing way.

Here at Wisconsin Lutheran High School, the development director

The purpose of the professional development director is to enable the ministry to realize its fullest potential and highest destiny.

serves the high school conference as well as the individual congregations. My conviction is that if the conference congregations prosper and are effective in their stewardship, then the high school ministry will also benefit. To that end I have worked with individual congregations to assist them in starting their own endowment funds. I have helped other congregations plan and implement stewardship programs and capital fund campaigns. I will assist individuals with wills and estate planning no matter whom they name as beneficiary (most often first named is their own congregation).

One of the primary tasks of the development director is to administer the systematic plan established by the congregations for supporting their high school. This involves establishing financial goals based on strategic ministry plans. Then, as equitably as possible, allocating the financial responsibilities among the congregations of the conference, tracking and reporting the results in a timely fashion, and occasionally offering a word of encouragement to a congregation to "finish the job." I ask my staff assistants to remind me when deadlines are approaching or of appoint-

ments that I have to keep. The conference has called me to serve them occasionally in the same capacity.

The development officer must operate as a servant of the conference that called him, the administrator who supervises him, and the individual contributors who come to trust him to help them plan their giving. In essence, the purpose of the professional development director is to enable the ministry to realize its fullest potential and highest destiny at the direction of conference congregations and on behalf of all those the ministry serves and aspires to serve in the future. If the ministry is to succeed, its development program must succeed, and the success of the development program is the success of the entire conference, by the grace of God.

Daniel Krueger has been Director of Development at Wisconsin Lutheran High School since 1988. Prior to accepting this call, he was an independent market consultant.

Teachers Share Ideas



Student Input

My school days go easier for me if I invite suggestions and ideas from the students. Such student input helps me to work with them with less stress and to accomplish what needs to be done. To provide opportunities for student input, we have class and group meetings. I also allow specific times for “free socialization” when talking is permitted and I remind students to use this time to talk rather than the quiet times during the school day.

Joyce Loeck
Mount Olive, Appleton, WI



Task Organization

Teachers, especially those who are also principals, have many tasks to do. A helpful procedure is to keep a list of all current jobs and tasks. Review the list daily and do the most important things first. Cross off each item as it is finished. Not only does this facilitate task completion, it makes one feel good to know how much has been done.

It is also helpful to use the file drawer in your desk to keep track of all the things that must be done. Do not file these alphabetically. Rather keep them in order of priority and dates due. Keep the most current folders right up in front so they will receive immediate attention. Remove folders when they are no longer needed and recycle them for use again at a later time.

Orville Hando
Good Shepherd, West Allis, WI



Word of God Review Lessons

The *Primary Bible History* book and workbook contains periodic reviews of the lessons. I've found that a cooperative learning approach to these reviews can be lots of fun for the children as well as help-

Teachers Share Ideas

ful in keeping everyone involved in the review. Beforehand, I prepare a list of questions on the facts and applications of the stories. Also included are "Give a passage ..." type statements. I divide the children into three groups: Team 1, Team 2, and Team 3. I am Team 4. The children sit on the floor at the front of the room when we play. I start by giving Team 1 their first question. They form a huddle and talk over their ideas for the answer. After everyone agrees, one person gives the answer. If the answer is correct, their team gets a tally mark on the board, and we go on to Team 2. If Team 1 gives an incorrect answer, the question passes on to Team 2, and so on, until a team gives a correct answer. I answer any questions that pass all three teams without being answered. This also pretty well guarantees that I will be the last place team, which can be helpful. After a correct answer has been given, I always go on to the next team in line for the new question, even if the question went through all three teams before finally being answered. Every person on the team must have a turn to be the answer giver.

Donna Kuenn
St. John's, Princeton, WI



Clipart
courtesy of
Joy Klatt

A sincere thank-you to all the teachers who sent in ideas for "Teachers Share Ideas." A special thanks to Joy Klatt for her clipart. If your idea didn't get into this volume of the *Educator*, it will appear next year. If you have an idea, send it in. If you have some good clipart, send that also. Have a relaxing summer. IRM

RECRUITING CHURCH WORKERS IN THE AREA LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL: *Ten Ideas That Can Help*

Mark S. Grubbs

Loud voices of warning are being heard throughout the Wisconsin Synod today and those voices call us to respond to an unpleasant reality. At this point in time, when our Lord is giving us so many opportunities to go forward with his gospel message both at home and around the world, a critical shortage of church workers has been projected. This shortage is often expressed in terms of numbers—the percentage of decline in attendance at our prep schools, the smaller number of graduates from the Seminary, and so forth. Those abstract statistics mirror a very real crisis. In short order we may be unable to fill pulpits, we may be forced to leave home mission fields unexplored, we may not be able to continue or expand our work in various foreign mission fields, and we may not be able to provide the teachers needed in our elementary and secondary schools. Why? Certainly not because there is no work to do. Not because the Lord is not opening doors. Not even because of lack of funding. But simply because we may not have as many trained workers as we need.

The aim of this article is to explore the role which area Lutheran high schools can play in helping to supply the workers our Synod will need in the years to come. To that end, I will outline ten ideas which we have found helpful at West Lutheran High in Hopkins, Minnesota. But before we

turn our attention to those ten ideas, I want to make two preliminary observations.

First, I believe that the solution to the problem of a shortage of church workers needs to be addressed by all WELS Christians in a united and cooperative way. All too often in recent years, there seems to be a kind of polarization developing. Some would like to see the prep school system strengthened. Others want more support given to the area Lutheran high schools. No doubt many are left with the impression that to be enthusiastic about the prep school system means we must be correspondingly negative about area Lutheran high schools and vice versa. If this sort of polarization is allowed to continue, it can only have a negative effect on both the area Lutheran high schools and the prep schools. Perhaps all of us need to be reminded that when it comes to preparing future church workers, we share a common goal. More is to be gained by cooperation and mutual encouragement than by a spirit of competition.

Secondly, we need to recognize the expanding role of area high schools in supplying future church workers. Our prep schools were established with the specific goal of training young people who would eventually become our teachers and pastors. This system has served our church well through many generations. And in our day, the prep schools continue to fulfill the

purpose for which they were established. On the other hand, the area Lutheran high schools were established with a different primary goal in mind, namely to provide a more general kind of Christian education, tailored more for future lay leaders than for future church workers.

Yet, even though the area Lutheran high schools were not designed primarily to train future full-time church workers, they have always done so. Without abandoning the primary goal of providing a general Christian education, the area Lutheran high schools have made provisions (for example, by providing instruction in Latin) to make it possible for students to make the transition to DMLC or Northwestern College. Today, some of the area schools include pre-ministerial or pre-teacher education as a stated purpose of the school, and others simply provide the necessary courses. But all of the area schools—even the smallest of our schools—work hard to keep this option open to students who show an interest in becoming full-time church workers. So the issue is not really one of whether or not the area Lutheran high schools can or should produce potential church workers, but rather how we can better do what we are already doing.

It is clear that the area Lutheran high schools as a group consider this challenge a high priority. It is for this reason that the Association of Area Lutheran High Schools has invited prep school representatives to participate in its meetings in recent years. And it is for this reason that the primary topic of discussion for the 1992 AALHS meeting will be improving our efforts at supplying potential full-

time church workers.

With those preliminary thoughts in mind, we turn our attention to some specific strategies for area high schools for producing more potential full-time workers for the Lord's kingdom work. For the purpose of this article, I will limit my remarks to what my own school has done and is doing. For us, the last few years have been a period of brainstorming and innovation. Like the other area Lutheran high schools, we are experimenting to find what approaches will work and we are looking forward to comparing notes with the other schools.

Curriculum planning

One necessary component for success in producing church workers in the area Lutheran high schools is a curriculum which adequately prepares students to continue at DMLC or Northwestern. This curriculum modification is especially critical when it comes to foreign language preparation and it presents the greatest challenge to smaller schools. Our approach has been to bring our foreign language electives in Latin and German more in line with what is being taught in the prep school system. This has necessitated a change in the texts we use in these courses. And, although we are not in a position to add Spanish at this time and can only offer Third Year Latin on an as-needed basis, this plan does allow us to provide the basics necessary for our students to make a successful transition to DMLC or NWC. We are convinced that this approach also offers excellent language instruction for those students who do not pursue full-time church related careers.

Utilizing alumni

Another change in our approach has been a concerted effort to keep the opportunity for full time church work before our students. In all honesty, I would say that we sadly neglected this aspect of our work in the past. Although a few committed students did go on to train as full-time workers over the years, this was due more to the strength of their own commitment than to any encouragement offered to them in the school setting.

Part of our approach to remedy that situation has been to use our graduates who are training at DMLC, NWC, and the Seminary to recruit current students. We invite students enrolled at these schools to speak in religion classes, to conduct chapel services, and to speak privately with those who show potential and interest in church work. There is a very personal aspect involved in this approach. Our present students often know our alumni well. They relate to them in a way they would not relate to strangers. Our graduates who have committed themselves to preparing for the preaching or teaching ministry are able to relate their own experiences, doubts, fears, and hopes in a way only they can do.

Utilizing recruiters

We have also committed ourselves to improving the direct contact we have with the recruiters available to us from DMLC and Northwestern. In addition to all-school presentations by these recruiters, we make time available for the recruiters to speak personally with individual students. During these one-on-one sessions, the recruiters can address the doubts and

concerns that are in the minds of those who are considering church work. They are able to awaken potential interest in some students and strengthen the interest that

already exists in others. Again, the goal is to keep the opportunity before the eyes of our students.



Highlighting the need for workers

An increased commitment to this goal has led us to make some changes in chapel services and in our religion classes. We now include more emphasis on full-time church work in our chapel series. During the course of the year, we include week-long series which focus the attention of the students on the aspects of the ministry which are emphasized in the Word: the need, the goal, and the blessings of service in the Lord's kingdom.

Campus visits

Visits to Northwestern, DMLC, and the Seminary do more than just allow our students to see these facilities. They also help students envision themselves as potential students in these schools. We make sure that our students have the opportunity to visit the school closest to us (DMLC) at least every other year. And this year, we will include a visit to the Seminary for all our freshmen. To make the most of such visits, we ask the host school to provide an opportunity to meet and talk with students, in addition to the usual campus tour. It is also valuable to ask any alumni

of your high school to meet your current students when they arrive.

Identify good prospects before they reach high school

Pastors and teachers already know their students well, before they enroll in the area Lutheran high school. From their work with their students, they can identify those who have the necessary gifts for the ministry and those who have already shown special interest. Often, the pastors and teachers have been actively encouraging such students to consider the ministry. And, yet, our high schools usually have no way of identifying these promising prospects *before* they enter the high school setting. Our guidance counselor asks the upper grade teachers for help in identifying these students when he visits with the eighth graders each year. Likewise, the pastors are asked to provide their recommendations at the summer association clergy meeting.

Encouraging parents to encourage their children

No one is able to encourage a student to consider church work quite like his or her own father or mother. Yet, many seem to neglect this privilege, perhaps simply because they never thought about using their influence in this way. When the parents of promising students visit with teachers during parent-teacher conferences, we not only speak of the potential we see in their sons and daughters, but we also enlist their help in encouraging their children in this direction.

Actively involve students now

For most people, it is a long time between their first serious considera-

tion of becoming a church worker and the time they actually get to participate personally in such work. In our school this year, we have instituted a special once-a-week chapel service in which students can take a leadership role. On this one day a week, these students and their classmates meet in their homerooms with their class advisors. With the help of their advisors they design the order of service they will use, compose and lead prayers, and present portions of the Bible lesson for the day.

Role modeling

Surely, we would all agree that Christian teachers are role models for the coming generation, but how effective are we in communicating our own personal enthusiasm for and contentment with the ministry into which the Lord has called each of us? Our students cannot see into our hearts. The only way they are able to perceive our dedication, our commitment, our contentment, and our joy in the Lord's service is when those qualities are honestly reflected in our words and actions. All of us—certainly not just those who teach religion classes—are in a position to speak honestly and frankly with our students about what we already perceive as the pros and cons of full-time church work. In all probability, our students are very much aware that church workers as a group are not overpaid, but we can help them also see that the Lord has been faithful in providing for our needs. Likewise our students may look negatively upon the hard work and long hours that are associated with being a pastor or a teacher. Our job is to help them also see the incomparable joy and deep

fulfillment which we personally experience every day as we communicate the Gospel message. After all, the Lord's work is exciting and fulfilling and eternally significant. As role models for our students, let's make sure our students can see how true that is in our own lives.

Footsteps to the ministry

Two years ago, our school started a program which allows students to spend some time observing local pastors and teachers as they go about the day-to-day duties of their calling. The first year, only two students took part; last year we had eleven participating; and this year, we hope to involve even more.

The program is simple. In the case of those interested in the preaching ministry, the student spends one day with an area pastor. Each year, we ask the supervising pastors to concentrate on one or two aspects of their ministries. Last year, for example, our participating pastors explained how they go about preparing their Sunday sermons—including the work they do in the original languages, the writing and editing of the sermon, and so forth. In addition, they helped their charges construct a brief Bible class lesson. This year, we will ask the pastors to show our students how they prepare the devotions they use for shut-in or hospital calls and take the students with them as they make an actual call. In this way, our students get the opportunity to see various aspects of the ministry first hand, while at the same time receiving direct encouragement from men already in the ministry.

Our Footsteps to the Ministry Program for potential teachers is sim-

ilar. We work with teachers in our local Lutheran elementary schools. As far as possible, we try to give the students varied experiences each year. For example, we might place them in a multi-grade classroom one year, and then a single-grade classroom the next. During the first visit, students serve primarily as observers. In subsequent years, the supervising teacher may allow them to give a test, lead a prayer, or help in teaching the Bible lesson for the day.

Since our Footsteps to the Ministry program is still in its infancy, we know that there are refinements that need to be made. But our students are excited about the program, and participating church workers see great potential in this program. Above all, we are convinced that this approach is an excellent way of helping students see how the Lord might also use them in the future as full-time kingdom workers.

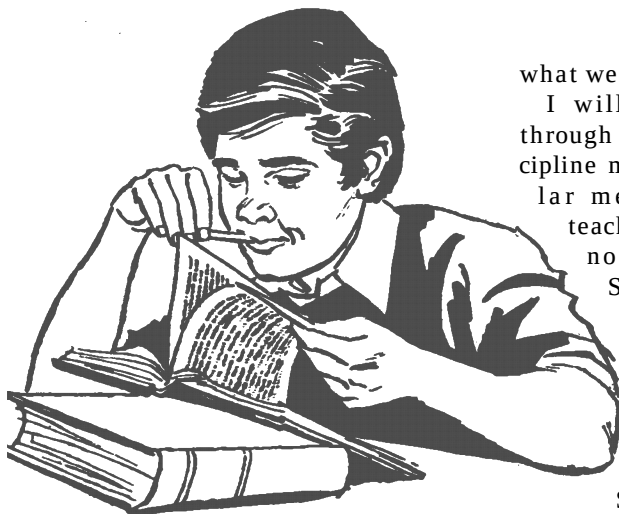
Some concluding thoughts

In his wisdom, the Lord has chosen to use frail human beings to speak the message of salvation. As a church body, we face a critical need for more church workers in the years ahead. I hope that some of the ideas presented here will be helpful to those working in area Lutheran high schools throughout our Synod. May our Lord help each of us do all we can to encourage our youth—whether they are in area Lutheran high schools, prep schools or public schools—to consider prayerfully the possibility of full-time service in His kingdom!

Pastor Mark Grubbs is principal of West Lutheran High School, Hopkins, Minnesota.

From Tedious to Tremendous: Teaching Memory Work in the Upper Grades

Mark C. Wagner



Memory work leaves a definite track on the emotions, sometimes positive and, more often than we teachers will admit, negative. Students may well associate pain, labor, and tedium with memory work. Yet that which is difficult to attain can and often does have a tremendous influence on the development of the most significant personal beliefs, attitudes, and life decisions. John Isch, in an *Educator* editorial explained, "...the mind returns to that which is deepest, engraved there in childhood. ...we remember also our teachers who taught us these words and who insisted that we memorize them. ...we thank God for teachers such as these. ...we ponder frequently

what we have memorized." (1990).

I will never forget when and through whom I was convinced to discipline myself into a pattern of regular memorization. This special teacher was able to convey to me not just a knowledge of Scripture, but that which I have come to appreciate as the cornerstone of his biblical teaching: a love for learning the Word. I was so intrigued by Dr. Siegbert Becker at the Seminary that I scarcely perceived a new resolution rising within me. Like Elisha bargaining for Elijah's mantle, I began to ask the Spirit for a portion of that deep hunger he modeled so well. Here was a teacher who so craved a relationship with the Lord Jesus that he had invested an astonishing amount of time and energy in study, meditation, and careful memorizing. It showed all over him and through him. By daily association with him, we seminary students saw his tremendous understanding and commitment in action. Almost without effort, it would seem, he transferred his living faith to us and hundreds of others.

I wanted to do the same with my confirmation class and began to explore ways to make memorizing more than a mundane task. By seek-

ing new ways to challenge them in their growth, I began to notice a difference. The change was quite perceptible to me as a teacher (and indeed one of my most desired outcomes), yet they barely noticed it in themselves. They were having too much fun learning. They were too busy trying out their new skills. Memorizing was becoming much more than rote repetition or an assignment accomplished. It was, in fact, similar to their first ride on a bike. After pushing them through the process, one day I let go. Riding on their own, they discovered the freedom of the wind blowing in their hair and the fun of being in control of a whole new mode of moving. Slowly and surely their memory bank was filling up their hearts with the richness of spiritual insight.

Consider your own class. Can you recognize that love for learning in your students' eyes? Can you see that they are really enjoying what they have memorized, and they desire to remember even more? Are you able to create an atmosphere where that consistently occurs? Perhaps what I need to ask first is, "Do you yourself have a deep yearning to walk with the Savior in his Word?"

Goals of memory work

We first need to ask ourselves very clearly and loudly, "Why am I attempting to carry out this task of teaching memory work?" Is it simply because we feel we have an assignment to get through a list of passages? Do we look at it as seat-work time, busy work, a necessary evil along the way? Or do we have a genuine goal of establishing for each student a platform from which he or she

can penetrate deeper into the truths of God? Do we have a goal of transferring a love for Jesus? Do we view memory work as a way to teach definition of theological words? Do we value memorizing for recognition and relearning? Let's examine these.

1. To effect the transference of a living faith

The only way we achieve this goal, and I believe it is the essential one, is to have an ongoing plan of memorization for yourself. If you are satisfied with the passages you learned in confirmation class, you will not only be sadly out-of-date, but you will be lacking vitality. Howard Hendricks describes this goal of biblical teaching, "What we are trying to do as a teacher, as a motivator, is to develop a person into a self-starter." Later he says, "I'm asked over and over again, 'How in the world do you get a person motivated?' I answer, 'When you sock someone with 20,000 volts of electricity, they don't turn to you and ask, 'Did you say something?' No, they move. The key question is... Are you motivated? Because motivated people become change agents" (1987).

Let me lay this down at a new level. When was the last time you did wholesale memory work for yourself? Not just a passage, but a review of the entire catechism, or memorizing sequences of passages within a special book of Scripture, or even a thematic paragraph? Have you ever considered putting yourself to the test in the presence of your class? Consider this kind of challenge:

Tim was a conscientious teacher who determined that he would memorize Romans 8:28-39 for himself. After a fair encounter with these words, he told his class

what he was doing and asked them to keep him “honest.” At the end of the week he gave them the opportunity to read any five words out of that section and he would finish the passage verbatim. Later that fall he attempted to reread Ephesians often enough to recognize what chapter any five words were in. The children nearly came out of their seats to get a chance to stump him.

The harder you work and the more they push you, the more joy they get seeing you grow. And, besides modeling the attitude, you give them exposure to Scriptures other than the standard Bible stories.

2. To offer immediate defense against the Evil One.

Sin lurks so close to us, and with the liability of our sinful nature, we can fall prey to Satan’s temptations before we have even called the principles of God to mind. Words that are memorized arrive on the mental scene quicker, like a sword in hand to hold the enemy at bay until we can gain our senses for a systematic defense. John Isch states, “The simple truths of God’s Word memorized as Scripture passages, hymn stanzas, or parts of Luther’s Small Catechism serve as a support to our oft-times faltering faith. The written, revealed Law of God, which we memorized in the Ten Commandments, guides our lives and constantly reminds us of our absolute need for God’s grace and mercy in Christ. The temptations of Satan and the forces of evil can be overcome and routed, even as they were when our Lord Himself was tempted, by those memorized passages” (1978). If only more of the teens I counsel could have used the

Word in this way!

3. To give a simple, clear testimony about Jesus

Children have a “license” to say what adults often cannot. Think how boldly they speak to grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends, and neighbors! My wife reminded me of this recently while recounting the day’s events. Flooded by diapers, laundry, phone calls, and noise, she dropped a pan full of eggs on the kitchen floor. She mumbled, “I’m about ready to quit.” Our nine-year old son heard this, hugged her, and said, “Aw, Mom, think of the Psalm that says, ‘I will lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from?’” Eternal words sometimes slip out of children’s mouths with amazing effectiveness and youthful clarity.

I have overheard my boys in our predominantly unbelieving neighborhood quoting Scripture to friends as naturally as if quoting Dad. I was pleased but also humbled by the thought of how often I had missed such opportunities to draw directly on the power source.

4. To define theological words.

Children will get to know the bigger, million dollar abstract words by context. When they can readily remember a passage that is clear, they can easily define such words as redemption, salvation, reconciliation, forgiveness, and grace. If we don’t teach them the meaning of these words we will have a hard time introducing them to the Author!

5. To build recognition and relearning

In the soon to be published K-12 Coordinated Curriculum, David Kuske emphasizes that memorizing for recognition requires less time and

effort than learning for recall, but such memorizing must still be precise. "We expect the student to do recognition memory assignments with the same exactness with which he or she recalls memory work. The difference is that once recognition memory work is recited, it may never be assigned again until years later" (1991). I am especially fond of memorizing larger sections for this purpose. For instance, once Tim (the teacher) works his way through Romans 8, he may forget some of the words, but he will long remember the content and context, and have a sense of "locale." "Locale" was what we called Dr. Becker's ability to say that some passage was in the lower left-hand column of his Bible page. After memorizing wholesale from the Bible over a period of years, recognizing passages is like rummaging in the attic. You will remember what something looks like and generally where it is and while you are rummaging around to find it, you will make some great discoveries along the way.

Relearning refers to a level of remembering that makes it easier to learn the second time around. Again, the broader the base of knowledge, the quicker the relearning.

Methodologies for effective memorizing

Do your children think learning Scripture is something to be endured? My wife, Ronni, and I are convinced that children should experience joy and satisfaction from hiding his Word in their hearts. But when we suggested rote memorization to our two boys, they merely stared at us. If we wanted them to think positively about the Bible, we realized that we would have

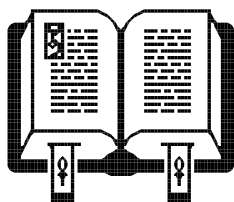
to incorporate strategies other than reading passages over and over one thousand times. One attempt during Advent struck a new chord with them, and became an exciting game with Dad. We cut out different shapes of construction paper and wrote one word from a verse on it. After saying the verse together, the children would leave the room while I hid the shapes. They loved the challenge of discovering Dad's secret hiding places. Putting the verse together was simply the "icing on the cake." Memorizing can be fun if you use creative methods and techniques.

Make memory work come to life by your own investment of energy and enthusiasm. Have your students write passages on cards so each has his own pile. Then try some of these ideas:

Variations

1) Vary the time: Go through the passages verbally with the class in the morning, at noon, and right before the 3 o'clock "collapse." Based on the spaced-practice model of learning, this method depends on frequency of repetition. Stop right in the middle of a mathematics assignment and run through a list of six to eight passages aloud. Or perhaps you could start the whole list and move rapidly through them.

2) Vary the sequence: Taking a list of ten passages, maintain the original order until the class has a fair recall. Then start at the fifth passage and run through the tenth, back around the corner from first to fourth. You could take every other passage, or even attempt to go backwards. You could do this by rows, individuals, or teams to add an element of competition.



3) Vary the rate: Go fast, slow, but never at a predictable pace that sets the dangerous cadence of monotony. I repeat the books of the Bible very fast to see if they can keep up and even tease them about having to say “rhubarb” if they can’t do it.

Mnemonics

You might consider placing passages around the room in the fashion of a maze and having the students walk through and memorize as they go. They can make associations with different areas; put the passage on the bulletin board, the podium, in the desk drawer, in an encyclopedia, or even inside a locker. You could make this an individual or a group activity to see how quickly they can move through a certain number of passages. Hide passages and have them find them. Take the children on a prayer walk and pray aloud about the importance of a specific passage. After you have explained the words, ask them to think and pray about the passage. Perhaps it would be even better to focus on the understanding of the words, asking them to associate passages with a time, place, or person in their lives. These methods would incorporate chaining and association principles.

Learning styles

Develop some options for the students based on different learning

styles. For visual learning flash a passage up on the overhead for two to three seconds and see who can get the most words. Maybe you could get them to work in teams to watch different parts of the passage. For auditory learning you might have them listen to Bible tapes as a reward system, work in pairs saying the passages or section aloud or even attempt charades to fill in blanks. For kinetic learning you may need to scramble the words of a passage for reconstruction, or play a game where they write the passage on a ball (transparency pen) and pass it back and forth until both players or the team can replay the whole passage and make the most catches. Any teacher who can make up rules can create and supervise a game setting. Even better, gathering the students’ input can result in surprisingly new ways to learn.

Competition

Although I have suggested some of this already in previous concepts, I use competition carefully. Upper graders can be so competitive that they “chew” on each other in the process of a learning game or ridicule someone for being too slow. I find such occasions an excellent time to reinforce passages which speak about unity, love, and fellowship. In fact, I might ask them to quote a biblical reference to that effect so that they see how these passages connect to real life. Learn to use competition as a positive driver, but watch for evidence that a person is becoming too pressured. This can result in learning only the words and not the meanings, and can really give those with short-term recall a distinct advantage. Give them chances to compete against

themselves. Use the clock, precision, and content as measures of success rather than using each other.

Referencing

When you have students read their Bibles regularly, you can get them to highlight their favorite passages and learn them directly from their own Bibles. Not only does this reinforce "locale," but it helps to set passages in their context. I always stress the learning of references and then challenge students to give me another passage from the same book of Scripture, or tell me what else is in that book or chapter. Here they can benefit in content as well as recall.

Luther, knowing that severity is apt to defeat its own purpose, was not a proponent of harshness in religious instruction. He suggested that parents make learning a pleasure in the home, where education enters into every setting.

We might thus train our youth, in a childlike way and in the midst of their plays, in God's fear and honor, so that the First and Second Commandments might be familiar and in constant practice. Then some good might adhere, spring up and bear fruit, and men grow up in whom an entire land might rejoice and be glad. This would be the true way to bring up children; since, by means of kindness and with delight, they can become accustomed to it. For what must only be forced with rods and blows will have no good result, and at farthest under such treatment, they will remain godly no longer than the rod descends upon their backs. (Painter 1928)

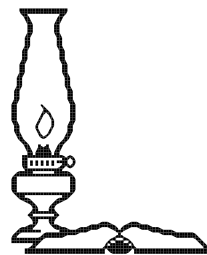
The goal of going beyond the cogni-

tive and reaching the affective in learning is so critical that we cannot tolerate a low level attitude about the Word, either in ourselves or in our students. So many people in our churches have never become impassioned about the only thing ultimately worth getting impassioned about. So let's get excited and watch the tedium give way to the tremendous blessing of a heart that hangs on every word that comes from the mouth of God! "Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart." (Ps 119:111)

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EFFECTIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENTS

Mary E. Olson

Most of us when we hear the word "environment," may think of nature; the word conjures up memories of grade school and high school science classes and the study of ecosystems and the delicate balance with which God created them.

As this is true in nature, it is also true for the surroundings in which we seek to care for and educate children. When I speak of the early childhood classroom environment, I am referring to the combination of external or extrinsic conditions that affect and influence the growth and development of young children.

This definition is purposely broad in scope. When considering the

design of a quality and age-appropriate Christian classroom there are numerous aspects to consider. The proper structuring of the classroom environment is crucial to the fulfillment of the goals and objectives of your program. A positive early childhood classroom environment should seek to (1) declare your preschool's unique Christian character by communicating the assurance of God's presence in the classroom; (2) create an atmosphere in which children and teachers experience joy, achievement and fulfillment; (3) encourage good order and classroom management; (4) encourage and provide for active exploration by children; (5) cultivate and foster positive and supportive relationships with families; (6) and express praise, glory, and adoration of a grateful people to a gracious God.

In developing an early childhood program, it is important not only to focus on what we need to do to fulfill appropriate curricular goals, but also to step back and think about the children's lives in a broader context. What is it like for these precious souls, whom the Lord has so generously entrusted to us, to be children today? What is our part in enriching and edifying these children's lives?

Childhood is a special time in every culture. It is the most formative period of our lives. Our childhood experiences form the foundation of what we become. These experiences affect our ability to learn,



and they influence our sense of ourselves in relation to our Lord, to other people, and to things. Childhood is a time to cement the spiritual truths with which we all must be firmly grounded in order to have a fulfilling and God-pleasing life, and it is a time to shape the way we will use our God-given-gifts and talents throughout our lives.

The environment of childhood needs to possess the following attributes in order to foster an effective and positive setting for learning.

Children need an environment rich in experience. One's early childhood environment should serve as an invitation to the child. It should awaken his curiosity, leading him to make sense of his world and the multitude of experiences provided him there. The child through play should become a "meaning-maker"; he should be able to discover and learn for himself the wonders of God's creation.

Children need an environment which encourages play. Our Lord has designed young children to learn through actively exploring and manipulating one's environment. Play which is self-initiated, spontaneous, and voluntary allows the child to build on his own experience, understandings, and cognitive structures. Play can be encouraged and facilitated but not forced; if we force children to do certain activities, play no longer is play.

Children need a childhood rich in teaching. Play alone will not teach children about sin and their Savior, nor will it provide the necessary information to know how to cross the street safely or how to bake bread. Children will only learn some things

by being taught. However, the most effective teaching involves active learning, and this kind of teaching then allows the child to reinforce the concepts discovered through play.

Children need an environment rich in language. The foundations of literacy do not begin when a child reaches grade school age. They begin at birth and are nurtured and enriched in an environment full of oral language, reading, and writing. It is the early childhood program's responsibility to foster this growth. The disciple's ability to be an active witness to his Lord hinges on the child's ability to speak, read, and write the Good News to others.

Children need an environment rich with people. It is through relationships with people—people of varying ages, races, occupations, and backgrounds—that children learn how the social world works. It is within the context of these relationships that children learn that we are all children of God and part of his family. It is in relationships with people that children learn to love and care for those outside their family, as well as learn that others outside their family love and care for them.

Children need an environment where they are properly valued. It is imperative that children learn that they have worth because of what Christ has done for them, not because of what they can do.

Children need an environment in which they feel they belong. An early childhood classroom should be designed so that a child feels safe and comfortable. It should be a place that is familiar, consistent, and full of

love, learning, laughter, and care.

Most of all, children need an environment that is rich in God's Word. Christian early childhood classrooms should seek to integrate God's Word into all aspects of a child's play and learning. The child can grow and develop while (and by) learning that God is a part of his or her whole life and that the whole of life is lived for him.

These are the environmental principles that we should be thinking about when we design programs for young children. Now we will focus on how this might be accomplished.

It is impossible to address all the individual needs one may have in a particular program. Each program has its own unique problems and blessings when it comes to the physical space allotted. However, there are some general tenets one must consider when designing appropriate environments for young children.

Classroom space works best for children when it is divided into distinctive learning centers, and the children are allowed actively to explore and make their own choices. Because each center provides a unique set of materials and play opportunities, children can see what their choices are. The following centers, at a minimum, should be provided in an early childhood classroom: block area, house area, dramatic role-play area, language arts area, toys and manipulatives area, art area, music and listening area, sand and water area, science area, large muscle area, and an outdoor area. Many sources also advocate a carpentry and construction area.

Designing an early childhood envi-

ronment requires much thought and planning. I recommend first that a grid of the dimensions of the room be made. Then either draw or cut out (to scale) the major pieces of furniture the center already owns. Set up your centers to see how things may be placed. By doing this you can ascertain whether any additional equipment is needed. Learning centers should be located around the perimeter of the room, with the furniture pieces defining the play space on all sides. Therefore each center will be constructed from the wall toward the center of the room. One should always be careful not to leave open dead space in the middle of the room, or to create a straight path or "runway" down the center. Both situations will cause mobility and interaction problems in your classroom. If your classroom is not designed to leave a separate space for circle and group times, one of the centers should be big enough for group meetings (or the furnishings should be flexible and movable enough to provide for this in your schedule when needed).

The licensing requirements of your state can give you minimal guidelines on the space requirements per child and safety precautions to keep in mind. However, the early childhood environment should be designed to be aesthetically pleasing and comfortable for both children and adults. Check to make sure all entrances are clean, landscaped nicely, and easy to enter. The entrance area to the classroom should be bright and inviting; there should be an easily accessible parent board to communicate vital information, as well as colorful displays and pictures that convey the program's commitment to Christ.

Likewise the classroom should be light, clean, safe, ventilated properly, and have comfortable floor coverings (carpet in all areas except for the art area). Bright pictures and displays in the classroom should communicate to children (and their parents) the particular theme for the month, and keep our Lord and Savior always visually present. Rest rooms should be clean and odor-free.

The physical space, as well as the staff, should both verbally and non-verbally give the message to the children and their families that "you are welcome here." Parents should get to know the teaching staff as people; home visits and family displays with short biographies can aid in building rapport. If possible, provide space for parents to chat together (putting on a pot of coffee will encourage this). Provide parent programs during the preschool time in an area more "parent-sized." Invite parents to be a part of their child's learning environment as aides or observers.

A number of helpful books have been written to aid in the physical development of an early childhood program. The bibliography which follows includes several books I would recommend to you. The works by Hohmann, Houle, and Kritchevsky are particularly helpful, and the Harms listing is a useful evaluative tool. Any of these books will be valuable as an aid to environment planning and as inservice material for a staff to study.

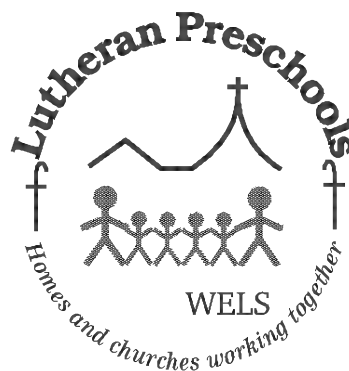
Age-appropriate, well-thought-out environments are imperative in early childhood classrooms. They are the settings in which we as Christian educators carry God's saving message to the cherished souls with which we

have been entrusted. May the environments we create always communicate Christ as well as serve the needs of the children who are in our care and their families.

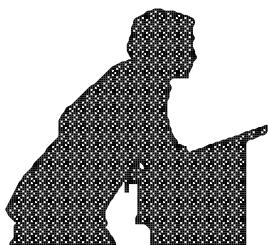
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Profiles of Ministry:



THE EAST COAST

Carla Melendy and Susan Haar

"What did you say you teach? Did you say that you teach kindergarten through seventh grade in two classrooms with two teachers and no helpers? That's unbelievable! Does it work?"

Such a reaction is common from Baltimoreans who are not familiar with the concept of small Lutheran schools. To them we seem an anachronism. The public schools, parochial schools, and private schools in Baltimore County offer everything that children seem to need: gifted classes, special education classes, emotional disability classes, values education classes, computer labs, athletic programs, music programs, lunch programs, before and after school care, transportation, and counseling services. Although we cannot offer all these programs, we offer the one thing needful, the Word of God.

Atonement Lutheran Elementary School is one of five WELS schools in the North Atlantic District. The church and school are located in Baltimore County, Maryland, a suburb of the Baltimore metropolitan

THE EAST COAST

Carla E. Melendy and Susan G. Haar

THE INNER CITY

David G. Niemi

area. Our members are a cross section of the incomes and occupations that come with an area having a population of 2,000,000. The school was begun in 1975 with an enrollment of nine students taught by one teacher. Today the school has an enrollment of twenty-six students taught by two teachers. The school has had its ups and downs in enrollment. During 1986-1988, the school came under intense scrutiny as to the feasibility of maintaining two teachers with such a low enrollment. This caused the congregation to reevaluate the role of the school. Proposals for a preschool, for before- and after-school care, for providing transportation, and for reducing the faculty to one teacher were discussed and debated. The final decision was to keep the school as K-8 with two teachers and to try to increase enrollment. The school was reaffirmed as a vital and consistent part of the ministry of this congregation. The Lord blessed the congregation's perseverance by sending more students, and this year's enrollment of twenty-six is the highest number of students in the school's seventeen-year history.

Classes were held for the first year and a half in the back of the church. Then the congregation acquired a portable classroom which happily eliminated the moving of desks and equipment each weekend. As the enrollment grew, a second portable



classroom was acquired and attached to the first one by means of a connecting hallway. Faithful members spent many hours repairing, painting, carpeting, and refurbishing the classrooms. The classrooms have been affectionately referred to as “the diners.”

We teachers have invented our own word for our unique teaching situation. We are not strictly departmentalized, self-contained, open, or closed. We call our teaching strategy “stropen,” partly structured and partly open. “How does it work?” you may ask. We have structure within an open classroom setting. One room has kindergarten through third grade while the other classroom has fourth through seventh grades. The children remain in the same classroom throughout the day with the exception of the third graders who move for science to the upper grade classroom. We teachers are the ones on the move. We switch classrooms at each recess break, morning, noon, and afternoon. This affords us the opportunity to work with all levels of students. We departmentalize science, social studies, music, and physical education. Otherwise, we teach a variety of subjects as mutually agreeable. Our teaching arrangement seems unorthodox at first, but visitors have agreed that it works in our particular setting.

Each classroom has a structured schedule but is open to cross-grade teaching and grouping which allows us to try to meet each child’s needs. This scheduling requires us to work together and maintain a good “team spirit.” Our like-minded discipline and philosophy of teaching allow this to happen. As co-administrators, we

have the privilege and responsibility of setting up such a class schedule, choosing curriculum, and trying different teaching techniques and strategies. This gives us the flexibility and the ability to change according to our students’ needs. This year we are implementing the “Writing Workshop” after attending Rolland Menk’s workshop last summer. This kind of teaching requires long hours of preparation and thought in order for the days to run smoothly. Teaching never grows stale because we never know what a day at the “diners” might bring.

Of one thing we are certain. The Lord is with us and has blessed our ministry in Baltimore. We have experienced disappointments, discouragements, and struggles, but the Lord has seen us through the rough times and given us encouragement through his Word and the many faithful people in Baltimore. The Lord has also given us many joys. We have seen the mother of three students come to faith and be baptized. A five-year-old student told us we were the first people to tell him about Jesus. We see God’s Word bearing fruit in students who attended or are attending Michigan Lutheran Seminary. A graduate of Atonement is at Dr. Martin Luther College preparing to become a teacher. We also know that God’s hand daily sustains and guides our students and us in a quiet but sure way. The Lord is faithful, as he promises in His Word, and we know he will continue to bless our ministry in Baltimore.

Susan Haar and Carla Melendy teach at Atonement Lutheran School, Baltimore, Maryland.



THE INNER CITY

David G. Niemi

I remember it vividly. I had sent all the necessary letters to the right people and told the board at Beautiful Savior that I was returning the call they had extended to me. There was still work to be done at First German in Manitowoc. Our family was well liked, and we liked the community. We were staying.

After school the next day, I picked up the family and drove to Hardee's for supper. Carrie and I talked while the kids enjoyed the play area. It had been a very good day at school, but something just wasn't right. It was the call. How many other teachers would see *Inner-City Milwaukee* and just say, "*Forget it!*" But I knew something about Milwaukee, the inner-city, and the congregations. Carrie knew what was coming. "Hello, Mr. Plath? You know that call I returned to Beautiful Savior? Well, I made a mistake"

So here we are in Milwaukee, a big city with a small town atmosphere. The city offers a wide variety of communities, cultures, peoples, and opportunities. We have over 35 WELS schools in the metropolitan area. Each school's ministry is a reflection of the specific needs of the people of that particular community. Yet it is a ministry with a common purpose to make disciples of Christ through the preaching of law and gospel.

But what about an inner-city school? Isn't it very different from

other schools. What are the students like? What are the families like? Even among the inner-city schools of the WELS in Milwaukee there are differences. Let's take a look at Beautiful Savior Lutheran School where I serve.

Beautiful Savior Lutheran School (affectionately known as BSLS) is a consolidated school serving the congregations of Jerusalem and St. Philip's Lutheran Churches. Jerusalem, an older congregation with a German background, and St. Philip's, a younger black congregation, had both operated separate schools until 1980. In an effort to make better use of resources, the two schools were merged to form BSLS in the fall of 1980.

BSLS is an inner-city school. Student population is 90% black and 10% white. Sixty-five percent of the students come from the two congregations, and the rest are tuition/mission students. The students come from the neighborhood near the churches. They face the challenges of living in the inner-city, and yet they are loving, kind, and honest. Self-control and Christian discipleship predominate in student attitudes and in the atmosphere at BSLS. Students and teachers share the security and comfort of Christ's love in an unsure world.

Our ministry here at BSLS is mission-minded. With over 35% of our students being tuition/mission, we are constantly working with many families who are "spiritual infants" in terms of faith. Even though congregational membership is not mandatory, assisting our tuition parents to grow spiritually is essential to our ministry. We all agree that we need to be



partners in discipling children. Parents who have committed dollars also commit their time and energy in support of the process. Parents who understand that we are not just a private school are resources we treasure dearly.

BSLS has enjoyed great success in its academic and extra-curricular programs. Our students consistently score above city and national norms on standardized tests. We participate in forensics competitions, math meets, spelling and geography bees, and art fairs. Our school choir sings at both congregations. The entire student body presents its Christmas eve service for residents at the Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service home. We present a school play and room skits annually. Our school has won athletic trophies in basketball, wrestling, soccer, and volleyball.

We are blessed with parents who volunteer to assist with tutoring, chaperoning, cooking, bulletin boards, sewing costumes, coaching, and more. Each year the parents serve the Thanksgiving dinner for the school. At a time when many schools are dealing with uncooperative parents, we are thankful for the willing support of our parents.

We rejoice that 96% of the congregation's children attend BSLS. But we are beginning to see our supply of mission students dry up. Many families seeking alternatives to the public school system are no longer attending BSLS. They are able to receive state funding to attend non-sectarian, non-public schools under the Wisconsin "choice" plan. Enrollments that had been near 120 are now below 80. When parents ask if we can receive "choice" funding, we make use of the

opportunity to witness to our mission. "No, we do not qualify for those funds because we *do* teach that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. May I send you some information?"

One difficult aspect of ministry in the inner-city is dealing with stereotypes. I am not going to give credence to any of the commonly held misconceptions about inner-city youth by listing them. I will simply assure you that the students I now teach at Beautiful Savior would match up with any that I have ever taught. You are just as safe at BSLS as at your school (even at night). But perhaps the hardest idea to change is the belief that those who minister in the inner-city are "helping poor black children." This concept of paternalism is insulting and degrading to every minister in the Lord's kingdom and to those they serve. It implies that the motivation for ministry changes with each new group of disciples.

May God who never changes, continue to bless the work of discipling through his Word here at BSLS as he has in the past.

David Niemi serves as principal and upper grade teacher at Beautiful Savior Lutheran School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



Challenges in Counseling High School Youth

Jason M. Nelson

"In light of certain realities of society today, what challenges face our area Lutheran high schools in personal counseling of young people?"

We asked that question of Jason Nelson, an experienced area Lutheran high school teacher and principal. Here is his answer. (Ed.)

The challenge of acceptance

In the last decade, considerable progress has been made in accepting personal counseling as a necessary and positive aspect of the ministry of the area Lutheran high school. The stress of modern life and, in some cases, unfortunate events at the local level have moved high school conferences and federations to recognize that counseling is not a luxury, but a necessity if we are to effectively disciple teenagers for Christ. The battle for acceptance of counseling in the high school by policy makers has not been completely won. But there is greater appreciation for the contributions of a Christian counselor in the overall pattern of ministry of the area Lutheran high school.

The acceptance challenge has a second level. Students need to accept the counselor and trust him or her. The building of rapport and confidence with student clients is the counselor's personal challenge. The counselor must bring to bear an understanding of the adolescent and an array of behaviors that send the message, "I am here to listen. I am here to help."

The counselor's words are the starting point. However, the counselor's actions are much more powerful in harvesting and keeping the acceptance of students. Visibility in the school, attendance at student activities, casual conversations with groups and individuals, and taking the initiative to reach out to students are critical behaviors for the school counselor. These help the counselor get the trust of students.

Keeping the trust of students is also a challenge. A counselor will be of no help if students do not perceive him or her to be someone whom they can take into their confidence. Matters of confidentiality are always a challenge for any counselor in any setting. They are especially important to the school counselor who is dealing with a client base that is by nature distrustful of adults. Christian counselors want to be trustworthy in the eyes of students. They also want to be supportive of parents and assist them with their God-given task. Sometimes carrying out these two goals requires striking a fragile balance.

The staffing challenge

Another set of challenges faces area Lutheran high schools who are attempting to staff a counseling ministry. Since it has been only recently that counseling has gained acceptance in our circles, we do not have a large pool of qualified candidates for this ministry. In the immediate future most area high schools will have to “grow” their own counselors. Programs of Christian counseling have not existed or are just beginning in our worker training system. But we have had programs that have produced many fine ministers of the gospel who love the Lord and love young people and have the heart of a counselor. With additional training, these servants can become skilled counseling ministers.

Just as we have maintained our commitment to having qualified

workers in other forms of ministry, we must maintain that commitment for counseling as well. There are biases which suggest that counseling is merely the application of “common sense” or good biblical advice. These may indeed be elements of the counseling process, but there is much to be gained from training in individual and group counseling techniques. There is much to be gained from learning various theoretical orientations and therapeutic approaches. There is much to be gained from understanding the disorders and dysfunctions that afflict teenagers today. When we meet the staffing challenge effectively, our students receive the benefit.

Jason Nelson is the principal of Lakeside Lutheran High School, Lake Mills, Wisconsin.