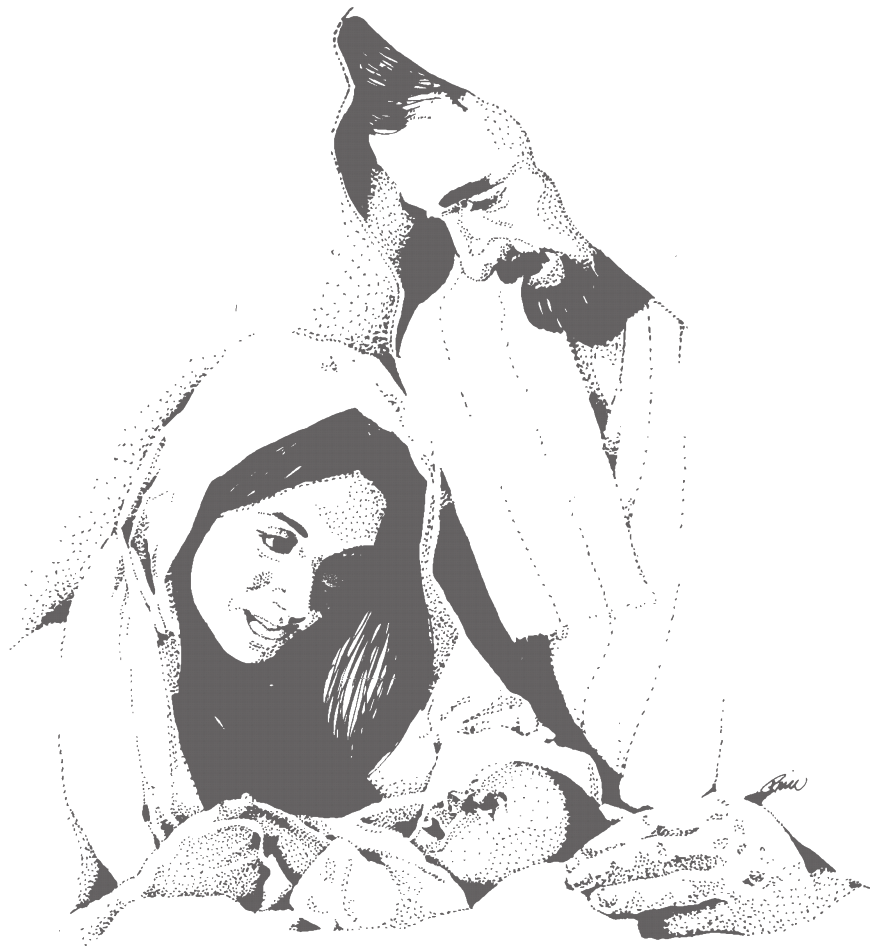


The Lutheran Educator

The WELS Education Journal

VOLUME 33
NUMBER 2
DECEMBER 1992



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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THE IMPORTANCE OF INVOLVING PARENTS

When the father of a truant algebra student failed to return his calls, Jaime Escalante rang the man at 5 a.m. "I wanted to catch you before you went off to work," he said sweetly to the sputtering parent. The student returned to class.

Five years ago the film "Stand and Deliver" made Jaime Escalante a pedagogical celebrity. He hasn't always enjoyed such status since then. Los Angeles's Garfield High, the school he turned into a national model, long ago turned against him. Escalante was determined to raise standards, and that brought clashes.

Since last fall Escalante has been teaching at Hiram Johnson High in a blue-collar section of Sacramento. He is no longer teaching calculus students but freshmen and sophomores still struggling with arithmetic and algebra. Yet he's done very well. A recent Newsweek article reports that Escalante succeeds "because he believes that disadvantaged students can do difficult work and because he kindly, if firmly insists that they do it. He uses visual aids and mind games, and exploits the power of teen-age pressure by creating the aura of a winning football team preparing for the Big Game—the AP test." He insists that weak students meet him before or after school and when any fail to show up he unleashes his favorite weapon—calls to their parents.

Escalante's formula for success is something Lutheran teachers have known for a long time. Good teaching techniques are important, but no more so than involving the parents in their children's education. Not only summer home visits with parents but work with parent/teacher organizations, the use of parent classroom assistants, and frequent consultations with parents have proven to go a long way in advancing a child's education.

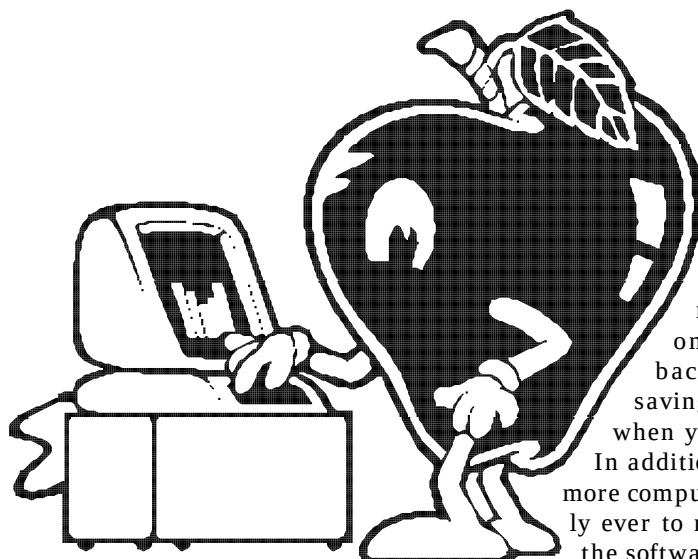
It's not just good pedagogy; it's God's will. Lutheran teachers involve parents because they are convinced that God has given the first and foremost responsibility for the Christian education of children to parents. "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph 6:4).

We don't need the world to tell us that involving parents is important for a child's education; nevertheless it's interesting to hear it.

MJL

USE YOUR APPLE IIe

Gary L. Sonnenberg



needed to run AppleWorks. If not, the extra cost for the memory add-on is only about \$35. Step back and look at these savings in hardware alone when you take the IIe route. In addition, the IIe is probably more computer than you are likely ever to need. Now let's get to the software.

RAISE your hand if you have access to an Apple IIe. Keep your hand raised if you also have access to a Macintosh Classic or LC. Did you see all those hands go down? Raise your hand if you have access to more than one Apple IIe. Look at most of them come back up again. The point, of course, is that many schools have IIe's already sitting around, but most would have to purchase new hardware to run software such as ClarisWorks.

The Mac Classic sells for \$900 and the LC for \$1800, plus \$200 for the IIe emulator to run software such as AppleWorks on the Macintosh. If you keep an eye open for used IIe's, you will see them selling for \$400 to \$600. These deals, which can be found in the classifieds of many newspapers, often include a monitor, disk drives, software, and even a printer. Many will also have the 128K of memory

In an editorial in *inCider* Dan Muse states, "We expect the integrated-software wars to rage on in the Mac industry. The competition is just too strong for one product to dominate. As for AppleWorks, it'll join the Boston Celtics and the Montreal Canadiens as a dynasty that won't be matched" (1992, 8). The same issue of that magazine contained an article comparing ClarisWorks with five other similar Mac programs. ClarisWorks was ranked near the top (Ross, 1992).

But how does ClarisWorks stack up with AppleWorks? There is virtually nothing that ClarisWorks can do that AppleWorks (with Beagle Brothers' add-ons) can't. There are nice features in ClarisWorks, but first consider how important they are to you. Then think how often you might use them. Finally figure in the cost you'd pay to get them.

Both AppleWorks and ClarisWorks

There is virtually
nothing that
ClarisWorks can do
that AppleWorks
(with Beagle
Brothers' add-ons)
can't.

are word processors with spelling checkers, data bases, and spreadsheets rolled into one package. ClarisWorks also offers built-in graphing, drawing, telecommunication, font choices, and macros. AppleWorks can have all of those extras, none of them, or just some of them.

This is where the Beagle Brothers' line of software called TimeOut fits in. These products permanently attach themselves to AppleWorks allowing you to customize the basic program in many ways. TimeOut titles include Graph (with Paint), Telecomm, SuperFonts, UltraMacros, ReportWriter, SideSpread, and more. This list compares favorably with the additional offerings found in ClarisWorks.

Finally, look at the overall pricing. You could spend \$900 (maybe less in an educator's deal) for a new Mac Classic and get ClarisWorks with it—but no color monitor or IIe emula-

tor. Or you could take that IIe you already have, update AppleWorks to version 3.0 if needed, add in the TimeOut modules mentioned and write a check for about \$400! Subtract about \$80 if you already have version 3.0. Subtract an average of \$45 for each of the TimeOut modules you'd choose not to buy because you personally would never use them.

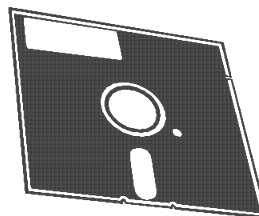
Most school budgets made this choice an easy one. The power and flexibility of AppleWorks and TimeOut make it even easier. Good stewardship suggests that you examine these things more closely before diving into the Mac world.

There is much more that can be said regarding AppleWorks. I would encourage you to ask an AppleWorks user in your area about it or write to the author. In any case, don't be too hasty in getting rid of that faithful Apple IIe.

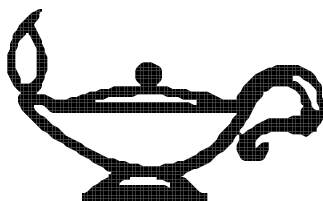
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NEKKETSU SENSEI



Paul L. Willems

TO A READER of *The Lutheran Educator* the answer to the question, “What is teaching?” is obvious. Teaching is imparting knowledge and skills to children. Teaching is describing, talking, writing, and demonstrating concepts for children. Teaching is 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with every minute filled with children asking and answering questions, milling about, groping and growing as they reason and comprehend. Teaching is staying up late, correcting papers, preparing lessons, coaching and directing, making sacrifices, making do, and helping parents in parenting. Teaching is that around which my life revolves. Teaching is what I do.

That is one definition of teaching. Yet we can give another definition for teaching. Teaching is still a noun, but in this definition the emphasis shifts from what teachers do, the duties of teaching, to what teachers are, the modeling a teacher does. The focus is away from things we do toward what we need to become in a fuller measure each day.

Teaching now becomes a precept, an action, or a rule of conduct. The idea of a rule can be thought of in a restrictive, straight-laced, or formal manner. However, a precept can also be thought of as something not imposed from without, but rather something accepted from within.

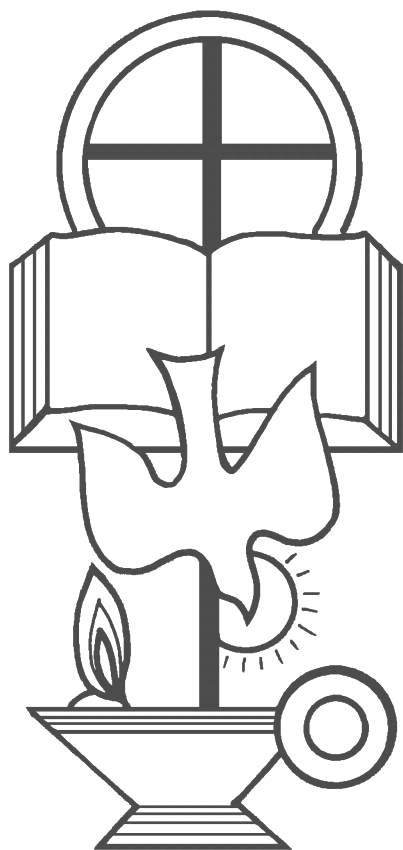
Teaching then becomes a matter of conviction. It comes from the heart. It can be grasped only by a kind of conversion, an internal change in behavior.

Teaching, in this sense, is a doctrine, belief, or dogma. It is a set of principles received as true and undisputable. Doctrine can be thought of as arbitrary principles. Doctrine can also be thought of as an inner belief that is not forced upon an individual, but one which a person sees, acknowledges, and trusts. It is a way of life, a pattern that permeates and governs everything that a person thinks, says, and does. It is a shelter, a fortress, some substance one can cling to when all else is failing.

Teaching is also a tenet, an opinion, or a maintained principle. In this sense, teaching is a constant vigil, a defense of some theory, but a tenet can also be thought of as an inner confidence or peace. It is the heart reposing on Christ.

This second definition of teaching can be called making disciples. What goes on in our classrooms is the making of disciples. Disciples of Christ are literally taken apart by the gospel and their hearts are remade by the Holy Spirit so they think and speak and act according to God’s will and not their own.

It is not easy to define teaching in this way. Even the apostles, the origi-



nal disciples of Jesus, did not leave a manual for making disciples in their Gospels. Rather their hearts changed and their lives bore witness to those changes. Matthew no longer worked at gathering money, but at gathering souls for Christ. Mark no longer ran away from his duties, but was profitable to the spreading of the gospel. Luke no longer healed only human bodies, but now spoke the words which healed human souls from the sickness of sin. John did not even mention his own name in his Gospel, but pointed away from himself to the

only One of importance, the Beginning and End of all things.

Now that is what I like to call teaching. It is not so much what we as teachers do. It is something we become, something we are because of what Jesus did for us. Making disciples then has no time limit of seven and one-half hours per day for 180 days a year. Making disciples involves a total commitment to Jesus and to the feeding of his lambs 24 hours a day, day after day. Making disciples is not the sacrifices of time, money, and energy we make, but the sacrifice Jesus made. Making disciples is not only what we do in the classroom. Making disciples is what we become and what we are. The process of making disciples is everything about each of us as forgiven children of God. Discipleship is the philosophy, wisdom, and knowledge that governs our thoughts, words, and conduct. Making disciples is even more. Being a disciple maker underlies all knowledge and wisdom. It is the very existence given to each of us to live all the fuller in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This kind of teaching is an awesome responsibility, an incomprehensible concept, and an unbelievable expression of God's love. He chose you and me to be his ambassadors to his children. Now we cannot accept this responsibility or accomplish its requirements by ourselves. Yet Paul writes encouragingly to young pastor Timothy, "But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength" (2 Ti 4:17). We cannot comprehend the vast thoughts of God, "For your thoughts are not My thoughts" (Isa 55:8), nor can we believe his unspeakable love in sending his only Son into

this sin-sickened world to do what we could never have done and to save those we would never have desired to be saved. We cannot accept these things by ourselves, but Jesus has said, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom" (Lk 12:32), "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Mt 28:20).

This kind of discipleship means daily contrition and repentance. It means fully sharing our goals with our pupils, communicating Jesus' love, and being one in judgment with our colleagues, parents, and pupils. The Japanese call such a one *sensei*, which is roughly translated as teacher, but it means much more. A *sensei* is one who has gained wisdom through experience and now leads pupils through the example of character and conduct. This exceeds the boundaries of the classroom walls and of our job descriptions.

Making disciples takes time. Even as Jesus was taking those steps which would finish his work on earth and remove him physically from his disciples whom he had personally instructed for three years, Peter denied he even knew Jesus. Yet Jesus worked with Peter. He forgave him. Jesus accomplished great things with Peter and in spite of Peter. Saul, the persecutor of Christ, the Pharisee, the chief of sinners, was transformed by Jesus so he became all things to all people so that in so doing some

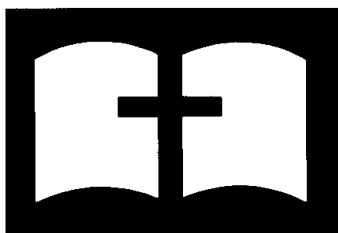
might be saved. But this took time. Paul was continually growing as a disciple while he was making others disciples.

Now the torch has been handed to you and to me by that same God and Lord of all with those same words, "Feed my sheep ... my lambs." So gather around the well of living water, which is Christ. Don't just take sips. Drink deeply as you study

his Word in private Bible reading and in family devotions. Do this every day and in every way within the classroom. Keep the doors of your heart ever open to the Holy Spirit in church, in Bible class, in choir, and wherever the Word

is spoken and used. Immerse yourself in Christ. Search for him. Then in the classroom you will become *Nekketsu Sensei*, Warm Hearted Teacher, because of the flame of the gospel burning within your heart. In the classroom of a disciple of Jesus, the instructor as well as those instructed grow as his disciples. In such a classroom his Word permeates every thought, word, and deed. The answer to the question, "What is teaching?" will not be, "Teaching is everything that I do," but rather it will be, "Teaching is everything that I am in Jesus."

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





What We Long to Hear

Ramona Czer

DEAR TEACHER:

Today I read the school memo and felt a familiar surge of excitement. It's time for Parent/Teacher Conferences! "But you're an old-timer," you might be thinking. "Why should you be excited?"

Yes, as I waited seven years ago for that first conference with my daughter's kindergarten teacher, I did feel keener anticipation (and more nervousness too).

I remember wondering: "Will she tell me about Megan's strengths and weaknesses? Will she tell me how well she's making friends or how her mind works? Will she tell me about her progress in growing as a consecrated child of God? Will she ask me what I long to share about Megan?"

The conference, when it finally came, flew by. We chatted about this and that, looked at a few projects and her report card, and then it was over. I walked away deflated. Maybe I'd had too many hopes, too many things I longed to hear.

Now I'm more realistic. I know you don't have time to discuss ad nauseum the quirks and foibles of my child. I know you can't keep copious notes on all the children. It's hard enough dealing with the really difficult learning or discipline problems. But I still need to talk and to listen.

Even though I've done this many times before, things keep changing. Our dear little girl gets a head taller, starts hating dresses, develops a love for reading and a fear of fractions, starts talking loudly and laughing uncontrollably, keeps secrets, stops singing with her whole heart, and we feel confused.

I still need conferences for direction and encouragement. You teachers are such wonderful listeners. Even when not parents yourselves, you understand our intense love for our children, and, more importantly, you see them as blood-bought children of God. Everything is important, perhaps eternally so, and you take seriously our dreams for our young ones.

So perhaps you will appreciate these suggestions. Perhaps you do want to know what I long to hear:

— Tell me my daughter's strengths so I can encourage her to do and be her best. Please stress creative, social, and physical strengths especially because she gets intellectual feedback regularly.

— Tell me her weaknesses, also in all areas. I have a good idea what they are at home, but I suspect she changes around her friends and you. I need your objective eye.

— Give me details and stories if you can. How I long to know the girl you know. She doesn't always tell us about school anymore, except in unpredictable outbursts.

— Tell me how her mind works. Is she analytical? Intuitive? Does she need encouragement to try new things, work cooperatively, or speak up in class? How does she act under pressure? Can she adapt to new circumstances? What can I do to help her stretch herself?

— Tell me how she is growing in faith. Does she love her Savior? How can you tell? Does she pray naturally, answer questions eagerly, volunteer insights from her own life? Does she treat others with kindness? When reprimanded, is she repentant? What should I be laying before God about my daughter? Are there sins or wrong attitudes that need attention? Nothing is more important to me



than her walk with her Lord.

— Finally, please ask me about my daughter's opinions and interests. I know much about her I'd love to share: what homework she likes and what homework she agonizes over, what she does in her spare time, what frightens, embarrasses or pleases her. If you're brave enough, ask me what she thinks of you. You may be pleasantly surprised.

A lot of this we can share anytime, I suppose. But at conferences, I have your complete attention and you have mine. Both of us are focused for those precious minutes on the Only Child in the World. We can chit chat anytime. I can admire your bulletin boards later. But next week when I step into my daughter's daily realm, I have only one thing I long to hear: the truth.

In anticipation,

A Parent

Ramona Czer is a wife, mother, teacher, and writer living in New Ulm, Minnesota.

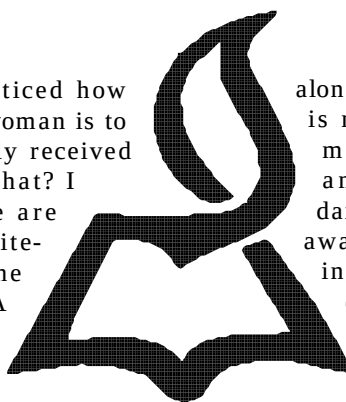
DISPLAY YOUR DIAMOND

James P. Becker

HAVE YOU ever noticed how excited a young woman is to display a recently received diamond ring? Why is that? I would guess that there are two reasons for her excitement and joy. One is the beauty of the ring itself. A diamond is one of the most precious and beautiful stones that we find on this earth. To let that beauty stand out a jeweler places that stone in a setting made of gold. He doesn't use tin or brass or even silver. He chooses gold to make a setting fit for a diamond. The second reason that young lady is so excited has to do with what that ring means. It symbolizes the high value some young man holds of her. And it signifies his commitment to join his life with hers in marriage.

Our heavenly bridegroom has given us Lutheran educators a precious stone to display. We have the gem stone of God's Word to display to our students. Although we can do that in many ways, this article will focus on using high school devotions to display the precious Word of God.

The reason chapel services are so precious is the great need they satisfy. People get married because it satisfies the need to be complete. "It is not good that man should live



alone..." (Ge 2:18). That need is met in marriage when a man and a woman unite and become one. In our daily life, we become acutely aware of our own shortcomings, our own sins and our own limitations. We just can't make it by ourselves. Our souls weren't made to live

alone or apart from God. Living with your soul separated from God is pure hell. Chapel services, centered on the Word of God, serve to bring us back into connection with our Lord. They reassure us that our sins are forgiven and they motivate us to face the challenges of the day. If we as leaders need that, think of how much more our students need that chapel service.

The message

Unlike our congregations in which most of our members do not go to Bible class, each of our students attends religion class. As a result our chapel services can have a narrower and more focused purpose than our Sunday morning worship services. Our religion classes provide instruction to our students; school devotions therefore can concentrate on inspiring our students. They can serve to provide the gospel motivation for a

courageous Christian life. With the comfort and strength God's Word offers, each member of our high school family can "soar on wings like eagles ... run and not grow weary ... walk and not be faint" (Isa 40:31).

We inspire our students and our fellow staff members through a clear and vivid presentation of God's grace. To prepare hearts we present the law. Preaching the law is easy. We are all familiar with the Ten Commandments and how we break them. We have a natural knowledge of God's will and a conscience that makes writing law sections for our sermonettes quite easy. But in doing so, we don't use the shotgun approach in which we wound many people. We use the rifle approach. We shoot to kill. We should be like Nathan who said to David, "Thou art the man." There should be no doubt in the hearer's heart regarding his guilt before the Lord.

On the other hand, preaching the gospel does not come naturally. It is hard for us to understand that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Yet this is the message we must make clear. Whether we do that by picturing examples of God's forgiveness to people during Bible times or by showing how God's grace applies to our lives, presenting the gospel message needs to be our ultimate goal.

The time

The time of day for chapel should be carefully considered. Pick the best part of the day for devotions. If it is too early in the day some people are not fully awake. If it is too late, the morning people have already shut down. The first and best of our time

belongs to the Lord. Although our school has had devotions at the beginning of the day and at noon, it appears that mid-morning is that best time of the day. As far as the length of devotions, God never tells us how long they should be; however, we need to be careful that devotions are not so short that we leave students with the impression that devotions are of little value. Frequency is also important. If we consider it valuable to teach mathematics and science each day or to serve lunch each day then isn't it important to have chapel each day? We need to think carefully about how long and how often we have chapel.

The first and best of
our time belongs to
the Lord.

The manner

Just as not every diamond is displayed in the exact same setting, so we need to vary the form of our devotions. Repetition isn't wrong but vain repetition is. And through repeating the same form over and over again we increase the danger of our worship services becoming empty, vain, worthless to us and an offense to God. As a result, administrators and individual chapel presenters need to set aside the necessary time and money to create a golden chapel setting to

present our Lord and Savior. This can be done in a number of ways. One of the most important is to make sure that the message is presented to all types of students. As teachers we know that some of our students learn best by hearing, some by seeing, and others by doing. Make use of that knowledge in chapel.

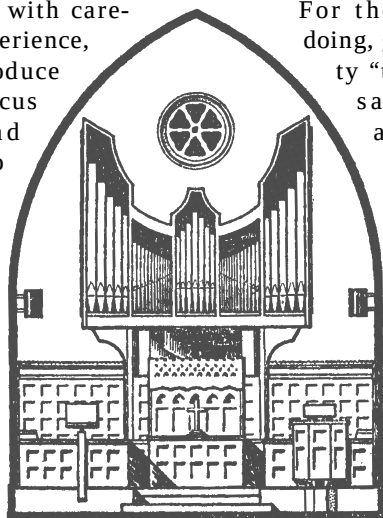
Show your school family members your message. You can do this with banners that really drive home the devotion theme for that season, week, or individual day. Involve your students and ask them to make the banner for your chapel. Use visual aids to make the message stick. Ezekiel shaved his head and then burned, cut up with a sword, and scattered to the wind some of his hair to teach a lesson about the future destruction of the Children of Israel. God used yeast to teach his people about the growth and spread of sin. Jesus pointed his disciples to the widow's two very small copper coins to drive home a point about proportionate giving. One of the dangers of visual aids is that people will remember them instead of the message. However, with careful planning and by experience, you will be able to produce visual aids that will focus people's attention and serve as a trigger to remind them in the future of that message.

I will always remember the need to wear Christ's righteousness and carry the sword of his Word from a teacher who dressed up in a suit of homemade armor as he delivered a devo-

tion on Ephesians 6 stressing the need to wear the armor of God. That was over twenty years ago. With the help of God you too can make the same kind of impression. If you are presenting a chapel about the heavenly banquet, set up a dining table with fine china. If you are emphasizing the need to do mission work, give students a seed to plant as they leave chapel to remind them to plant the seed of God's Word. If you are encouraging them to be the kind of watchman that Ezekiel was called to be, show them a smoke alarm and discuss what happens when the alarm doesn't sound.

In order to use visual aids effectively, your school may need to invest in a wireless microphone. The money will be well spent. Even if no visual aids are used, a wireless microphone will enable the speaker to move around, which in itself tends to hold people's attention. We have been given the gift of creativity, not to make up a new message, but to drive home the unchanging message of God's love.

For those who learn best by doing, give them the opportunity "to do" your chapel message. If you are talking about repenting and taking to heart God's forgiveness, have students read a unique confession of sins and an announcement of forgiveness that you have written. Or, ask one of your students to write a confession and absolution for an upcoming chapel. During the devotion



provide specific opportunities for the people to respond to or to repeat the message on which they are focusing. One of the most common ways we do this is through hymns.

Spend more than two or three minutes to choose your hymns. Search for hymns whose melody and words serve as a golden setting for God's message. Don't confine yourself to what you find in our current hymnbook. Use the *Worship Sampler*, the individual hymns from our new hymnbook that have been sent to every congregation and school, and other spiritual songs which you can locate. You can use your choir director or a faculty member who has an interest in music as a resource person. When you use music that has not been used before in your chapel, it is a good idea to have your devotion committee approve the doctrinal content. You might also want to vary the format of your music. Sing antiphonally. Use a piano or brass instruments instead of an organ. Or sing without any accompaniment.

Another way that we involve our students in chapel devotions is through prayer. In our school we have a prayer request box near the central office. Early in the year we encourage our students to request prayers of thanks or petitions on behalf of friends, family members, or other students. It is important always to double check these requests for accuracy and it is advisable to have the prayer in chapel within 24 hours of the request being made. To further personalize prayer you might create time for silent prayer during which each person can bring his individual requests to God.

For those who learn best by hear-

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ing, be creative in the way you deliver your message. A number of years ago one of my colleagues presented a Holy Week message in a very special way that made me really concentrate on the significance of the events of Good Friday. His whole devotion was written in the form of a poem. We so often deliver our message in prose and forget the impact poetry can have. Even if we can't write our own poems, you can look for religious poems that will drive a message home or you can ask a student who has a talent for poetry to produce a poem for you to use. As you read the Scriptures, you will note that God has presented his message to us through a mixture of prose and poetry. Let's copy his example.

The messengers

As you look around the world you notice that more than one woman has a diamond ring. Many women wear

Hearing one of their own, helps them to see that God and his Word are not just for the older generation, but are for them as well.

diamonds. The same should be true in our chapels. Many different people should lead us in worship and hold up the precious diamond of God's Word. All of the men on our faculties should have the opportunity to present God's message in this special way. And certainly each of the pastors of our conference congregations should be extended this privilege. In addition, I would suggest you consider making some of the boys in your senior class devotion leaders. We will not live forever. It is vital that we train and give opportunities to the next generation to lead in worship. This privilege should not be confined to those who are at DMLC or Northwestern College. Nor should this be limited to those who plan to go on and become pastors or teachers. Although the opportunity to lead in worship sometimes leads students to consider the preaching or teaching ministry, all who have this experience benefit from it. This is another way to train family

and congregation leaders.

If you decide to give students this opportunity, your school will have to be prepared to give specific and concrete help. It will be necessary for your administration to appoint a faculty member as Student Chapel Speaker Advisor. He would then be responsible for working individually with the students. One of his first tasks would be to draw up a set of printed guidelines which could be given to the students. Included in these guidelines would be the purpose of worship at your school, an outline of how to prepare for a chapel service, helps in writing a sermonette, and a set of deadlines that need to be met. He would then work with each of the boys as they develop the theme for the service, select hymns, write prayers and write/rewrite devotions. It is also a good idea for the boys to practice the delivery of their message. It is amazing to see the insights God gives them and how their faith shows itself throughout this process. It also seems to have an impact on other students. Hearing one of their own, helps them to see that God and his Word are not just for the older generation, but are for them as well. However, throughout this process we need to remember that they are boys and are still learning. As a result, it will be necessary, occasionally, for the advisor to give a chapel on short notice for a boy who didn't quite get finished on time.

Another way you can get more people involved in carrying the diamond of God's Word is to establish personal devotion days. These are especially fitting on days when congregations have their own services, such as the Wednesdays in Advent and Lent. On

these days no corporate worship services would be held at school. Instead, the time would be used for each student and staff member to conduct his or her own personal devotions. Training for how to conduct these could take place in religion classes. Each person would then be responsible for handling his own devotion. The only restriction would be that no talking or school work could be done during this time. If we want the next generation to have personal or family devotions we must train them to do this and give them opportunity to practice. If you adopt this idea, be ready for resistance. Personal devotions bring people face to face with their accountability

before God and that makes some people very uncomfortable.

Strive to create a golden setting for God's Word through your chapels this year. But always remember the need to touch the individual participant. Each person needs to know what the gospel means in his or her life. All need to see that they are engaged to the heavenly bridegroom.

May God bless your efforts to display the diamond of the gospel in your chapel services.

Rev. James Becker serves as a religion instructor and as Devotion Committee chairman at Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



May the joy of the Christchild's birth be with you and those you love.

The Editors
JRI, MJL, IRM, MDS

A CONTEMPORARY FORM OF OLD MAID

Gail L. Deltgen

DO YOU remember how the game of Old Maid was played? All the cards in the deck had an exact match, except one. That card was the Old Maid. The object of the game was to get rid of the Old Maid card, so if a player did get that card during the game, he or she didn't want anyone else to know. That way some other unsuspecting player might accidentally pick it. In this day of video games, the game of Old Maid seems rather old-fashioned, but some of the questions about the game may not be so outmoded because aspects of the game parallel the contemporary education issue of gender inequity.

Why was the game called *Old Maid*, not *Old Bachelor*?

While playing the game in my youth, I never thought to ask that question. Maybe the reason was that the game had always been played that way. I was also oblivious to the thought of gender inequity in my



classroom because I was too busy concentrating on maintaining a traditional classroom setting. I used textbooks without checking how proportionately girls were portrayed to boys. Sadker and Sadker (1982) surveyed textbooks to find ratios of 5:2 (boy vs. girl-centered stories), 3:1 (adult male vs. adult female stories), and 6:1 (male vs. female biographies). I had run my classroom using a competitive goal structure rather than a cooperative goal structure. Shakeshaft (1986) pointed out that the competitive nature of classrooms and the playing field complements the background of male students, not female students. Unfortunately, I was not alone in my oblivion; I compared well with the public sector: "Tetrault and Schmuck found that the gender issue is virtually ignored as a category of concern by at least eight of the major commission reports" (Bennett and LeCompte 1990, 225).

Why was the game called *Old Maid*?

How could the Old Maid's appearance as elderly and reserved possibly fit with how girls were treated in my classroom? Hall and Sandler (1982) reported that in elementary schools, gifted female students are less likely to be identified or to participate in accelerated classes than gifted male students. Teachers prefer the neatness and cleanliness of girls, but they also ask girls fewer questions, provide them with fewer directions, and give them fewer rewards and punishments than boys. Shakeshaft (1986) contended that "the high achieving female receives the least attention of all students" (501), and, as a result, "most learn to hold back, be quiet, and smile" (500). Sadker, Sadker, and Steindam wrote that "girls are the only group who enter school scoring ahead and twelve years later leave

Teachers ask girls
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school scoring behind" (1989, 46). This happens because girls generally receive better grades in school, but boys generally obtain better scores on national standardized tests which colleges use to determine scholarships. Because the girls were more mature about having special talents and quieter when they used them, was I taking the girls in my classes for granted?

Why was the game called *Old Maid*?

When I think of maids, I remember the stereotype I pictured from watching too many old movies: Maids were cute young women who wore short skirts with frilly aprons. I even found that stereotype amusing until I realized the correlation between my mental image of a "maid" and the most highly prized female activity in junior and senior high school: What do cheerleaders look like? According to Hall and Sandler (1982) junior high school teachers expect good girls to be appreciative, cooperative, efficient, poised, and thorough; and they expect good boys to be adventurous, aggressive, curious, enterprising, frank, and inventive. I became more serious in my self-evaluation of how I treat girls in my classes when I realized that "good girls" fit the description of someone who cleans furniture with a feather duster better than "good boys."

By the end of the game, the Old Maid was the loser because she didn't match up with any of the other cards. Could this be true about girls in our classrooms as well? The documentation has helped me question some of my teaching behaviors. The following are five core questions I now consider

as I deal with possible gender inequity:

- ◆ How carefully have I surveyed the content of my textbook to show proper role models?
- ◆ How often do I use different learning techniques (cooperative as well as competitive) that will add variety and appeal to what is being learned?
- ◆ How fairly have I evaluated individual students' abilities?
- ◆ How appropriately have I given attention to individual students' unique personalities?
- ◆ How adequately have I prepared individual students for their future ... and for eternity?

The documentation seems to indicate that girls deserve better treatment than they are getting, but to overreact to the documentation could simply tip the scale to create inequity against male students. Perhaps you noticed that the five questions I ask myself refer to "individual students"—not to "girls" and "boys" and certainly not just to "girls." The individuals I am privileged to teach are faith-filled, blood-bought children of God, and it is this—their relationship with God—which is much more basic

Their relationship
with God is much
more basic
than their gender.

than their gender. I appreciate the opportunity to question how my classroom is run and how I can help my students by reading the documentation of researchers in the public sector, but such evidence is not the reason why any of us Christian educators decide to incorporate changes. Changes in our classrooms, just like changes in our hearts, are caused by the fact that we, just like our students, are faith-filled, blood-bought children of God. Our relationship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit helps us focus on doing what is best for our students. In regard to gender inequity, James 2:1 encourages us, "...as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism."

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HELPING THE UNCERTAIN SINGER

James Schierenbeck



WHAT A thrill it is when children sing with melody in their hearts to the Lord! But it is also our goal to help our students sing with melody in their voices and with everyone on the same pitch.

How much easier it would be for a music class to stay on pitch without the off-pitch singers adding their own “melody,” especially during rounds and part-singing. The uncertain singers themselves realize their lack of skill as they get older. Many become self-conscious, often losing the joy of singing for their adolescent and adult life.

When a child in our classroom needs academic help, we respond. The off-pitch singers also need help. Many of the learning difficulties a child encounters can be solved through group instruction. At times, however, small group or individual tutoring is required. Helping the uncertain singer often requires this special attention.

The skill of singing on pitch can be taught. The best teacher of singing is

the parent who immerses the preschool child in musical experiences. In school, a few uncertain singers will discover their singing voices and pitch-matching as the whole class sings with them. Most will need one-on-one instruction.

The teacher or parent volunteer works with the child a few times a week. Sessions are fun and brief, with an extra measure of patience from the instructor. The child is reminded that the Lord hears the melody of faith in his soul, but we also try to make the best use of the varying abilities we have. Parallels can be drawn to the difficult but also joyful experience of learning to kick a ball or find the correct answer in math.

Many procedures and helpful hints are given in teaching music materials and in issues of the *Chorister's Guild* magazine, for example, April, 1986; December, 1987; and January, 1989. The basics include helping a child dis-

The skill of singing
on pitch can be
taught.

cover his singing voice through imitation of animal sounds or sirens, by matching his pitches with another singing voice or the piano, and by practicing control when moving from one pitch to another. Since hearing pitches incorrectly is the primary obstacle to producing them, use of a tape recorder and tone bells is helpful. Some articles explain the use of singing while holding one ear shut, using echo songs, moving up and down with the pitch, and other techniques. For many singers just a few, brief, one-on-one experiences will open up a whole new world.

The uncertain singer will not be the only one who benefits. Other children in class will locate their pitches

more easily, especially when singing harmony or with a varied accompaniment. The children will take pride in the sound of their classroom singing. Music will gain more respect among students. Teachers and parent volunteers will experience the joy of teaching. Worshippers will appreciate even more the children's contribution to worship. Singing in our church services will improve as new generations of secure singers join the throng.

As one parent volunteer said, "To be able to hear singing is a joy; to be the one singing is a greater joy."

James Schierenbeck teaches at St. John's Lutheran School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Christmas Prayer

—Dolores Schumann,
The Lutheran Educator
December 1970

*Holy Christ Child, we have gathered
On this blessed, holy night
To adore Thee with the Wise Men
Led by Bethlehem's star so bright;
May we also kneel before Thee,
Worshipping Thy boundless grace:
That Thou camest down from heaven
To redeem our sinful race.*

*We were lost, condemned, and wretched,
Lay in trespasses and sin;
Thou had'st pity to redeem us,
Unto Thee our hearts to win;
Could we, Lord, refrain our praises,
Could our hearts to Thee stay cold?
No, Thy glory shall be endless
For Thy mercies manifold.*

*Lord, accept our humble praises;
May we ever be Thine own!
Ever guide and guard our footsteps
Till we worship at Thy throne,
Where we with the family blessed
Join th' angelic choir above,
Celebrating endless Christmas
In the realms of perfect love.*

Teachers Share Ideas



Classroom Organization

Use stick-on colored dot labels to organize your shelves where the games, puzzles, and blocks are kept in the primary room. Put a colored dot on the front edge of the shelf and matching dots on each container that belongs in that particular spot on the shelf. If you run out of colors, use two dots together or put letters on the dots with a permanent marker. It helps the children be more responsible for the items they use, and, if the shelves still become cluttered, one or two students are able to straighten them by themselves rather than having the teacher clean it up.

Donna Kuenn
St. John's, Princeton, WI

Good-Grammar Contest

I start with a simple word or phrase that I don't want the children to use when speaking in the classroom. Examples are "ain't," "them guys," or "me and him." The selected word or words are posted on a bulletin board or chalkboard along with the correct way of saying them. I keep a sheet of paper on my desk for record keeping. This sheet is a list of my pupils' names. Whenever someone uses the selected word or words, the pupil's name is checked on my record sheet. I count only things which are said during class time – not recess. At the end of a week or month, I give a "good grammar" prize to those who have done their best. Everyone has become more aware of good grammar and conscious of personal speech improvement.

Debra Walz
Petra, Sauk Rapids, MN

Independent Easel Painting

My kindergarteners love to paint at the easel. There is not, however, enough time in a half day to let each child have more than one turn. Therefore, I set up the easel(s) in a semi-private corner of the

Teachers Share Ideas

room. I made a chart listing the students in my class and put it on the wall near the easel.

When the children come into school in the morning, they take turns painting at the easel until their lessons actually begin. When a masterpiece is completed, the child puts an "x" behind his or her name on the chart and removes the painting from the easel to dry. This means that the next child on the list can immediately have his or her turn. In this way, every child may even have several chances at painting. Sometimes the children are allowed to paint whatever they want to paint; at other times I assign a specific thing.

There is very little teacher time required for this activity after it has been explained and modeled at the easel. The children can keep track of whose turn it is and clean up after themselves each day. All I have to do is admire my students' art work and be sure that paint and paper is available for my young artists.

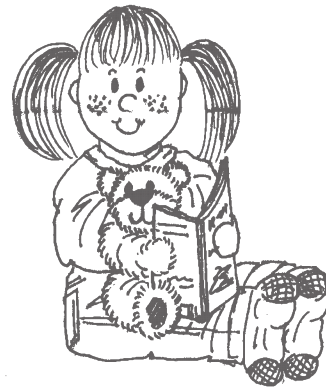
Helene Moldenhauer
St. John's, Princeton, WI

Memory Work Recitation

When listening to memory work recitation of hymn stanzas, some children struggle to say them correctly. It has been my experience that some pupils are more successful when singing the stanzas.

Therefore, I encourage and allow hymn recitation to be done with singing and I also give kids the option to sing their assigned hymn stanzas in pairs of three-somes. Some children found this much easier than reciting.

Debra Walz
Petra, Sauk Rapids, MN



Send your ideas and clip art to
Teachers Share Ideas *The Lutheran Educator*
Dr. Martin Luther College New Ulm, MN 56073

GOSPEL FREEDOM AND CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

Paul O. Wendland

Pastor Wendland's timely and interesting article on contemporary music will be published in three consecutive issues. This issue contains the first part, "Music is an adiaphoron, an 'indifferent thing.'" The February issue will contain the second part, "Music is God's good gift and creation." The May issue will contain the final part, "Music is a part of any people's culture."

"The world is so full of a number of things
I'm sure we should all be as happy
as kings."

IN PRE-WAR Europe, when Robert Louis Stevenson penned those lines, it was easy to look out at the world in sunny-eyed optimism and believe there were few blights in Eden which could not be overcome with a good disposition. After seeing the devastation of two world wars, the novelist William Golding transported some "British boys" to an idyllic island where they soon wound up chanting in demonic fury, "Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!" (1959, 141) But the beast was beyond human killing, since he was rooted in human nature. It was clearly impossible for Mr. Golding to remain optimistic about a world in which evil spirits like Hitler and Stalin could rise to power.

What is the world to a Christian? Is it a place of horror from which we want

to escape? Or is it a wonderful landscape created by God in which he has put many good things for our pleasure? Is it possible for both things to be true in some paradoxical way?

The fact is, the Christian church sings out both truths. We urge one another to "Flee the world which would deceive us and to sin our souls allure" (TLH # 409). At the same time we sing, "Let all things now living a song of thanksgiving to God the creator triumphantly raise" (THS #721).

It is difficult to resolve this paradox. It is not always easy to understand how the Apostle Paul can quote pagan poets in his inspired writings, while at the same time proclaim the revelation of God's wrath upon the moral bankruptcy of the Greco-

Roman world. It is hard to grasp fully Jesus' meaning in telling us that we are both in the world but not of it. It is puzzling to discover the way Luther could be so frankly at ease with created things — laughter, music, and good



Wittenberg beer—while at the same time be so filled with distress at the evils of this world that he would pray for release from it.

It is important to understand that we are dealing with a difficult subject. Beware of anyone who presents an easy way of resolving the tension between living a life of thanksgiving in God's good creation and setting our hearts on things above. Anyone who says, "I've got it" surely doesn't. I don't claim to offer the definitive answers to every practical question, but I do want to talk about the attitude Scripture offers to us for resolving the paradox in our own lives.

The particular problem we want to examine is the question of what a Christian's attitude ought to be towards contemporary music, particularly rock music. In our circles, the question has presented itself in the form of whether or not it is possible to tolerate Christian contemporary music of the pop and rock varieties. Is it possible to proclaim Jesus in a backbeat rhythm without becoming hopelessly entangled in the world?

For some, even the question sounds blasphemous. The answer then is easy. Any rock music—pagan, 'Christian', whatever—can be put into one heap with the label, "Corrupt, Satanic, flee!" The evil of Christian rock is predicated upon the intrinsic evil of all rock music. It is poison fruit from a corrupt tree. Pastor Greg Jackson, for example, seems to deny that rock music can be considered a neutral genre and used for good or ill. In a recent article in *The Christian News*, he compares rock to the historical/critical method, an approach of Biblical interpretation which rests on presuppositions of

unbelief. Apparently, his argument is: the historical/critical method was not neutral. It was inherently corrupt. Beware of all voices claiming that rock music is neutral. It is inherently corrupt. (Jackson 1992, 17)

A person cannot find much to dispute in the thought that a great deal of contemporary music is morally vile in content. I would join wholeheartedly in the warnings good Christians raise against what is bad in rock music and the rock culture. What I cannot agree with is the proposition that rock music as such is sinful and hence is to be avoided as an article of faith.

Archimedes once said, "Give me a place to stand, and I'll move the earth!" I believe the gospel gives the Christian a place to stand so that he can not only turn the world upside down, but also live in it, accept the good in it, reject the evil in it, and long for the new world to replace it. Only the gospel helps me resolve the paradox between viewing this world as corrupted by sin, and seeing it as filled with God's good gifts. To put it another way: only the gospel can preserve a person from the evil in this world, and enable him to use God's gifts not for lust, but to give God glory. That is why we will approach this matter under the heading, "Gospel Freedom and Contemporary Music." We will in turn subdivide that thought into three main considerations:

- I. *Music is an adiaphoron, an "indifferent thing."*
- II. *Music is God's good gift and creation.*
- III. *Music is a part of any people's culture.*

Part One

Music is an adiaphoron, an “indifferent thing”

When Jesus walked on earth, free from the tomb on Easter morning, it was more than death which had released its grip on him. By his death and resurrection he had set himself into a new relationship with the old world. He was completely free. He had died to the world and the world was a dead letter to him. “Take heart, I have overcome the world,” he said to his disciples (Jn 16:33). Everything that belonged to the old order of things—nature, law, decay, pain—was a nullity to him. It had no hold or claim on him whatever.

Yet we also see that, prior to his ascension, Jesus made use of the things of this world in perfect freedom. He broke bread with his disciples, ate a piece of broiled fish in their presence (Lk 24:42), and even cooked breakfast for them on occasion (Jn 21:9ff). At one of his appearances, he invited a disciple to touch him; at another, he requested a disciple to stop touching him (compare John 20:17 with 20:27).

All these things he was free either to do or not to do. The one principle guiding him was, “How can I demonstrate my love for my people?” If love prompted him to eat in order to confirm that he truly was the Crucified One risen to life, then he would eat. He did it for the sake of his disciples, not to serve his own need. If love prompted him to ask one disciple to touch, and another disciple to let go, then he would do so. Again, he was free to do or not to do. His love and desire to serve others would cast the

deciding vote before action.

Now the gospel of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection is not to be preached merely as historical fact. As Luther points out, “Christ ought to be preached to the end that faith in him may be established that he may not only be Christ, but be Christ for you and me” (1957, 357). When Jesus says, “I have overcome the world,” he is not speaking some lifeless fact which has no bearing on us. He is telling us what he has done for us and what we receive when we are joined to him by faith.

In a sense when someone is in Christ, he stands in exactly the same relationship to the world in his spirit and conscience that Christ did on that first Easter morning. He is free from all of it, dead to all of it, alive to God alone (Gal 2:20, 3:27-29; Ro 6:4, 11). Certainly, until we are rid of the outer man—“this body of death” from which we long for deliverance—we are subject still to all the natural and moral orders which God has ordained to preserve for his saving purpose the temporary life of this dying age.

But in our spirits, reborn in Christ, we truly are the new creation, seeing all things in a wholly new way. Our spirit freely and willingly uses the law and the moral order of this life to regulate and curb our sinful flesh. Because of our flesh, we still need the law to direct our thinking, since we are so prone to fall into self-serving ruts and call what we’re doing “love.” Only the law has the power to blow the lid off self-deception. We thank God for its guidance.

And in freedom we view all the things of this created world concerning which God has given us no command or prohibition and ask our-

selves how we can use them to give God glory and serve our neighbor. Love has no other question to ask, and once that question is answered, love has more than enough to do.

Does rock music belong in the category of “indifferent things” to which God has attached neither a command nor a prohibition? The answer must be, “Yes!” Scripture does not speak to the question of whether music should be rhythmic or arrhythmic. It does not tell us to avoid syncopation, nor does it praise a predictable beat as the musical consummation devoutly to be wished. It does not prescribe the use of certain instruments. It does not even advocate what scale we ought to use. One will look in vain for a statement in Scripture concerning a particular style of Christian music which transcends culture.

Certainly a type of poetry, a style of music and a definite instrumentation was in use at the temple in Old Testament times. The poetry has been preserved for us in the Psalms; the exact sound of the music to which they were sung has not. Any attempts to recreate it are, at best, educated guesses. I would venture to say that if we could reproduce it exactly, it

would sound exceeding strange to every ear tuned by a Western style of music, far stranger than the appalling din many people feel rock music to be.

Yet even if we could reproduce David's original melody for Psalm 23, we have no command in Scripture telling us we must. The form of Old Testament music binds us no more than any Old Testament law or form. Surely no one would suggest that poetry for Christians can only be phrased in a psalm-like parallelism. How then can anyone reject a type of music per se as being non-Christian? The gospel frees us from all ceremonial forms!

Note carefully that we are speaking merely to the form of the music as music. When rock music is used as a vehicle to preach the joy of sexual promiscuity—that is not an adiaphoron. When a rock lyricist glorifies the ingestion of mind-altering substances as the way to the good life—that is not an adiaphoron. When a rap-artist urges me to kill a cop—his message is not to be treated with indifference. When anyone tells me that suicide is a good option for frustrated lovers—that is hardly a matter



for Christian freedom to tolerate.

But when Don Henley tells me that forgiveness is the heart of the matter, when Paul McCartney sings one of his silly little love songs, when the Eagles mount a scathing critique of the cultural vapidness of southern California, when other artists too numerous to mention sing about our common experiences of love, hope, joy, and sorrow, must I refuse to listen because the message is put in a musical setting also used to glorify clearly immoral actions? Not at all! There is no word from God telling me what form of music I may or may not listen to.

Since this is so, we will resist any attempt to enslave and entangle us in a system of thought which has as its starting point the idea that the use or non-use of the indifferent things of this world has any bearing on our salvation. To the one who says, "Touch not, taste not, handle not" (Col 2:21), we reply, "The kingdom of God does not consist in eating and in drinking" (Ro 14:17). Wrapping God's created world in all sorts of ceremonial do's and don't's is to invest it with a greater weight than it can bear. None of it will last. None of it can bring us any closer to God. Therefore we will not accept any legislation or prohibition which acts as if it could.

Here's where we find an answer to the question with which Dr. Jackson began his article. He wonders why anyone would bother to defend rock music. "It reminded me of Samuel Johnson's comparison of a woman preaching to a dog walking on his hind legs, 'One is surprised to find it attempted at all'" (Jackson 1992, 17).

Whether or not a person feels rock music is worth defending, Christian

freedom certainly is. And when an entire genre of music is being condemned as intrinsically corrupt, or when Christians are being given a bad conscience for listening to or performing a certain type of music, Christian freedom is precisely the issue. It is possible for someone to be infected with worldly attitudes through rock music. It is also possible for someone to be overcome with the virus of legalism. We all carry it as part of our spiritual gene-pool. One way it troubles us is when we feel something more needs to be said beyond convicting law and consoling gospel in order to protect a believer from the world. That's the point at which we start making "musts" out of what our Lord has left "free."

If our goal is to protect the young from worldliness, to go beyond what is written by teaching them to avoid all rock music is the wrong way to achieve it. Paul says, "Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom...but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence" (Col 2:23). Paul knew that only the gospel message of Jesus has the power to renew our minds and transform us from within, so that we will not "conform any longer to the pattern of this world" (Ro 12:2).

It is much more vital for pastors and teachers to plant a gospel heart within our young people through faithful use of law and gospel, than it is for them to plant a hedge around the young of man-made regulations to protect them from the world. A gospel heart is an inexhaustible source of power from within, giving a Christian the spiritual insight to "make judgments about all things" (1 Co 2:15). By way of contrast, a hedge of man-

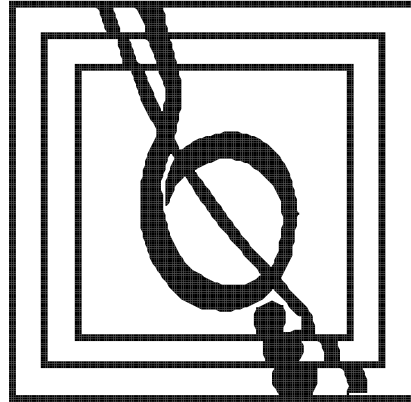
made laws lacks the power to preserve even a small patch of earthly real estate free from worldly contamination.

Furthermore, once we accept the regulation of our consciences with respect to one "indifferent thing," there will be no end to the regulations. At a time in his ministry when people were making "musts" out of what was "free," Luther wrote, "Out of the making of one law (in the early church) grew a thousand laws, until they have completely buried us under laws. And this is what will happen here, too; one law will soon make two, two will increase to three and so forth" (1959, 78).

Naturally, when we hear Christian freedom discussed in this way, our sinful flesh wants to use it as a springboard for cutting loose and plunging into a life free from any restraint. As surely as we must resist the conscience-regulators for the sake of the gospel, so surely must we resist the flesh's inclination to use Christian freedom as a license to sin. Simply to embrace rock music wholeheartedly, without encouraging people to exercise sound moral judgment would be one way of going too far.

A rather more likely possibility among us would be for those who listen to and appreciate rock music to run rough-shod over the feelings and sensitivities of those who are troubled by rock's immoral associations. Here Jonathan Rupprecht makes a good point well worth listening to:

Rock music performers have long been associated with drugs, immoral sex, ungodly living and attitudes. It's hard to separate the baggage from that music, especially when some Christian rock



groups also imitate the appearance and some of the actions of secular rock groups. (1992, 56)

The early Christians faced the same problem of associations with respect to meat sacrificed to idols. Those who were strong in faith knew that an idol was nothing, and merely eating food once consecrated to a heathen god did not imply that a person was worshipping that particular god. However many other Christians had so lately come out of pagan worship that it was hard for them to escape the feeling that somehow they were honoring a false god by eating such meat. The apostle Paul agreed that Christians were free to eat it, but he warned, "Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died" (Ro 14:15). As mentioned before, when Christ left the tomb he was completely free with respect to all things earthly. The one thing that determined whether or not he would use or not use something created was his love for his disciples.

Dr. Siegbert Becker was a special gift of God to us in many ways. His unique background gave him an abili-

ty to view us with more objectivity than one could who was WELS born and bred. In 1983, he observed,

Some may even have the opinion that we (in the WELS) equate Christian liberty with "rugged individualism." When I became a member of the WELS just twenty years ago, that was one of the phrases that often made me cringe. I know that the men who used those words often meant something good and right and Christian by that phrase. But it also seemed to me at times to denote an attitude of unconcern with the neighbor's opinions. (1983, 45)

For us simply to flaunt our Christian liberty with respect to rock without consideration for those whose consciences have been sensitized by rock's association with immorality of many kinds would be sinful. We would not be loving our neighbor nor giving glory to God. Our fellow-Christians could draw the wrong conclusion from such flaunting, and believe that we were advocating the same rebellious, promiscuous, drug-enriched lifestyle which to them rock represents. Similarly, those who want to perform and sing "Christian" rock among us will want to be guided by love for neighbor as well. We will restate the truth that they are free to do so to all and sundry persons. At the same time we will remind the advocates of Christian rock to have respect for other peoples' consciences.

Here again we might all remember some words uttered by Father Luther when faced with a similar situation,

No new practices should be introduced, unless the gospel has first been thoroughly preached and understood. On this account, dear

friends, let us deal soberly and wisely in the things that pertain to God, for God will not be mocked. (1959, 90)

Good Lutheran practice is not to rush ahead of the pack, do something new, and let the Devil take care of teaching others what it means. Good evangelical practice teaches first, patiently and thoroughly, and then lets the gospel teaching create the climate for doing something new.

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A suggestion for your classroom

Prosody and Religion Lessons

John R. Isch

The typical way teachers teach and check comprehension of Bible history or Word of God stories is through questions. The teacher tells the story or the students read the Bible history lesson. Then, in the part of the lesson called Discussion, the teacher questions the students on the content of the story. The questions are to teach and test comprehension and to develop the inferences and truth of the story. There are other ways of doing this comprehension teaching and for some stories and some students, prosody may be a better choice.

Prosody is expressive oral reading. It includes oral reading aloud with variations in pitch, stress, and duration where such variations reflect the meaning or emotion suggested by the text. Prosodic reading can only be done when the reader comprehends the text, its words, phrases, and paragraphs. Prosody is a way of teaching and testing comprehension. A teacher could use prosody in a religion class in the following way.

First, a teacher should use this

method with a story that has considerable dialog, preferably by several persons. A number of students can thereby be involved. Second, the teacher can follow the usual procedure for presenting the story. In the primary grades, for example, the teacher can tell the story to the students. In the intermediate grades, the teacher can assign the story to be read before the class. If the teacher assigns the story to be read, he or she also ought to do all the things good reading teachers do before silent reading: introduce vocabulary, give a purpose for reading, and suggest a structure or text interaction.

After the students have heard or read the story, the teacher would break the class into groups. The size of the groups depends on the number of speaking parts plus one—the narrative reader. The students read the story orally in their groups, taking the parts of the speakers. One student reads the narrative—the “in-between parts.” The students should do this at least three times, changing



parts each time. Most importantly, they should help and encourage each other in interpreting the parts for expressive reading. They could discuss how the person would have said the words and why. They could help the narrative reader dramatize the reading so as to carry along the action of the story. By this process of discussing and trying out different ways of reading the text, the children will build comprehension of the text. Some modifications of the text can be made, dropping the "he said," for example, but otherwise the reading should remain faithful to the text.

After the students have practiced in small groups, select at least one group to present its reading to the class, similar to the radio drama of years ago. The children would not dramatize the story visually with actions or costumes. Rather they would dramatize as good storytellers

have done for thousands of years—with their voices, with prosody.

The children will likely comprehend the story very well using this technique and the only question the teacher may need to ask is the question for the truth of the lesson.

Prosody will not work for all lessons and there is a basic assumption in this comprehension strategy that students can independently read the text. Give these two caveats, prosody seems a useful and appropriate variation on the question and answer technique used in the typical religion lesson.

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