

VOLUME 33  
NUMBER 1  
OCTOBER 1992

# The Lutheran Educator

The WELS Education Journal

## I'm back!



# The Lutheran Educator

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

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As We See It  
THE BEST CONGREGATION IN SYNOD

TEACHERS SHARE IDEAS

**VOLUME 33** **NUMBER 1**  
**OCTOBER 1992**

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## THE BEST CONGREGATION IN THE SYNOD

Recently, I was reminded of something a wise pastor said to a group of greenhorn teachers in the Nebraska District many years ago: "Consider the congregation you are now serving as the best congregation in Synod."

Sometimes I think we teachers—and pastors—have a hard time believing this. After all, there is Florida in the middle of a Minnesota winter. There is the school down the road that is larger and better equipped. There is that rural congregation that has fewer children with learning and behavior problems. There is that urban congregation with better amenities of life. Then there is the bigger organ, the larger choir, the brighter principal, the more dedicated staff, the richer parishioners, the better preacher, and on and on and on. The ecclesiastical grass really does seem greener in the other parish.

Luther, as usual, had a comment on this: "If God wants it, He will have no trouble finding you. My friend, do not let your ability burst your belly. God has not forgotten you. If you are to preach His Word, He will no doubt call on you to do so at His own time. Do not determine the time limit or the place for Him."

When itchy-feet thoughts come, you need to turn to 1 Timothy 1:12: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who made me strong. He considered me to be trustworthy and appointed me to do His work." Paul was telling Timothy of the grace that God had shown in choosing him (Paul) to be his minister in a place and at a time of God's, not Paul's, choosing. The best congregation for Paul to serve was the congregation which Paul was currently serving because that is the congregation which God wanted Paul to serve. The people you are currently serving are the people who need your special service. Those children or young people need you, uniquely you. Of the 2000 teachers in Synod who could be teaching there, God selected especially you.

Does that mean you never take a call? No. Paul did move to different congregations, but that was when God, not Paul, was ready. Teachers move to different congregations today, but this is when the Lord, not teachers or Synod or congregations or an executive secretary, decides.

The world laughs at this ministry and calls it mindless. Our ministry, they say, doesn't have good "career moves" and "professional advancement opportunities." But then our Savior who started all this was interested only in how he could serve us through his life and death. We now have the privilege of proclaiming the incredible results of that service. He has determined the message of our ministry and the place of our ministry.

When and if the Lord decides to call you to a different congregation, then accept gladly and look forward to serving the best congregation in Synod. If he has not decided, then rejoice and continue to serve the best congregation in Synod. In either case, you're in the best place.

JRI

## FUNDING THE PARISH SCHOOL

Stephen F. Schafer

**“M**ONEY, MONEY, MONEY, that’s all we ever talk about in this church. I am sick and tired of hearing and thinking of money.” Practically every called worker has heard or said those comments. It does get tiring always relating the church to money. We are not here to raise money but to spread the gospel. So then why another presentation on money?

Money is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end. The end is the salvation of souls. God has given us the means whereby that end can be reached, the gospel. The gospel has the power to effect such an end. When it comes right down to it, money is not a part of the formula at all. Matter of fact, Jesus himself told his disciples to take only the bare necessities along on mission journeys. “Do not take a purse or bag or sandals...stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages” (Lk 10:4, 7).

In our culture money is, in many cases, a necessary evil used in the ministry process. A lot of personal ministry is done today without any exchange of money. Simply an act of kindness done in the Lord’s name is a ministry. How many kind words and deeds are given every day in the Christian community with no exchange of money whatsoever?

Money is not intrinsically a part of soul saving. It is merely a means to an end.

Money makes it possible for the spreading of the gospel to be done in an organized and systematic manner. Christians can organize churches and call and salary one or more individuals to minister to them in an organized and systematic manner. Christians can also organize larger groups called “synods” which can provide needed services to supplement the ministry process and collectively carry out Christ’s mission to “preach the good news to all creation.” Money is no better or worse than the system which the church has organized to carry out its mission of spreading the gospel. Money helps to make the job neat and clean and, sad to say, a little removed from the individual Christian.

The devil would love to have Christians spend all of their time discussing money, how to raise it, how to balance the budget, how to fund a special project, and less time on the saving of souls. Then he would have us arguing and quarreling among ourselves, pointing fingers and complaining about what we can’t do. He would have us looking out of focus at God’s goal for us. This sorry situation would make hitting the target much more difficult, if not impossible.

Money has to be controlled as a

wild beast. If left to itself, it will gain control, create havoc and disunity, and disrupt the ministry process. Budgets cannot be viewed as an end in themselves, but a partial ministry plan or goal. Much ministry is done outside of the budget. The question is not whether or not the church ended in the black or red, but whether or not it accomplished its objectives in terms of ministry and spreading the gospel. A congregation can end its fiscal year in the black and still fall far short of its ministry potential. That is the sad thing.

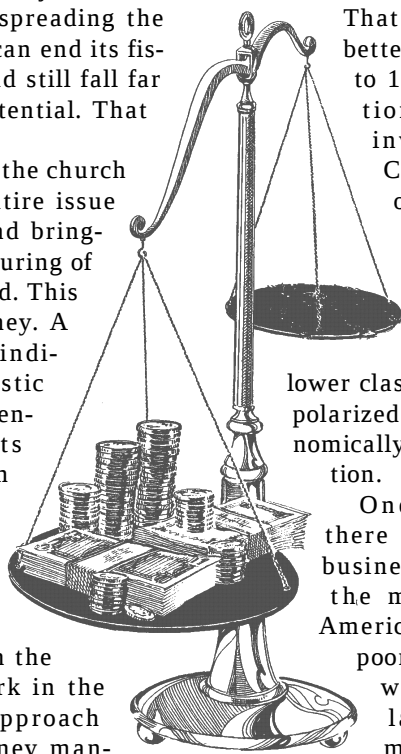
Controlling money in the church involves putting the entire issue into the background and bringing the saving and nurturing of souls into the foreground. This involves managing money. A congregation, like an individual, has to be realistic about its assets and potential and live within its means. Changes in funding and spending will have to be made as congregational situations change. What was done in the past does not always work in the present, nor will it work in the future. A long term approach has to be taken to money management to help provide for those changes. Congregations cannot exist on a year-to-year, month-to-month basis, and still do an adequate job of managing money and putting it in its proper place: the background. The objective of money management in the church should be to control it in such a way as to reduce its influence in the church.

Why are we now seeing such a con-

cern over financial matters? It's simple. What our church has done in the past isn't keeping up with its ability to fund those activities. The post World War II era was a boom time. Despite all of the concern over communism, the economy grew and prospered. The parents of the Baby Boomers improved their economic status by leaps and bounds.

That is not so any more, for better or for worse. Even up to 15 years ago, congregations were willing to invest in a ministry of Christian education by opening a parish school. Today, the growth rate has stopped. The middle class is shrinking and the upper and lower classes are becoming more polarized. The same is true economically in the church population.

One might argue that there are other factors. The business community has fed the materialistic bent of Americans. Many people are poor budgeters. They live with a "buy now, pay later" mind-set. Some might even say that this generation is less spiritual and less receptive to God's Word. Others might argue that the church has not kept up with changing times and has not planned well. Whatever the reason for the financial troubles in the church, changes in thinking and in approach will have to be made. What works must be kept; what doesn't must be changed.



### **Money and the parish school**

So what does all of this have to do with the parish school? Simple, if the parish school is a part of the total ministry of the parish, then what affects the church has to affect the school. Since the parish school is a very large part of the financial operation of the parish, what affects the parish school, affects the parish. The school cannot operate spiritually or financially in a void from the congregation which supports it. There must be a cooperative, team approach to the ministry.

Ultimately, it is the congregation which has to decide on its application of the goal to preach the gospel to all creatures. The congregation must examine its total ministry efforts, study their relation to each other and their effectiveness, and make some decisions concerning them and the congregational support of each. The debate over each form of ministry and the refocusing that results is very valuable. It will force the congregation to maintain its proper goal and regularly renew support towards its mission efforts, including the parish school.

Traditionally, the WELS parish schools have been funded to a great extent through the congregational budget. One of the benefits of this approach is that it involves the total congregation in the ministry of the school. This system also makes attending a parish school affordable for more families. The seniors and empty nesters can help the younger families in providing a Christian education for their children. Moreover, the strength of the doctrinal position of WELS might be weakened considerably were it not for its strong

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Christian educational system.

Recently, there has been more and more concern about the parish school system in the WELS. Is it affordable? Are too many people getting a “free ride”? Are we putting all of our mission “eggs” into one basket? Do we have to make some changes in funding the parish school?

First of all, if there are any major changes to be made in the WELS parish school program, they should not be dictated primarily by money. If it is, something is wrong with the church. Second, an evaluation of the parish schools is always healthy and positive. God will only permit good to come out of such debate and evaluation. Third, changes will most likely have to be made. We cannot expect the world to change around us and we make no effort to meet those changes. Too many eyes are focused on the past and not on the future. Fourth, God has not permitted the WELS school system to be the first to change. The Missouri Synod and Catholic school systems have under-

gone changes in recent years. May the WELS not make the same mistakes and later find that not only have its funding problems not been taken care of but its ministry arm has been cut off too.

### **Funding**

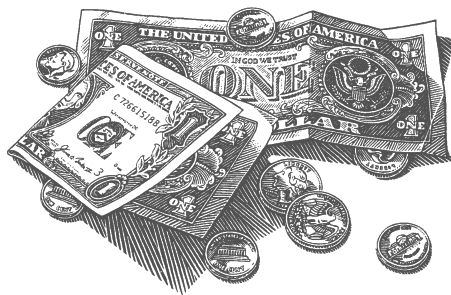
After developing all of this background, one can see that the issue of funding the parish school is not a simple one. However, where does one go from here? Each congregation must decide that answer for itself. Its history, circumstances, make-up, goals, and objectives will dictate what funding strategies each parish will employ. Yet, there are a variety of congregational and school-related approaches which can be taken.

The funding starting point might sound more theoretical than practical, but it is very necessary and very practical. Any development director of any institution or organization will tell us that to have a constituency buy into or support that institution, it must first identify and clearly enunciate its mission to them. For example, the MACC fund is a very well-known and growing project in Milwaukee. Not only have they identified that their primary objective is "fighting childhood cancer," but they have also

communicated that to the community and beyond. Then the MACC fund identifies projects and accomplishments to show how they are accomplishing their goal.

While congregational goals are solely accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit, those goals can be identified and outcomes publicized. The mission of the church is to "preach the good news to all creation" as God empowers. This too is the mission of the Christian school. However, the common person does not see how that rather vague goal is accomplished by teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic. Most people see getting a quality education and a good paying job as being the primary goals. If the members of the parish and especially the parents of the children do not in their hearts understand the divine and earthly purpose of the parish school, then that school system has failed them.

Yes, the mission of the parish school is to preach the gospel, to disciple young people and their families; however, how, exactly, is that mission accomplished? Is it assumed that parents just know that when they send their children to school? It must be assumed that they do not know that. Pastors, principal, faculty, board



members, council members, long time members of the parish must keep telling and showing parents and each other that the goal of the parish school is to disciple and nurture young people and their families. Such discussions cannot start when children enter school at age five. It must start from the time of birth.

### **Educating parents**

Some parish schools have developed organized programs to keep this concept before their people. One such program is the Family Ministry. Congregations have ministered and will continue to minister to the basic unit of society, the family. By strengthening its parts as a working unit, the ministry task is focused on where it must begin and continue. Under the Family Ministry umbrella, congregations presently provide a variety of services such as regular and special worship services, Sunday school, Bible classes, adult information classes, the parish school, vacation Bible school, the area Lutheran high school, parental orientations, parenting library, newsletters, parent teacher meetings, counseling, and the list goes on and on.

Parents must see that the school is part of a total congregational ministry package. The parish school is not a separate entity unto itself. Parents must be told that directly and shown that through role modeling and personal involvement in such ministry programs.

If parents are going to use the parish school as members of the parish, they must assume the spiritual leadership of their family and get involved with the church's ministry programs. They don't have a choice.

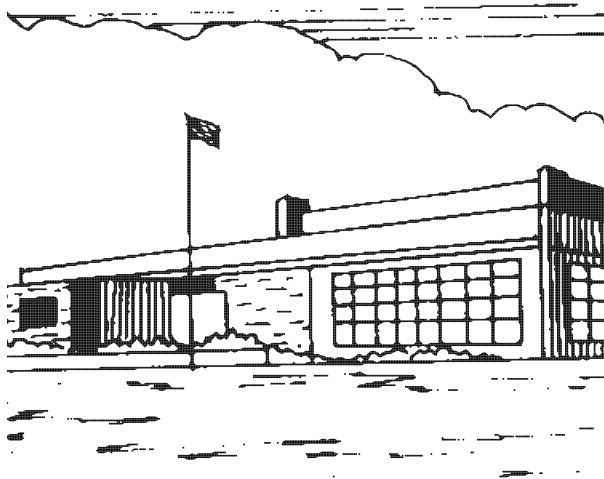
God has placed them into the position as head of a family, and they must assume spiritual responsibilities. The congregation and parish school exist to help them with their task. God will empower them. The level of involvement will grow as their level of sanctification increases; the parish leaders should expect to see this growth. (However, parents must be expected to act responsibly and focused.) Love motivates this expectation.

Under God's direction and the power of the Holy Spirit, small but important spiritual growth steps will be made. Perhaps worship attendance will improve. Maybe communion attendance will go up. Offerings may increase. Maybe counseling sessions will bring up spiritual concerns. Perhaps a member who had left the parish and been battling all kinds of spiritual, physical, and emotional problems will remember a friendly teacher with a Christmas card and picture. May God bless the leadership with opportunities to see those small growth indicators. They raise the spirits and encourage the resolve.

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The leadership of the parish must clearly point out the goals of the congregation, help the congregation plan how they are going to reach those goals under God's direction, and identify bench marks and accomplishments of those goals. This does not mean merely making and meeting an annual budget. A congregation could finish in the black every year and yet not accomplish Christ's purposes for it whether on an individual level, on a parish level, or on a Synodical level. The parish school must be an integral and vital part of the mission strategies and spiritual growth programs. The faculty and staff, from the secretary to the custodian, must see their roles in the ministry goals.

Once people are involved, growing, and motivated by the power of God, the funding issues will take care of themselves. Will they go away? No, not at all. Some attention will have to be given to funding also. However, it should not be at the expense of mission opportunities. Less time and planning should be taken in develop-

ing funding strategies if the church is doing its God-given job. Ultimately, that job is the application of the law and gospel appropriately. People will fail, but God will create success.

### **Funding suggestions**

There is no one answer to the parish school funding issue. The issue is complicated and the answers are too. However, there are a number of possible answers or considerations to the funding issue. Each must be considered in the light of the needs, attitudes, and traditions of the parish. One such partial solution is to require parents to fund the congregational part of the educational support. This support could be accomplished through a tuition or a family member fee. The fee level would depend greatly upon congregational need and the economic level of the school families. The fee should not take away from developing stewardship practices and the support for the total ministry of the congregation. If a family reduces its congregational support to pay a tuition, nothing is gained. Families must be educated on the purpose of the fee increase and the increases should not be too large or too fast. Increases should balance with the congregational need. The more school families are involved with the total ministry of the parish, the better that ministry will be served.

Fee increases or minor fund raising programs can be directed to reducing congregational expenses of the school by having the school pay for such

items as paper, cleaning supplies, secretarial and custodial salaries, desk purchases, and minor improvements to the school building. The salaries of the called workers and major capital improvements to the plant should still be part of the total congregation's responsibilities. Yet, in a gradual way, the school could be responsible for smaller items and thereby reduce congregational output for the school.

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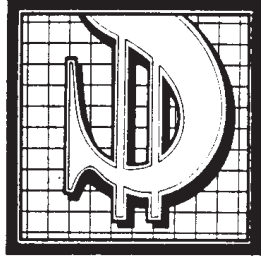
Many parish schools do use a variety of the funding programs discreetly. Campbell's labels is a simple way of getting needed supplies. The Wisconsin Kohl's food stores have recently run a similar program using cash receipts. Saving aluminum cans for the school can create cash. Pizza and bake sales often go over big in many parishes. These programs can be run "in house" without a lot of pressure and generate some much needed cash for schools to reduce congregational expenses while still

improving and maintaining the school's program.

Gifts and donations to school projects are another important part of school funding. The more successful schools develop a "wish list" and keep it before the school parents and congregation. The needs should be small as well as large. Not only does the list identify wishes, but it also highlights goals and programs of the school. It gives a direction and purpose to the school. All gifts and donations should be recognized and proper thanks be given. Public recognition need not always be made. However, a donor might be interested in learning how his or her gift is being used. Families or individuals with a special interest in the school might be informed of special service stewardship opportunities with which the school is involved.

Grants are available through a variety of benevolent organizations. The Seibert Lutheran Foundation is one of the more familiar. Their support for early childhood programs is well documented. Local foundations might be interested in supporting specially packaged programs being run by a parish school. However, in all these situations, one should not compromise scriptural principles. The effort taken in the paper work is well worth the benefits of extending or improving parish ministry.

A number of parish schools have made use of life insurance as an inexpensive school savings program. Term insurance is very inexpensive and will provide a small savings account for a family or school. Some benevolent programs offer a matching gift or contribution for those named in a policy. A gift of \$100 would be



doubled by the agency for those carrying their programs. If the school is named as the beneficiary,

the cash value of the policy becomes the property of the school and parish. Upon graduation, a term life insurance policy might be worth hundreds of dollars in cash value. A large number of involved individuals would increase that savings plan to thousands of dollars very quickly. Again, this program is not an immediate fix for parish financial problems, but it is a long-term aid. It will never fund the entire ministry. That would not be healthy. However, a lot of small sources of income can reduce congregational expenses in the school.

Two areas which the congregation should carefully examine for funding and ministry growth are Planned Giving and preschool and day care programs. Planned giving is similar to the stewardship programs; however, planned giving is not just an annual shot in October or November but a ministry program. A church committee educates and counsels parish members in their personal planned giving. Giving is more than reaching into one's pocket on Sunday morning to find some change for church. It is long and short term planning. Wills, bequests, insurance, property, for example, all can be used to donate a sizeable gift to the Lord's work. Most people haven't thought about such plans. However, many are interested in receiving help in devel-

oping a long-term gift to the church. The Synod's program is working well. Yet, it is very limited. For many, the motivation is there, it's just that they haven't taken the time to plan.

Preschool and day care are fast becoming the new mission tools of the church. Not only do they provide a ministry service to members and non-members, but they can be self supporting and even help fund other ministry programs of the parish. The key is to look at preschool and day care as outreach and ministry tools, not fund raisers. Many, many parents need guidance in raising children as Christians in this heathen society. Christian modeling and guidance done in a preschool and day care program can help a great deal. Parents want the best for their children. WELS parishes can provide that for them because of their experience, motivation, and direction. A parenting program tied in with the care and education facilities will be a blessing to children, parents, and the parish. Moreover, such services will help parish schools better deal with the very difficult situations which they face with older children.

Funding of the parish school is not an easy problem to solve. It will never totally be solved as long as this earth stands. However, funding can be managed. Funding must be looked at as a means to a higher goal, the saving of souls. May funding be managed in such a way as to accomplish this goal.

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*Stephen Schafer is principal of Atonement Lutheran School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

## OBE AND ME

Paul L. Willems

### WHAT IS OBE?

OBE has become the latest “buzz word” in education. The initials stand for Outcome Based Education. You may already have an idea what OBE is, or this may be your first experience. In either case you may well ask, “Is this the new model for education so long awaited, or is this merely the next in a long dull line of education fads?” OBE can be either in your classroom. A lot depends on you, the instructor. Education has always been highly dependent on the individual who directs the learning in his or her own classroom. I personally look forward to OBE becoming that long awaited new wave or paradigm shift in education that will transform the classroom into a place where children are successful and where learning can be both rewarding and fun.

By now some readers may be ready to turn to another article in this magazine. Please give me a chance to explain OBE before you leave. I believe OBE to be the “good stuff” that successful teachers have been doing in their classrooms all along. It is being concerned about students more than the courses you teach. It is being more concerned about whether the students can perform the tasks set before them than how fast some students can complete these tasks. It is being concerned that all students find success in the classroom and not just the “bright” child or the “gifted” student. OBE is people-oriented and task-directed.

You may have heard that OBE uses the techniques of Mastery Learning to accomplish its outcomes and so has the limitations of Mastery Learning. Yes, OBE can use Mastery Learning as a tool, but it doesn't have to. There are other and better techniques that may be used. You may have heard that OBE uses complicated assessment tools to discover whether the students have mastered a task. Yes, OBE can use such evaluative techniques, but it doesn't have to. There are other and better techniques that may be used for assessment. You may have heard that OBE will completely revolutionize education to the extent that grades, report cards, school calendars, and daily schedules will have to be completely rewritten. Yes, OBE can result in all of those changes, but it doesn't have to.

Like any good educational approach, OBE makes students its main focus rather than a set curriculum, method, or program. Students are asked to demonstrate what they know, what they can do, and what they are like. This represents the “outcome” part of OBE. Since these demonstrable outcomes then determine the curriculum or what goes on in the classroom, they become the “based education” part of OBE. OBE is not merely individualized instruction. It is not simply collaborative learning. It is not a “band aid” quick fix for the curriculum. There is more to OBE than that.

The outcome demonstrations of

OBE are performances by the students after the teacher has modeled the outcome for them. Outcomes are not merely worksheets or tests done over and over until a passing grade is achieved. OBE means the students must show they have met the criteria and can do what was asked. In most classroom methods of instruction, points are earned and scores are kept.

Of course, you may say, how else can we assign report card grades? In OBE this is not done. Either the student can perform the task, or he or she cannot and the work is incomplete. You may assign a grade, but it could only be A, B, or incomplete. Incomplete means the student has yet to perform the task satisfactorily and must rethink, be retaught, or redo the task until the outcome is achieved.

But what about the horror of a twenty-five year old first grader who still can't complete some task, such as the oral reading of a poem? First, we need to understand that OBE provides for a variety of ways for learning and demonstrating a task. Second, we must introduce outcome based education gradually. Perhaps one project a quarter could be han-

### **Outcome Based Education**

#### **Key questions:**

- 1. So what are they supposed to learn that's significant in the long run?**
- 2. How would you know that they've learned it successfully?**
- 3. Where do your outcomes come from?**
- 4. Have they succeeded yet?**

dled in this way while the rest of the curriculum stays as is. And if the student's work is still incomplete two weeks after the report cards have been sent home, in spite of staying after class and having received extra help, then give the student an F for the project and move on. There is no need to become fanatically bound to a system at the expense of the student or yourself.

You may already be familiar with a task-centered approach in other educational areas such as typing, driver's education, physical education, or shop classes. In these courses students must demonstrate outcomes before they can pass. How can our entire course of study be structured around outcomes that are demonstrable? I advise that you make small changes at first. Eventually each school will set up the outcomes it desires its graduates to achieve. These will be taken from all educational areas: spiritual, verbal, quantitative, technical, strategic, and evaluative. And because each school is unique—rural or urban, technical or agricultural, homogeneous or heterogeneous—the individual school outcomes will all acquire individual flavors. However,

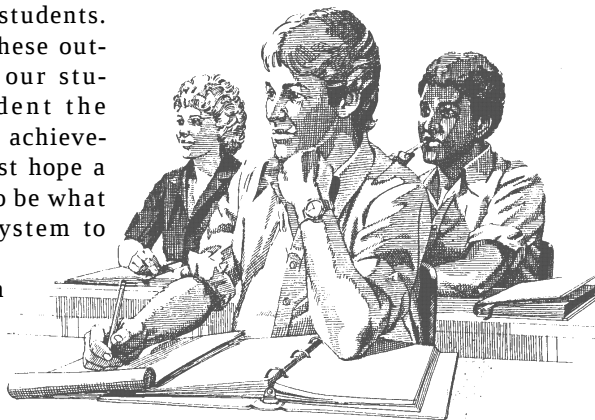
we know wherever people form a culture, the areas of their relationship to God and their language skills, mathematical skills, physical skills, interactive skills, thinking skills, and judgmental skills are important for every individual as he or she fits into and functions within that culture. OBE's philosophy is that all students can learn basic skills in these areas and successfully function within their culture. OBE is a way to help students become responsible adults. As Christian educators we want all our students to become responsible Christian citizens. OBE can help us achieve that.

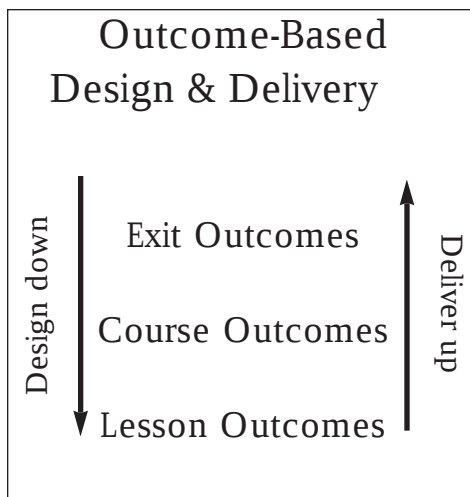
According to learning research, students learn best by practicing and demonstrating to their peers rather than by listening to lectures, watching videos, reading, or discussing in small groups. In OBE students spend considerable time practicing and demonstrating outcomes to their peers. As Christian teachers we also want our students to learn Christian attitudes and values, develop positive self concepts and emotional control, show rational behavior, and demonstrate they are motivated individuals. These are the outcomes we all admire and strive to induce in our students. OBE allows us to identify these outcomes, practice them with our students, and give each student the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of these tasks. Why just hope a few "top" kids will turn out to be what we want our educational system to produce?

Only a few outcomes in OBE are culminating tasks. These include problem solving or higher thinking skills, and skills

of synthesis, analysis, and applying previously learned knowledge and skills to new situations. "If I could only teach my students to think!" is the exasperated cry of the new and experienced teacher alike. Well, let's plan to do it. In OBE we look for such "after graduation" behaviors we want the student to exhibit.

In OBE there are also lesser, or enabling outcomes which are necessary for the student to achieve before the culminating outcomes can be demonstrated. These include components of knowledge, competences, and orientations. OBE is not merely putting new labels on old goals or objectives. Outcomes focus on learning; goals focus on teaching. Outcomes focus on the student; objectives focus on a lesson or small piece of learning. Outcomes allow the student to take responsibility for his or her learning and allow the teacher to keep track of only a few things while becoming a better facilitator of learning. Outcomes are not isolated content details or activities. Such "factoids" need to be eliminated from the curriculum so higher-order tasks can take their place.





In introducing OBE to your classroom or school everyone concerned about the educational process should become involved in deciding what it is students should be able to do after they leave school. Students, parents, and teachers need to know the reason for everything that goes on in our school and in our classroom. All our educational activities need to be designed to contribute to the few culminating outcomes of our school. We also need to shift our views to performance-oriented tasks. This approach provides opportunities for meaningful activities in our classrooms which point toward our graduation outcomes. The whole learning experience should be seen as an opportunity for our students to achieve and not as a contest to see who can do it best or first. OBE believes all students can learn. So get rid of low-level classes. Eliminate the “sparrow,” “blue bird,” and “robin” reading groups. You aren’t fooling anyone, especially the students in your class. They know the students from whom you expect little. These strategies tend to become self-

fulfilling prophecies of academic doom for the “sparrow.”

Achieving OBE doesn’t happen overnight. Any new idea in education requires patience and careful planning or it will become a pie-in-the-sky dream at best or a chaotic Dewey-progressive-education fiasco at its worst. We need first to understand OBE and realize it does not have to be threatening. Next, we need to clearly identify what the student is to learn. This means working with students, parents, business people, and other teachers.

OBE is not a new concept. The apprentice systems, ballet, and the methods of the Master Teacher, Jesus, all involve modeling by the master and practice and performance by the pupil. The curriculum must then be designed down from the clearly identified culminating outcomes. This means restructuring, not merely renaming. Many parts of our present curriculum are good, but others may have to be eliminated so time is available to achieve the outcomes we value as truly significant for our students.

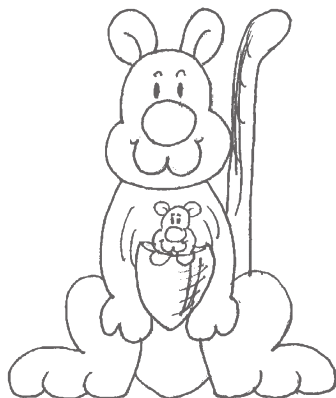
Too long have we looked at the school year calendar and the material the text book publishers have put between the covers of their books as our curriculum drivers. “How can we cover the material?” needs to be replaced with, “How can we best help the students in our classroom become the very best Christian citizens they can become?” This is what Christian educators have always done. This is what OBE means to me.

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*Paul Willems teaches at Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, New Ulm, Minnesota.*

## Teachers Share Ideas

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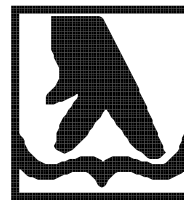
### Let Your Fingers Do the Walking

This is a fun project and also a useful activity. I have found it to be especially effective for my fourth graders when we spend time learning about the use of reference materials. The telephone company was glad to supply Yellow Pages for my entire class.

I began this activity by telling the class I'm looking for a place to rent a bicycle.

Help me find a pet store that has tropical fish.

Find a florist that delivers and accepts Mastercard.



After doing a number of these research activities as a class or in groups, the children were ready for a written exercise in the use of the Yellow Pages.

I have also found that this activity makes an excellent Open House project for parents and children to do together. I give the parents a sheet of suggestions similar to those above, and the children enjoy using their newly learned skills as they work together with their parents to do the research.

Anita Rupprecht  
Mt. Calvary, Redding, CA

### A Mission Project

The children of my classroom and I have chosen a mission congregation as our special mission project. These first and second grade students have "adopted" the mission church, Amazing Grace, of Florence, Kentucky.

The pastor of Amazing Grace is Pastor Gaertner. He sent us a video of their first service and their first anniversary service on January 12, 1992. We also receive a newsletter from him each month.

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## Teachers Share Ideas

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Once a week we have a special mission devotion. At this time we talk about missions and "our" adopted church in particular. We also have a special mission prayer. The children are reminded to pray for this new congregation in Kentucky.

A small cardboard bank, with the name Amazing Grace on it, stands on my desk each day. The children bring their mission offerings when they can. Our goal was to buy at least one hymnal for the mission church. How excited and pleased we were when we achieved that goal!

To increase my students' awareness of the Amazing Grace congregation, we are sending a birthday card to each member this year. We also made a video of our school and the members of the class introduced themselves. Each child will write to a family of the Amazing Grace congregation this year too. And we have taped some of our Wednesday morning chapel services for them.

My prayer is that the children in my classroom will learn to appreciate what they have here in our very old and well-established congregation in Red Wing, Minnesota. They need to realize that not everyone has a church and a school like they do. They need to learn that there are things they can do to promote mission work, even when they are young. I would encourage other schools and classrooms to adopt a mission congregation as a very special mission project.

Alice Danell  
St. John's, Red Wing, Minnesota

### An Invitation

Share your ideas and clip art sketches. Send them to

Teachers Share Ideas  
*The Lutheran Educator*  
Dr. Martin Luther College  
1884 College Heights  
New Ulm, MN 56073



## Attitudes Toward Lutheran Schools: A 1992 Survey

John R. Isch

**W**HY SHOULD LUTHERAN congregations support Lutheran schools? Are all members committed to the support of these schools? What priority would you give to various congregational programs? What do you see to be the challenges to Lutheran schools in the next ten years? Where should the money for Lutheran elementary and high schools come from? Which grade level of Lutheran education is most important? Have attitudes toward Lutheran schools changed in the past ten years?

These are important questions for parents, children, congregations, pastors, teachers, or anyone concerned with the formal programs of Christian education which we call Lutheran schools. The 1850 constituting convention of the Wisconsin Synod encouraged each pastor to “devote himself especially to the youth and conduct day schools, Bible hours, mission hours, etc.” One hundred and forty-two years later, pastors and lay people in our congregations were asked how they felt about these “day schools.” The questions were part of a survey of WELS and LC-MS congregations in southeastern Wisconsin. Meitler Consultants of Hales Corners conducted the survey and published the results last April. Some 1800 WELS members (pastors and lay people), randomly selected, participated in the survey. Their responses are instructive and important in helping us understand Lutheran schools now and in the

future. In this review of the survey, each section below gives the question, tells how the people answered, and makes some comments on these results.

In your opinion, what are the three most compelling reasons why Lutheran congregations should support Lutheran schools in the future? From the list below, check no more than three.

- Encouraging young people to enter full-time church work
- Assisting families with the Christian nurture of their children
- Providing high quality education
- Providing a safe environment for children
- Transmitting our Lutheran traditions to the next generation
- Counteracting the growth of un-Christian values and morals in our society
- Evangelizing the unchurched
- Other
- None of the above. I don't feel Lutheran congregations should support Lutheran schools.

Three out of four persons selected as one of the three compelling reasons to have Lutheran schools “assisting families with the Christian nurture of their children.” Slightly better than half chose a quality education and counteracting un-Christian values and morals as compelling reasons. Transmitting Lutheran traditions was chosen by nearly half the respondents and a safe environment by one in five. Evangelism was selected by only one in ten lay persons although pastors responding selected this reason more frequently. Only one

percent choose, “None of the above. I don’t feel Lutheran congregations should support Lutheran schools.”

The results are not too surprising. Many selected “nurturing children” as a strong and positive reason for Lutheran schools. There are also the traditional “sheltering” reasons such as “safe environment.” Somewhat surprising is the “Lutheran tradition” that many feel needs to be transmitted to the next generation, although the term may include many things. Also, noteworthy is the low priority given to the evangelism function of the Lutheran school. In summary, there appears to be considerable variation in what the respondents believe to be compelling reasons for Lutheran schools.

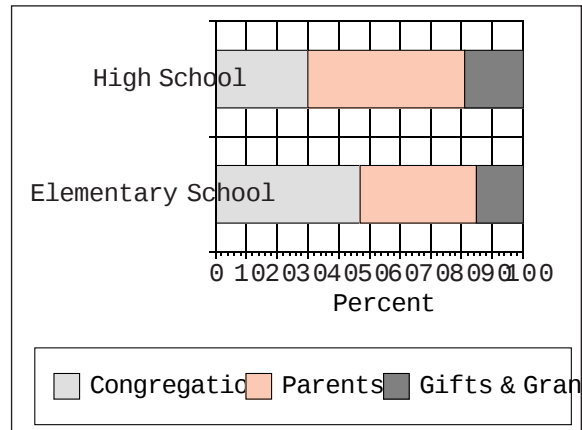
This divergency of views is not necessarily a bad thing. Differing views can prompt us to discuss the purposes and functions of Lutheran schools. That kind of discussion is always necessary and can be valuable.

In your opinion, what percentage of the total cost of Lutheran school education should come from each of the following sources? (congregation, child’s parents, gifts and grants)

The responses, separated into elementary and high school, are shown in Graph 1.

It appears that there is a growing number of persons who are coming to the conclusion that parents of elementary school children should carry a greater share of the costs of their child’s education. More schools are charging tuition of their members.

Graph 1  
Who Should Fund Lutheran Schools?



The results of this survey affirm this trend. The important question, which also needs discussing, is whether this belief about the financial obligations of parents is based on principles of stewardship and parental responsibilities or on practical realities of a congregation’s financial condition. One hopes that when people do come to the conclusion that parents should pay for their child’s schooling, they do so because they honestly believe they can encourage parents in the responsibilities and privileges of stewardship. Here, also, we need a wholesome discussion of stewardship, its meaning, its motivation, and its practice. Then the issue of who pays how much is less relevant.

If your congregation were faced with limited financial resources and you were forced to put programs in priority order for funding from the congregational budget, what would be your priorities? (Although this is not a complete list of all ministries, rank the items listed below in priority by putting a “1” by your first priority through “5” for your 5th priority. Rank only your first five.)

Table 1 below shows the rankings. The persons who responded to this item had some hard choices to make; there was no “all-of-the-above” choice. Unfortunately, congregations are also frequently faced with such choices.

A reader often has difficulty making sense out of items like this. The results are averages with all the problems of averages. They don't really show Gramma Schmidt's choice and why she choose as she did. They don't really show the spread of rankings: Did everyone mark missions as a three or four, or did they choose either a one or six? But what we do have is an impressive vote for the Lutheran elementary school. Also impressive are the rankings given to the other education programs for children. Congregation members place a high priority on activities of the congregation that are directed to children. Other programs for adolescents, adults, and outreach, however, fall further down the list.

Again, these differences can prompt a fruitful discussion of the

purpose or mission statement of a congregation. Although the activity of putting things in some priority is difficult and sometimes even disagreeable, it does help to focus on the reasons Christians gather together in a congregation.

In your congregation, identify the extent to which each of the following factors is likely to present a challenge to the Lutheran elementary school or high school in the next ten years. [In this question, the persons completing the questionnaire were given 13 situations and they were to rate each on a scale of one (limited challenge) to ten (extensive challenge).]

The top five challenges (by average ratings of the lay persons) from most to least were

1. increasing cost of Lutheran schools
2. anti-Christian trends in society
3. breakdown in the family
4. lack of parental involvement in the congregation
5. declining economic conditions

All thirteen choices in this item were rated quite high; only one, confidence in public schools, was rated below five, the mid-point.

The results of this question may not be surprising; the choices given are all serious and potentially a problem for a congregation. Many people may feel that Lutheran schools are experiencing hard times. The results from other questions on this survey suggest that the people responding felt strongly protective about Lutheran schools and thus they would likely agree that there are some serious situations challenging the school. But we should also realize that these situations are not just a challenge to Lutheran schools; we don't need to

**Table 1**  
**Congregation Program Priorities**

| Rank | Funding Priorities                 | Average rank<br>(Laypersons) |
|------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1    | Worship services                   | 1.5                          |
| 2    | The Lutheran elementary school     | 2.4                          |
| 3    | Sunday school                      | 3.2                          |
| 4    | Early childhood education programs | 3.3                          |
| 5.5  | Missions                           | 3.5                          |
| 5.5  | Lutheran high school               | 3.5                          |
| 7    | Adult education and Bible study    | 3.8                          |
| 8    | Special needs programs             | 4.0                          |
| 8    | Teen youth programs                | 4.0                          |
| 8    | Social outreach                    | 4.0                          |

get into our school bunkers to fight off these challenges. These are challenges and tests for all Christian institutions: the congregation, the family, the ministry, outreach, Bible study, corporate worship; in fact, they are challenges to the life and work of all Christians and all congregations. Thus the congregation might be better served if these challenges were discussed in terms of the mission and function of the church rather than their impact on one particular agency, the Lutheran school. The congregation also would be served if the members would discuss how these challenges can be met, not just by a school, but by expanded and strengthened programs of evangelism and stewardship, Christian education programs for all ages, family support activities, and Bible study.

Reflecting back over the last decade, from your own experiences or experiences of others, what is your perception of the attitudes of Lutherans ten years ago versus now? On the ten point scale below, circle your response for each statement.

For this item, the respondents were also given eleven statements and asked to rate each statement from a "less likely now" to "about the same as 10 years ago" to "more likely now." The statements were all phrased in positive terms, e.g., "parents' willingness to enroll children in Lutheran early childhood programs," "congregation's ability to financially support its school."

The lay persons, on the average, rated each statement as above the midpoint ("more likely now"). This would suggest an optimistic perception of the attitudes of Lutherans

today, at least as compared to Lutherans ten years ago. Perhaps these positive attitudes reflect the experience these people had and are having with Lutheran schools. Half the people who completed the questionnaire had themselves attended a Lutheran school. Of those respondents who have children, two-thirds of them have one or more children enrolled in a Lutheran elementary school. On a separate question, these people rated themselves as strongly committed to a Lutheran school. Again, there is a strong vote of confidence in Lutheran schools.

A similar number of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod members and pastors also completed the survey. There are separate results therefore for four groups: lay persons from WELS and LC-MS; pastors from WELS and LC-MS. The responses of the lay persons in both synods are very similar. It is difficult, in fact, to distinguish among the lay responses by synod. The responses of the pastors, in both synods, differ in some ways from the responses of the laity, and the responses of the pastors differ by synod. Thus, you have three somewhat different groups: WELS



pastors, LC-MS pastors, and lay people.

This is not particularly surprising that lay people in both synods have similar attitudes and beliefs about Lutheran education. There is a long history of similarities between the two school systems and numerous cooperative activities over the years. Lutheran schools are Lutheran schools, at least in the minds of the lay people of both synods.

### **Concluding observations**

What conclusions ought we draw from all this? First, the research team is now using focus groups to continue the study. This should add some flesh to the often dry bones of survey numbers.

Those involved in and concerned about Lutheran elementary schools can take comfort in the strong support shown in this survey. Finances, who should pay, and what ought to be the priorities of our congregations and Synod are valid concerns and questions. But nearly everyone seems, according to this survey, to agree that money should be paid for schools and somewhere at the top of our priorities there should be Lutheran schools. We are thankful to the Lord for inspiring that commitment and we pray that he would continue his blessings on our schools, on the children and young persons who attend, and on the women and men who teach in these schools.

We also ought to think briefly about the “others” who didn’t respond. On surveys such as this, we may be getting the “choir’s response.” Think for a moment about many sermons that are preached concerning

the importance of going to church. Often the sermons are heard by the choir and by others who regularly attend church.

Likewise, surveys on attitudes regarding church programs are often completed and returned by those persons who are interested and participating in those programs. We are not always certain, therefore, how representative our returns are. For many people in our congregations, church and the functions of the church are not very important things in their lives. Thus, there may be a large, albeit silent group, who do not share our convictions about Lutheran schools. We also ought to consider these people. They should be part of the discussions, the plans, and the programs. We need to give them an opportunity to speak of their concerns, and we need to listen to them even when we disagree with their views. When we all share the same belief that the church exists to “make disciples” with all the meaning that phrase has, then we can discuss with

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**Congregation  
members place a  
high priority on  
activities of the  
congregation that  
are directed to  
children.**

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Christian thoughtfulness the place of the Lutheran school in that mission.

We also ought to consider the changes that are occurring and the possible effect these changes may have on people's attitudes. Will the shift in financing Lutheran schools result in changes in attitudes? A greater share of the costs of a Lutheran school is being placed on parents for both elementary and secondary schools. Non-parents will in the future have a smaller financial stake in these schools. Will that cause them to be less concerned about the operation, purpose, staffing, curriculum, and future of these schools? It strikes this observer that congregations and associations will need to put a particular effort into involving, informing, and interesting non-parents in the Lutheran school. Such an "engagement" of non-parents is not a financial ploy; rather, it is a belief that a Lutheran school is a *gemeinde-schule*, a people's school, regardless of who pays for it. Schools don't close because they run out of money; they close because they run out of people who believe in them.

Finally, congregations need to reflect on and discuss the purpose for Lutheran schools and how that purpose harmonizes with the mission of the church. There is little value in financially and morally supporting an institution, however noble its tradition and history, whose purpose is unclear or inappropriate. There certainly is value in sheltering children, in providing them with a quality education in a safe environment, in countering un-Christian values, and in transmitting a Lutheran tradition to them. The Lord also kept the Children of Israel from the fleshpots

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**Schools don't close  
because they run out  
of money;  
they close because  
they run out of  
people who believe  
in them.**

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of Egypt and for forty years he provided them with a quality education in a safe environment. But the day came when they had to march into Moab, and that day also comes for our children and young people. God grant that our schools have purposes that go beyond the shelter and safety, beyond the academic quality and the Lutheran tradition. We need schools that seek to teach the young to reach out with the gospel, to grow in a life of sanctification, to comfort and to encourage, to condemn and reject, and to do all this within a world waiting for God's judgment. Then our schools will be what we ask God to make them: workshops of the Holy Spirit and nurseries of useful knowledge and Christian virtues.

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*John Isch teaches in the education division of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.*



## Everyday Heroes

Ramona M. Czer

Dear Teachers,

Have you noticed that new clothing store in our mall? I love the name of it: Everyday Hero. Though it's probably the brainchild of some high-paid marketing strategist, I don't care. I still like it because it makes me think of the daily kind of courage and dedication we long to respect and emulate. One of my favorite quotes by Wilhelm Stekel says that "The mark of the immature man is that he wants to die nobly for a cause, while the mark of the mature man is he wants to live humbly for one."

That's how I think of you teachers, as living humbly for our Lord every day of serving his little ones despite headaches, late meetings, mountains of correcting, and sometimes unappreciative parents. I am definitely not one of these parents. Maybe it helps that I've been a teacher myself, but I like to think I'd still be thankful for the hours you spend with my children even if I knew nothing about lesson plans and red pencils.

But I'm not writing to you because of what I think of you. I'm writing to share with you what my children think of you. To them, you truly are their Everyday Heroes.

Did you know that? Think about it: How do our children choose their heroes? They must be someone they can observe closely. They must be intelligent and wise. And they must have powers beyond a child's abilities.

All these you possess, believe me. You are someone my children observe daily. They know how you dress, walk, and react to different kinds of people or problems. They know your gestures and facial expressions intimately. I know because they can mimic you well, and not in ridicule either, but as wonderful evidence that you have their rapt attention.

You are also someone they believe to be smarter than anyone they know, including me. As I help with homework, I'm forever having to convince all of them, from fifth grader down to first grader, that I really know what I'm talking about. "But Miss Smith does it this way," they wail, despite my assurances that they must have misunderstood. I've even given up sharing short cuts in math. It doesn't matter that I've been a teacher. Your ways are always better. You are always smarter.

You also seem spiritually wise to them. I hear many stories of insights you share from your own life. They repeat them with so many details that I'm amazed. Are these the same kids that play with their forks during home devotions, that can't remember what I said yesterday about sharing? That's okay, though, because I know they need to have you validating what I'm teaching at home. They need to feel that applying Bible

truths isn't just "Mom's thing" but something "real people" value too. Maybe they see you too as a reflection of Jesus, the best Everyday Hero of all, and listen as if to him.

Lastly, you are someone with great powers, such as the power to give good or bad grades, the power to extend recess or take it away, the power to choose helpers or send someone to the principal, and the power to make them feel confident or inferior.

It's awesome to think about, isn't it? How does it feel to be an Everyday Hero? I hope it scares you a little. You see, as a hero, your every comment, gesture, or frown sears itself on their minds. I'm not exaggerating. Many a time after school, I must explain something you have said, some decision you made on the playground that seems unjust to them.

I always support you to them and never allow them to complain disre-

spectfully, but sometimes they feel pain at what you say or do. Even a simple passing comment you make can hurt. I dry their tears and tell them you didn't mean to hurt their feelings.

How eagerly they want your approval. When you compliment them, even in passing, that too comes home to me and is told with such shining eyes that you would never again doubt your amazing influence. For when we love someone, we give them power over us, the power to hurt or the power to build us up. That's why you are their Everyday Heroes, you know: They love you dearly.

In thanks for your everyday heroics,  
*A Mom*

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*Ramona Czer is a mother, a homemaker, a teacher, and a writer in New Ulm, Minnesota.*

#### A Prayer for Our Schools

Rue Stone

Jesus, Tender Shepherd, lead us  
As we gather near Your Word,  
Trusting in Your gracious promise,  
Knowing that our prayers are heard.

Keep Your hand upon our schools;  
We, Your children gathered here  
Look to You for daily Manna,  
Knowing that we need not fear.

Draw our students ever nearer,  
Pilgrims at Your blessed side;  
Let their footsteps never falter,  
That they may in You abide.

Guide our teachers in their calling  
To extend Your Gospel's light,  
Finding joy in every service,  
Bounteous blessings shining bright.

Grant us all Your strength and wisdom,  
Tirelessly to work for You;  
If we're weary or discouraged,  
Let Your Word our zeal renew.

Teach us all to wait upon You,  
Fully leaning on Your grace;  
Make us faithful servants, Savior,  
Seeking You in all our ways.

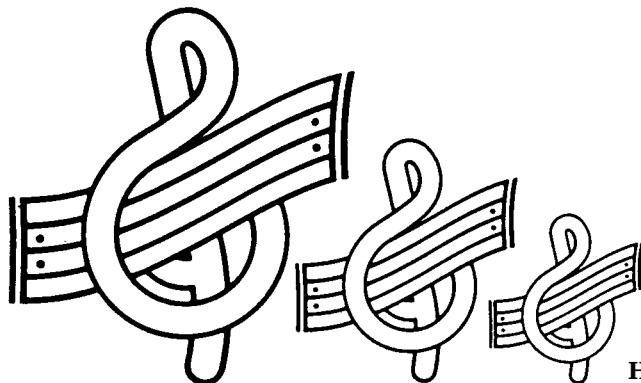
Through life's trials, tempests fitful,  
Fearful shadows as we roam,  
Be our Light, our Hope, our Solace,  
Bring us to our Heavenly Home.

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*Rue Stone teaches at California  
Lutheran High School, Huntington  
Beach, California.*

# THE NEW WELS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MUSIC CURRICULUM

Edward H. Meyer  
Wayne L. Wagner



Commission has taken steps to prepare materials for all levels, preschool through grade eight. Initial work on the project has begun and the materials should be available in several years.

## **How long has it been broken?**

### **Introduction**

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it." When that statement is applied to the existing state of WELS elementary school music, how do you respond? What's your choice?

- a) It ain't broke.
- b) It's broke; it's beyond repair.
- c) It's broke; but why bother fixing it?
- d) It's broke; somebody should fix it for me.
- e) It's broke; let's get it fixed.

Some claim there is enough evidence that it's broken. But, using the encouragement and support found in God's Word, we have enough reasons to get it fixed. Let's, therefore, make a good try at fixing it and let's get started now.

The Commission on Parish Schools, under the leadership of its executive secretary, Dan Schmeling, has recognized the need for improving the school music programs of our Lutheran elementary schools. The

If you have felt that music in your school is not at the level you would like to see, you might take comfort in the fact that others have felt the same. Already during Professor Fr. Reuter's time (DMLC, 1908-1924) efforts were made to shape a college-level music curriculum which aimed to achieve sufficient competence in music for the future teachers of Synod.

About fifty years ago Professor Emil D. Backer (DMLC, 1924-1957) claimed existing levels of elementary school music were low. He identified four weaknesses: "Incompetency in school-music teaching, lack of systematized music courses, poor and uninteresting song-materials, [and] laxity in preparation for the music period on the part of the teacher" (Backer, n.d., 1) And so here it is the 1990s and what Backer said fifty years ago applies today.

Some LES teachers, especially the "more mature" can recall Martin

Albrecht's (DMLC, 1943-1962) book, "A Music Course for Our Lutheran Schools" (1951). In this book a method for teaching sightsinging by means of solmization, usually referred to as the "Eleven Steps," was presented. The "Eleven Steps," the green tone ladder, and the song materials found in *Music Reader* were used by teachers of the 1950s and 1960s with noted success.

Noting that school music programs were not attaining the high levels for which one would hope, Meilahn Zahn (DMLC, 1962-1977), Edward Meyer (DMLC, 1970-present), as well as other teachers, wrote articles in *The Lutheran Educator*. These writers pleaded for organized music programs and offered suggestions to improve the situation.

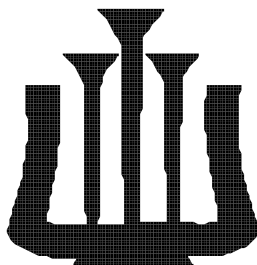
Not satisfied to merely examine the state of affairs, to comment, and then to wring one's hands, the authors of this article, after considerable study, decided that "enough was enough." An approach was made to Mr. Donald H. Zimmerman, former Executive Secretary for the Board for Parish

Education. The content of the letter seems as appropriate today—nearly a decade later—as it was then:

For a number of years the two of us have discussed the need for a music series produced for use in our Christian day schools. We believe a number of reasons exist which support the contention that a need for the series exists, that we have the resources to meet the need, and that this is the time to undertake the project.

There is evidence that a need exists for a WELS-produced elementary music series. First we believe music holds a unique position in its service to the Gospel and in the lives of believers. Its place in the elementary school curriculum is, therefore, right next to that of Bible history and catechism. This fact strongly suggests that we provide instructional materials designed to permit music to make its direct and important contribution to gospel service.

One set of books, the Missouri Synod publication of the 1960s



Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,  
Praise him with the harp and lyre  
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

called *The Concordia Music Education Series*, is now out-of-print. Currently available music series, while of outstanding quality, fail to provide an immediate service to the Gospel. We feel that a series which utilizes our Lutheran heritage, as well as the best of secular materials, can be used to teach the necessary musical skills and knowledge while, at the same time, serving the Gospel directly. Other currently available materials are not designed to do this.

Further substantiation of a need existing for the production of our own WELS music series can be found in the negative comments heard regarding the state of the elementary music program in some of our schools. We believe one factor greatly contributing to the problem in our schools is a lack of curriculum organization and a lack of instructional materials designed for the unique goals of our music programs.

Recently a study (Wagner, 1984) was conducted which provides direct proof that a need for instructional materials exists. Ninety percent of our schools responded to this survey. Only 19% of these had a written music curriculum and less than half (43%) had a music series. When the schools were asked to rank five music program components to indicate the areas of greatest need, 58% ranked curriculum organization and development as their area of great need. Following closely behind were the 48% who ranked the need for materials as another area of great need. We believe these figures

strongly support our feeling that we need curriculum organization and instructional materials for our schools.... (Edward Meyer and Wayne Wagner, September 14, 1983)



### **What's being done to fix it?**

While it may seem that it takes the WELS ten years to get going on something, it would be wrong to say that, thus far, nothing has been accomplished. A set of school music materials will be produced and the project has been taking shape. Fruitful discussions, preliminary summer writing projects, the securing of funding, and a survey of WELS elementary schools have already taken place.

The DMLC Board of Control has granted the request of the Commission on Parish Schools for part-time leaves for the two authors. Subsequently, a re-alignment of college teaching loads has taken place and temporary, substitute staffing has been secured. The writing, now underway, will near completion in spring 1993.

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# Music's place in the elementary school curriculum is right next to that of Bible history and catechism.

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## Results of a Survey

### Introduction

To obtain the views of teachers who might use materials of a new music curriculum, a questionnaire was mailed in the fall of 1991 to all WELS elementary schools. Each school faculty was asked to discuss the questions in the survey and to come to a consensus, if possible, on the responses. Thus one completed survey was to be returned from each school. Our very sincere thanks to the faculties that responded. Usable responses were received from 268 of 365 schools (73%). With such a high rate of return, the information provided will be truly helpful as we prepare the music curriculum materials. The remainder of this article summarizes the results of the survey.

### Questionnaire Results

Multigrade classrooms were, not surprisingly, the norm rather than the exception in

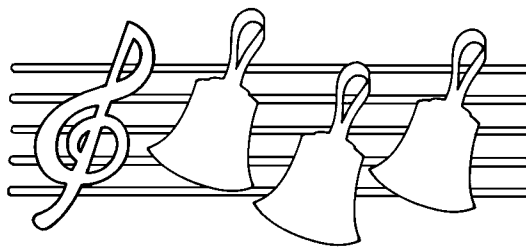
responding schools. Slightly more than one-third (37%) of the schools had three or fewer classrooms. Two-thirds (66%) had five or fewer classrooms. In addition, nearly half (47%) of the responding schools had a prekindergarten.

Regular classroom teachers were essential to the music education programs in these schools. They taught at least some of the music in 89% of the schools, and in 50% of the schools they taught all of the music. Only in 9% of the schools was music taught exclusively by departmentalized teachers.

Many schools had not purchased a music series recently. The same percentage of schools (35%) had purchased a music series within the past five years as those that had never purchased a music series. Also, 14% had purchased a series between six and ten years ago, and 16% had purchased a series more than ten years ago.

The teachers expressed interest in purchasing the proposed WELS series. Almost one-fourth of the schools (23%) indicated they were "very likely to purchase a WELS-produced music series." Two-thirds (67%) "might purchase" such a series. Only about one-tenth (10%) were "not very likely" to do so.

Three facets of curriculum content were surveyed: performing music, thinking about music, and valuing



music. Respondents clearly indicated the greatest importance for the learner is to use music to offer praise and to express truths about God and his work and, correspondingly, to honor our Creator God as the one who gives us both music and the capacities necessary to make it.

Respondents very strongly indicated that content and goals should emphasize a biblical, Lutheran viewpoint. The learner should value the use of music as a part of the Christian's life, know music that is part of the heritage of the Lutheran church, and value the role of music in Lutheran worship.

Growth in singing ability was rated as very important by 47% of respondents and important by another 47%. Vocal music reading ability was rated important or very important by 61%. Similarly, 64% rated understanding music notation as important and another 22% as very important. Playing common classroom instruments received higher responses than using basic movement experiences to express musical ideas, but the importance of each of these performing skills was rated well below that of singing and music reading.

A majority of the respondents considered developing an understanding of musical ideas to be an important part of the curriculum content. Hearing, conceptualizing, and remembering musical ideas was rated as important or very important by 64% of respondents. Knowing basic rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, formal,

and expressive ideas in music was rated important or very important by 60% of respondents. About a third of the respondents rated these items only somewhat important, and 3% rated them as not important.

Understanding different types of music and understanding music of diverse cultures were not rated high in importance. While 44% of the teachers considered applying musical thinking to a variety of types of music

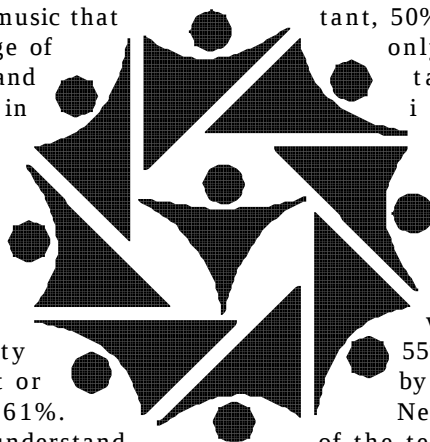
to be important or very important, 50% rated this item as only somewhat important and 5% as not important.

Understanding music drawn from diverse cultures was rated important by only 28% of respondents, somewhat important by 55%, and not important by 13%.

Nearly one-fourth (24%) of the teachers believed the development of the valuing of high standards in musical expressions to be very important and 47% rated it as important. One fourth considered high standards as only somewhat important. However, creating music was clearly not an important goal of the respondents, with 44% rating this as somewhat important and another 44% as not important.

Respondents agreed with the focus of instruction for each level as described in the survey questionnaire. These focuses were

In the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, the focus is sensorimotor/enactive experiences with music. These include singing, playing, moving, listening, and creating.



In the early elementary grades (1-2), the focus of instruction is perception of musical ideas through extensive participation in music activity. The child develops greater accuracy and independence in singing and rhythm performance skills. The child begins to recognize and classify basic characteristics of music, such as rhythmic and melodic patterns, tone colors, and degrees of loudness. The child represents music in visual and verbal ways, but standard notation and terms are not emphasized.

In the middle elementary grades (3-6), the focus is training to improve specific skills in making music and to increase understanding of the elements of music. Specific skills include singing with an expanded range, singing with improved quality, performing more complex pitch and rhythm patterns with improved accuracy, beginning partsinging, and using solfege (do-re-mi syllables) as an aid to vocal music reading. An increasing knowledge of the elements of musical structure (rhythm, melody, harmony, texture, tone color, form), standard music notation symbols, and the standard vocabulary used to talk about music are developed and used in singing, playing, listening, and creating experiences.

In the later elementary grades (7-8), the focuses are a) extending singing and music reading abilities to partsinging with changing voices, and b) applying musical understanding in listening, singing, playing, and creating experiences. A basic knowledge of music history and an understanding of the characteristics of differing types of music are also acquired.

The strongest agreement was at the prekindergarten and kindergarten level, where 63% strongly agreed and 36% agreed. Over 90% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the focus in levels for

grades one to eight.

At the prekindergarten and kindergarten level, respondents indicated that materials should be prepared only for the teacher. For grades one and two about half of the respondents indicated that only teacher materials should be prepared and the other half indicated that materials for both teacher and student needed to be available. For grades three to eight, nearly all the respondents indicated that materials for both teacher and student were necessary.

Black-line masters of lesson pages for local duplication was the choice of format for 80% of respondents. Simple keyboard accompaniments and audio tapes of all songs, accompaniments, and listening activities were desired by well over 80% of respondents.

### **Summary**

The results of this survey clearly indicate strong interest in the music curriculum materials project. On the basis of the results of this survey, materials should emphasize our Lutheran faith and heritage. Growth in singing and music reading abilities should be viewed as important. At the same time, the student must be led to understand and think with musical ideas.

Responses indicated that materials must be usable by the general classroom teacher and in multigrade classroom situations. The publication format should allow local duplication of materials. Supporting materials should include simple keyboard accompaniments and audio tapes.

### **An invitation**

Results of this survey will continue

to be analyzed to provide additional information as the writing of the music materials begins. Comments added by respondents are being considered. We invite your suggestions especially now as the writing is being done. If you have materials you have prepared and found successful, we invite you to share them with us. Send copies to the authors of this article at

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Preparation of curriculum materials is based on a philosophy of the subject matter and of learning. In a forthcoming article about the music materials we will discuss the processes of learning music and how these are being applied in the production of the music materials for our schools.

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