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The Lutheran Educator

The WELS Education Journal

Let the little children come to me...

The Lutheran Educator

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ARTICLES

DEPARTMENTS

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The Body Politic of Church Service

The post-election synthesis was different this past November. Political analysts across the nation have dissected how a former professional wrestler, Jesse "The Body" Ventura, the Reform Party candidate, could get elected governor of Minnesota.

Whatever the reasons for this upset election, the fact remains that Ventura connected with the electorate enough to garner 38% of the vote. Although that margin is not a mandate for sweeping radical changes, it does cause stir for reflection. The election makes one wonder why Ventura captured those votes instead of the established parties' candidates. On election night, Minnesota political analyst Tim Penny noted that the two major political parties may have distanced themselves from the concerns and issues of the majority of voters. Simply put, those candidates lost touch with their constituencies.

Like the long standing parties, we too can easily lose touch with constituencies that we are called to serve. I remember how easy it was to become entangled in my own professional concerns and personal challenges. I remember how easy it was to worry about finances and staff relationships. I also remember how easily I ignored the issues and concerns of the people I was called to serve. As called servants have we kept up with the government changes in the PIK program and milk price supports that affect many of our members? Have we considered the impact of unions bargaining to keep jobs rather that bettering wages and benefits? Can we empathize when large corporations "downsize" their staffs by hundreds of workers? Are we aware of the interpersonal strife caused by blended families and divided parental loyalties? We may even find it easy to sit back and shake our heads in disappointment when our members don't live up to our expectations.

Do our professional affiliations and get-togethers ignore the day-to-day problems that our members deal with? Perhaps we should find ways to maintain our contact with our constituencies by keeping avenues of communication open. We should continue to find ways of sharing each other's burdens. We should continue to encourage one another in the true faith. Our lives are about big people too.

Although we can often learn little from politics, this lesson from the last election we should remember: Stay in touch with the people we are called to serve. Even though we don't face reelection in four years or have to subject ourselves to scrutinizing media critics, we serve with the harshest of critics—our conscience. We should remember that we are members of the most powerful lobbying force on earth—the Body Politic in Jesus Christ.

Larry Czer

Disciplining Without Shame _
Discipling Without Shame

Gene G. Martens

I HAVE A WORKSHOP that I once called "Identifying Shame-based Discipline." When people first heard the title, they asked, "Now shame—that would be a bad thing, right?" I believe so. The examples and ideas in this article come from both that workshop and my experiences working with families and children.

Some people disagree with this view that, "Shame is a bad thing," for a couple of reasons: (1) Shame does work to stop an immediate behavior and allows control to be regained, and (2) Parents / teachers identify all too well with the topic. (Parents tend to be more sympathetic to these ideas.)

Consider discipline on a continuum. Shame is toward one end of that continuum. Developing cooperation and a desire to obey is on the other. As sinful humans, having more or less control over our own responses to situations, we will slide on that continuum in our methods of discipline. At times we may gravitate toward the shame-end. It is my hope that this article may provide an opportunity for you to identify shaming behaviors, encourage you to evaluate those behaviors, and consider what is behind shaming. Why do we shame when we discipline?

First, we must define shame if we are to discuss it. Webster's definition of guilt is "self-reproach that one has done something wrong." Shame is a "painful sense of guilt." Shame and guilt are not listed as synonyms but as being related. Is it not enough that children acknowledge their guilt? Who would benefit from stretching that guilt into painful shame? Adult or child? I want those children with whom I work to admit readily when they have done something wrong, but not to be in fear of humiliation. That is my goal in discipline.

> I know of two alternatives to hypocrisy: perfection or honesty. Since I have never met a person who loves the Lord our God with all her heart, mind, and soul, and loves her neighbor as herself, I do not view perfection as a realistic alternative. Our only option, then, is honesty that leads to repentance....Hypocrisy disguises our need to receive grace. (Yancey 1997)

I ask parents to make a list of

attributes they would like their child to possess as an adult; loving, respectful, honest, sense of humor, Christ-like, compassionate are some examples I receive. I then ask them to consider which of those characteristics could be achieved by shaming.

Together we then list shaming statements:

"You don't do anything right."

"You're stupid."

"How could you?"

"It kills me when...."

"Why must you always get so dirty?"

"You are always...."

"You make me...."

"Stop that crying or I'll give you a reason to cry."

"Babies behave that way..."

"You must be a baby..."

"Tomorrow you need to try harder and have a better day."

"Duh...."

"Why would you feel that way?"

"You don't need to feel that way"

"Do you ever think?"

A helpful test in determining whether a statement is shameful is to see how well it can be followed by the word "stupid." The "stupid" tone of voice can readily change the impact of a statement. Also consider the number of "you" statements above. Shaming statements often have the element of harsh judgment, as do statements of control.

Inherent in good discipline (discipling) is teaching. Harsh judgments and control techniques are not elements of the gospel and God's love for sinners. Is this something we want to teach?

When I consider discipline techniques, I ask myself, "What is my ultimate goal?" "What characteristics do I wish this child to possess as an adult?" My discipline should demonstrate those attributes which I desire to instill. Would anyone consciously look at a child and think "I want you to be really good at shaming when you're big?"

The impact of shame clouds one's self-view, self-talk, fosters irrational expectations of oneself, and eventually produces bitterness and despair. "Fathers, do not exasperate your children, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Pr 22:6).

Think about the shaming statements you made to yourself. When you've forgotten a file, tripped on the sidewalk, overslept, do you consider yourself stupid? an idiot? "I should know better?" Well, of course, you know better. No one purposefully messes up their day. Thus we often struggle in our own lives to accept the consequences of our being human.

Friends were speaking to me about their concern for their child who was constantly calling himself "stupid." Hesitatingly, I asked them to think about their own behavior. What has the child seen or heard from his or her own parents? A dropped wrench when working on a cramped engine produces a "Klutz!" An intense week in which the house gets a bit disordered is followed by, "If I could only keep a clean house." What we may think of as humility is often self-deprecation.

The Greek translation of Leviticus 19:18 is, “Agape your neighbor as yourself.” Have God-like love for your neighbor as you have God-like love for yourself. God-like love is holy and unconditional. God-like love includes demonstrating a love that forgives. Here we have instruction to demonstrate God-like love for our neighbor and ourselves; we are not to think or speak about ourselves or our neighbor with disdain or hatred. There are many people in this world who struggle with accepting themselves because of their sin. I am in no way suggesting that we excuse sin. But when the Lord of the Universe has demonstrated his love and acceptance of us—of whom sin is a part—are we to reject what he has accepted? There is a difference between accepting oneself with our human limitations, and accepting sinful behavior. Guilt is our friend in that in acknowledging our sin we are then ready to seek God’s forgiveness. Shame paralyzes us and children. When our discipline teaches fear of retaliation and an atmosphere of, “I’ll stone you with my words” because a child has made a mistake, we need to consider again what it is we hope to accomplish.

Although adults are also receivers of shaming statements from others, we do not experience these as intensely as children. Picture yourself kneeling at the side of a chair while another adult stands on the chair scowling downward, pointing at you screaming “You’re stupid! How could you? It kills me when...” We sometimes forget the power which comes with size and vocabulary. This exercise recreates that feeling of being small. When the stream of negative statements is shooting at your soul you can again take of the role of a child. In working with junior and senior high students I have to remind myself of what they are not. While their body may grow beyond ours and their dress gives the impression of having it all together, consider how little it takes to reduce that maturing face into that of a child. I recall a seventh grader getting in my face to challenge a long established rule, my stepping forward to reply very sharply and curtly only to witness him visibly shrink. His face melted into that of the six-year-old I once knew. Grown up on the outside—still growing on the inside. I later apologized for coming on stronger than necessary in order to make my point. The point needed to be made, but not in the harsh manner in which I went about it.

Students can be masters at shaming language as well. In teaching them to consider “how” their words sound, I will ask them to listen as I repeat their statement matching their tone of voice and ask them if they can hear how well the word “stupid” fits with their sentence. We then work on identifying other ways of saying what needs to be said without the sound of shame included. This may require modeling voice tone to the child and then having them say the words aloud so they can hear the difference in their own voice.

It is the role of the parent and teacher to guide, nurture, and correct children. The manner in which we do this

also teaches those entrusted to our care. Discipline involves teaching. We discipline children so they can learn to demonstrate love for God, as well as avoid sin and its consequences. When we discipline, the lesson should not be lost. "What do we want the child to learn from this?"

Discipline often involves consequences. The consequences must fit the misbehavior. Punishment also has consequences but some of the consequences seem illogical for the offense: a broken window results in being sent to bed without dinner. A logical consequence and fitting discipline would require earning the money to replace the broken window. Arbitrary punishment teaches that big people can overpower smaller people. This is not a lesson of good discipline. This is often visible among students and siblings. Somewhere it has been learned that control is the goal rather than taking responsibility for one's actions. Elium (1992, 119) shares a story of a teen boy in counseling who was in trouble for bringing the car home two hours late. The boy said, "Mom revoked my television privileges for two weeks. That just made me mad! She should have taken away the car for a week, but don't tell her I said that." Children learn to respect good discipline and can appreciate it. I have heard countless stories of children in a quiet moment thanking their parents or teachers for being disciplined. Sometimes this quiet moment comes years later. The fact that the discipline was remembered tells me an impression was made.

I learned a huge lesson after having a tirade because my students were talking when I had asked them to be quiet. "Why can't you simply do what I asked? How many times have we talked about this? Why is this so difficult for you (stupid kids)?" One fourth grader quietly said, "It seems like you expect us to be perfect." He was right. I expected that once I shared my rules they should not need repeating. My unrealistic expectations had led them to exasperation and myself to frustration. This was one incident but reflected an overall impression I had established. I needed to adjust my discipline style and identify what I could do better to help them want to cooperate and obey my rules. Control wasn't cutting it. I may have had good order when I was present, but was I helping them to be self-disciplined?

When we lose our perspective of situations, it may be because we fear the children's behavior reflects on us personally. When this happens it is our own shame that we are fighting. As parents or professionals working with children (or adults), we can anticipate being disappointed at times. I recently heard a wonderful analogy. Consider our ultimate parent: all-knowing, all-loving, all-just, all-compassionate, the perfect father—our heavenly Father—and even his children rebel. We are less likely to be caught off-guard and stumble in our discipline when we can identify an opportunity to teach a lesson in self-control or decision making.

One summer day shortly after exiting the freeway, I saw a family in their

driveway. There was a father dressed casually, a mother who had just stepped out of the car holding her briefcase, and a boy about six years old straddling his bike. I could easily imagine the words being said, "Hey, Mom, watch!" The little guy began peddling down the driveway. As he curved to turn around, he lost his balance and had to stick his foot down. I looked up to see his mother beaming. Wow. What a lesson she was teaching him. But when our children stumble in their behavior, what do they see in us? Are we found nurturing or judgmental? A teenage boy comes to mind who stated, "When you are two and fall down, everyone laughs. They thought you were cute because you were trying something new. When you're a teen and you stumble—no one laughs. Suddenly it's not OK to make a mistake."

Children do need correction and this also is a parent's and teacher's responsibility. Correction, however, can be accomplished in a number of ways. Self-evaluation is one method in which a child who is old enough can identify the consequences of the behavior and consider how other responses would have altered the outcome. This process needs to be taught and this teaching occurs when an adult leads the conversation with questions. I believe when children are involved in the process of correction, self-correction can become a pattern of behavior. A confidence develops which empowers them to make choices independently. As children grow, this skill becomes increasingly important.

Avoiding shame-based discipline

What can we do to avoid shame-based discipline. Here are seven concepts which may help you avoid getting caught in a circular shaming pattern. These can help you to stay inside yourself when disciplining children. "Staying inside" refers to a separation of self from the child.

- *I vs. you statements*

Consider again the shaming statements above. "You're stupid." "How could you?" "It kills me when you...." "Why must you always get so dirty?"

On the other hand, the use of "I" statements invites conversation and provides opportunity for understanding: "I don't understand your decision. I have told you what I expect and your behavior went against that." Granted, there are times when behaviors need to stopped immediately to ensure safety. But I have found that children who trust that you do listen and weigh their perspective are much quicker to respond also to direct commands when necessary.

- *Get past the anger*

When adults deal with uncooperative children they often experience or receive anger. Discovering the source of the anger goes a long way in exploring solutions to the situation. Anger can be broken down into two sources. When we experience anger toward someone or a situation it is most often because we feel hurt or afraid. When a "once again" child runs into the street without looking, my anger is rooted in fear for his safety. When homework is

not done "again today," I fear for her future success and use of God-given talents. Witnessing one group of children torment another hurts me. When I can identify for my students the source of my anger, and explain that it is the consequence of that behavior that concerns me more than the behavior itself, they view my anger in a broader sense. I am also teaching them that behaviors have consequences to be considered preparing them for future choices they will need to make.

When I am on the receiving or witnessing end of a child's anger, I work to focus on two things. I encourage kids that while I will listen to their perspective, they need to communicate those feelings in a manner in keeping with the Fourth Commandment. Secondly, viewing a child's or adult's rage as an immature expression of deep caring places me in a position of guiding them to identify the source of their anger. Discussing an outburst at a later time can also allow for a more honest evaluation and reduce feelings of defensiveness.

● *Validate feelings*

Adults can help children when they deal honestly with their own emotions. Adults can also teach children to do the same. Adults can encourage and allow children to state honestly how they are feeling and help them understand that emotions can also be irrational.

The adult has to separate emotionally from the child's behavior. We cannot get caught in the trap of thinking their behavior controls ours. We must own our responses to situations rather than blaming the child. We need to know what is behind our emotion, to name it, and to deal with it.

In helping the child, we need not always understand or agree with their emotion. Children must learn how to name feelings. The intensity with which they feel is often bigger than their body and they do not always have the words to identify what is happening. We can help by giving them the language to name what they feel is happening. Providing a list of possible emotions which fit the situation and allowing them to choose what best describes how they see it is one way. "Are you feeling hurt, confused, or lonely?" Once an emotion is identified, validating that emotion can help them to know that at least you understand how they see the situation. You don't have to agree. "I, too, would be hurt if I saw this situation the way you've described it." Once you have established that you understand their viewpoint, you can move to evaluating the behavior and where perhaps a mistake was made.

● *Sharing your feelings builds intimacy*

Modeling concern, a desire to understand not judge, love for the sinner not the sin, all these teach more loudly than just telling. Appropriate disclosure of emotion requires that children are not placed in the position of becoming the dumping grounds of adult emotion—the sole recipients of our emotional trust. That being said, however, adults are in a position to teach that understanding and dealing with emotions is one more aspect of appreciating God's creation. Emotions are what connect

us. A colleague recently made a statement that emphasizes this point: "It's not just about emotion. It's about head and it's about heart." When we connect head and heart we can identify the emotion and move toward understanding it. Situations which evoke emotions are a natural setting to teach.

Finally, researchers are beginning to say again that quantity time is just as important as quality time with children. It is by being with you hour upon hour, day upon day, that children learn who you really are. How do you respond to situations? How do you handle frustrations? How do you react to confusion? What do you expect of yourself and what should they expect of themselves?

- D*iscuss optio~~n~~help problem solve*

If children are to identify and avoid tendencies toward negative behavior, they must first know of alternatives. Again, this needs to be taught. In teaching I sometimes got the impression that adults think kids were born with responsibility. I catch myself thinking that way when frustrated. We can't simply give a child a bulletin board, hang their book report sheet on it, and expect we're done for the year. It may take reminding of how to use that board before it becomes part of the child.

Children are not always aware that they have options to situations. Depending on the situation the options will be more or less obvious. By providing viable options with both positive and negative results, we can help develop the process of choice-making. Asking the child to state additional ways they could have responded and then evaluating the results of those options walks them through the process. In time the process becomes natural to the child. For the student struggling with homework one option would be to make absolutely no changes—then consider the results of that choice together. Kids will often talk themselves right into the choice you also desire; thus they convince themselves rather than feeling coerced.

I will often allow students to select their own discipline from options I give them. At first they often resist because they would rather be angry with me if I select the consequence. When they choose it, they have to take ownership for any discomfort. Ownership for the misbehavior and repentance is my goal, not punishment or control.

- *Follow through on consequences*

When it is necessary to discipline, trust is established when adults "mean what they say and say what they mean." If we fail to follow through on stated consequences, children become confused when the line of expectation is shifting or sliding around. Consistency is being fair. The younger the child the more immediate the consequences need to be. Here is how I helped one of my classes understand consistency.

When I taught in a multi-grade setting, I had the benefit that my returning students helped establish the atmosphere of my classroom each fall. Little did I realize how easy this had made my job. When our school grew, I received an entirely new group of students. My expectations were the same, but this group didn't get it; although I told

them repeatedly in the first forty-five minutes of the first day what I expected, my words had little impact. I had not felt that kind of frustration since my first year. Just before walking out, never to return, I went to the front of the room and asked for a volunteer. I had thirty-one eager hands. I described my plan to the young man I chose and he said he fully understood. I told him I would draw a line on the chalkboard and he would have to put a check mark to the left of that line. "Easy," he thought. But rather than a single line I drew a broken line scattering segments inches apart down the chalkboard. He froze. I told him to give it his best. He walked way to the left side of board and made a small check. I asked him to stay and do it again. This time I drew one straight line from the top to the bottom. He smiled, walked right up next to it, and drew a big solid check mark. I informed the class again of my rule for talking. If I broke or moved the line, they were not sure where they stood and I would be confusing them. They could expect that I meant what I said the rule (the line) was solid. If they should cross it, they could expect a consequence. It wouldn't mean that I was angry or hated them, simply that they crossed the line and it was up to me to make sure that line didn't get confusing. The best part of the whole exercise was that they were all smiling (partly because they saw the point of this crazy exercise) but mostly because they felt safe—we had reached an understanding.

● *Share your faith*

When we share with children our challenges, our hopes, our uncertainties, our reliance upon our Savior God and his promises, we show children that God is very real for us; he is not just someone in long-ago stories. When we as adults are authentic when our faith strengthens as well as when it is challenged, I believe we help those around us also to assume the challenge.

My first call was to serve as an emergency teacher. I had one week in this classroom with the teacher I was relieving before these first through third graders would be mine. She taught me a wonderful lesson. With tears in her eyes, she shared with me the song we were about to sing was one of her favorites following her mom's death. "Home, Going Home" became more than a Friday morning song to those students. It was transformed to a testimony of faith in the promises of God.

In Psalm 13 David gives an incredible example of speaking honestly to the Lord. He asks repeatedly how long he will be forgotten and left in his confusing thoughts. He

concludes with his trust in God's unfailing love. Honesty and trust are wrapped together, conflicting at first, with trust winning out in spite of David's lack of understanding. We are not told that God relieved David's confusion. Wrestling with our thoughts does not diminish our faith, rather it calls us to trust in God even more. Helping our students turn to God and trust him when life doesn't make sense, rather than simply giving the impression that "had they more faith they wouldn't struggle or hurt," builds trust in God and honest reliance upon him. The apostle Paul said, "Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But, one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." (Php 3:13,14)

Conclusion

When I consider how Jesus interacted with his disciples during his ministry, I see him having to repeat himself to those who witnessed his miracles firsthand. He was at times confused by their slowness. Today we have opportunities to give our children words of life as well as words of death. The manner in which we speak those words can also make them words of life or words of death. If they cannot see gentleness in us, how will they identify it in the God of whom we speak? Being in control of our words and reactions is vital to our instruction. The consequences of not understanding our interactions with children and youth can have crippling implications for them. They are ours for but a short time. Identifying shame is one place to begin. "But Jesus called the children to him and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.'" (Luke 18:16)

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MUSIC

Watercolour Ponies by Wayne Watson
Let the Children Come by Michael Card
I'll Be Your Hands by River

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Divine Details

Ramona Czer

Dear Teachers,

I just put away my collection of Christmas letters again, tucking them into a box until next year. I love these long, newsy form letters from family and friends, and I always think I'll reread them too, commenting on Aunt Lu's back surgery or young Deidre's decision to get a tattoo, celebrating a birth never heard about or a job promotion long deserved. Yet I rarely do. Life gets busy, and suddenly it's two months later and my silence embarrasses me. Still, they matter, every tiny detail, triumphant or mournful shared, and long afterwards I muse on what I've learned.

And yes, I often write such form Christmas letters, the long kind with each child getting his or her own paragraph, full of stories and statistics, chaff and wheat. Are you glad you're not on my recipient list? Well, maybe you should be! And if you write one, I should be on your list too. Why? Because I fear we don't know much about each other, not enough to help us care.

How can you tell when a person truly cares about you? Does she remember your birthday? Can he recall your children's or grandchildren's names—and their birth order? Does she fix your coffee just the way you like it without asking? Can he recall your late husband's favorite hymn and why? Little things, right? But somehow they matter.

Nabokov, when asked to advise beginning writers, said, "Caress the divine details." Sprawling plots, a cast of thousands, amazing techno-wizardry may seem to wow us, but it's the tiniest details—a woman's dimple, a torn flag, a dripping showerhead—that linger in the mind. Details make us into believers in a fantasy world, and they also help us celebrate God's creation and the uniqueness of each person we encounter.

An Ann Landers column in November made me wonder once again, "Should I drop my form letters?" A woman wrote in begging people not in indulge in "those ghastly Christmas letters" because they don't show consideration for people like her who won't get a surprise Lexus for Christmas (her

1992 Chevy needs fixing and may not last the winter) or whose children won't get into Harvard (hers will be lucky to graduate from the local community college).

All I'd wanted to do was share who we are to my friends and family, give updates on what we're doing and becoming, and now suddenly I'm tied up in knots. Everything I say can and probably will be held against me. If I share about finally getting a permanent teaching position I love, what if someone reads it who's just lost his job? If I describe the fun of watching my two daughters play varsity ball, what if I hurt a young person's feelings because she'll never make a high school team?

But then I read on to where the woman said, "Just let us know in a handwritten note that your family is well and doing something useful." Now I get it—all this woman wants is a short, noncommittal, "We're still alive" kind of message because then she won't have to be involved in the lives of others, she won't have to remember any details, and she won't have to endure her own jealous and inadequate feelings aroused by their lives. How good a friend must this woman be to this family if she doesn't want to know about and rejoice in their good fortune? How sure of her own values is she if she can become so easily miffed by the pride of others? Yes, life is much more than the goods we acquire and the things we accomplish, but it's difficult to share with people our deeper feelings and goals if they seemed bored with the daily parts of our lives.

Friendship is about sharing the little things, about becoming vulnerable and giving information, and about seeking information from others about their inner and outer lives as well. And that's what Christian fellowship should also be about. If we don't know the details, the messy sad parts as well as the triumphant successes of our fellow Christians' lives, how can we pray about them, how can we help or celebrate with them? I think we're supposed to know what's going on each other lives intimately—who's ill and who's getting straight A's—and if we don't, then that's a huge flaw in the way we're interacting.

Why are we so intensely private as church members? The other day I found out that a woman had died who worked at the college where my husband teaches, and I hadn't even known she was sick. Why are we so hesitant to communicate with each other? How can we offer up our voices in prayer for someone if their problems are never shared? And why do we hesitate to tell others of our triumphs, a doctorate finally earned, a book published—are we afraid it's bragging? If God is truly working in and through us, as we claim we believe, how can it be bragging—it would be giving him glory, right?

To combat this private tendency in us, I suggest we write annual letters to each other, and at the beginning of a new year seems an excellent time to start. Yes, I know this is a pretty strange idea, but hear me out. I learned of something like this that a Kindergarten teacher does. She asked the parent(s)

of her incoming children to send along a letter to her about them. It amazed her how detailed and truly honest and passionate most of these letters were. Parents seemed thrilled that someone finally asked them to share information about their precious children—and they gushed accordingly.

Not only would you find about us, as individuals and the family as a whole, but you'd have to write a long newsy letter back, and we'd learn about you. I have no idea when your birthday is or what you like to read or what your dreams for the future may be, and I'd like to. Do you own a dog or a cat? Do you play the harmonica? Have you decided to pursue a degree? Where have you traveled and where do you hope to go in the future? Do you drive a jeep or a Honda? Some of this stuff I know—or think I do—but I suspect you'll treat me to many surprises, and I can't wait. Conversations galore will bud from this information, and before we know it, we'll know and like each other more.

Is it vital for us to become closer for the work of the Lord to progress, for children to learn? Probably not. But maybe the divine details we gather from each other will help convince our children that we truly love them and want to know these people we have entrusted with their care and that you in turn care about them beyond the classroom. Nobody's "just average" as the woman said of herself to Ann Landers—we're all one-of-a-kind, and with a little caressing, perhaps we'll finally believe it.

A Mother and Friend-in-Waiting

Ramona Czer teaches at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minnesota.

WELS 2001 National Teachers Convention

- The WELS National Teachers Convention will be held June 26-29, 2001.
- Watch for further announcements and notices.

Comparing Two Methods of Instruction: Traditional Grammar and the Writing Workshop

Part I: The Pros and Cons of Traditional Grammar Instruction

Jane A. Price

HAVE YOU HEARD THIS ONE?

Question: How many WELS teachers does it take to change a light bulb?

Answer: Change?

I thought it was pretty funny the first time I heard it, but then again, maybe it isn't so funny. It's not so funny when we're all comfy in our classroom and someone comes along and says, "Hey, we should do it this way once." Change can make parents nervous too. Parents of students in the fifth and sixth grade self-contained classroom of Trinity Lutheran School were concerned when I, a new staff member, wanted to depart from tradition by teaching language and writing skills without the usual textbook as the main focus of the curriculum. Called the writing workshop approach, this method of instruction focuses on daily writing, with traditional grammar instruction presented in mini-lessons related to the writing activities. When the new approach was tried, there were objections. Some parents worried that their children would not be ready for the lessons of the seventh grade text if they had not used the previous texts. Other parents were convinced that fifth graders should not be learning the same lessons as sixth graders. In order for the parents to be at ease with their children's learning, it became necessary for me to abandon my initial plans of combining

approach with the traditional grammar approach and simply teach grammar from the prescribed textbook as had been done in the past. Because of this limitation, I was concerned that exclusive use of the traditional text would adversely affect my students by not allowing them the many opportunities to practice writing in activities that would reinforce and even enhance their

language skills. Suddenly I was the uncomfortable one, required to change back to a more traditional instruction method.

Is there a difference in the outcomes when students are taught with a traditional grammar-based language instruction as compared to a writing workshop approach which includes grammar instruction? Will children be ready to adapt to a grammar text in seventh grade if they have not completed specific exercises in the previous texts? Will a writing workshop approach really enhance writing skills and still provide sufficient opportunity for developing traditional grammar?

My disappointment in being required to change led to a wonderful opportunity to study these listed questions in a master's project through the Education Department of Southwest State University in Marshall, Minnesota. I would like to relate parts of that study because it was a positive experience for everyone involved, teaching a lesson about change. In this and a following article, I hope to encourage teachers who use the writing workshop approach and to pique the interest of teachers of traditional grammar; perhaps they might take another took at the not-so-new idea of writing workshop.

Hypothesis

This study was designed to prove one of two hypotheses: (1) Students who are taught language skills with a writing workshop approach will score at the same levels of language abilities on both standardized grammar tests and writing projects as students who are taught using only a traditional grammar approach. (2) Students who are taught language skills with a writing workshop approach will score at higher levels of language abilities on both standardized grammar tests and writing projects as students who are taught using only a traditional grammar approach.

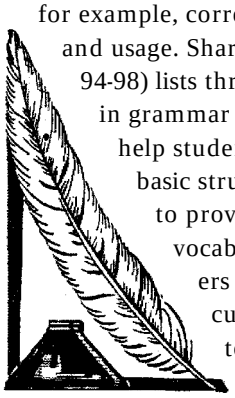
Benefits of grammar instruction

The traditional grammar approach is the teaching of the English language according to the component instruction model, that is, teaching concepts by separating the whole into its parts and presenting isolated parts in logical sequence. This is normally carried out through direct instruction, such as defining and drilling the concepts apart from real-life applications. The approach includes standardized testing throughout to evaluate the progress of students in their language skills. The desired final product is a student who can use the language in standard form both orally and in writing. Instruction often includes fill-in-the-blank assignments, without much time spent on individual writing.

In 1982 the National Council of Teachers of English published a brochure entitled "Essentials of English" (NCTE 1982). The NCTE stated that the study of the English language includes the development of its use as a basic means of communication, leading to the highest level of which the

human being is capable. The use of English involves the skill of speaking and writing to the extent that it can support an individual's abilities to become self-sufficient and to lead a productive life. The council stated that children acquire language at an early stage and internalize much of their grammar skills through use well before formal training in school begins. Classroom instruction can make students aware of the function of language, helping them control and use it in increasingly effective ways, possibly making language study the single most important means to realize the overarching goal of education, developing informed, thinking citizens. The document concluded by stating that competency in English is a means by which the individual can acquire self-sufficiency and work independently in all disciplines.

Researchers have found benefits in functional grammar instruction. George Hillocks (1986) calls for the study of grammar, not to increase the quality of writing, but to provide an understanding of traditional grammatical concepts which are necessary in attending to the mechanics of writing—for example, correct punctuation and usage. Sharon Taylor (1986, 94-98) lists three goals valuable in grammar curriculum: to help students understand the basic structure of language, to provide a common vocabulary when teachers and students discuss language, and to give students increasing competence in using language.



Researchers like Lucy Calkins, who strongly promotes the writing workshop approach, also see the need for teaching functional grammar. In viewing students' papers filled with mechanical errors, Calkins (1986) states that the content of such papers is difficult to appreciate, the errors impossible to overlook. Even the students themselves want to write correctly and desire direct instruction in functional grammar. Emphasizing creative writing alone does not teach the components of writing. When student writers see the effect their work has on their audiences, then syntax, spelling, penmanship, and the use of mechanics begin to have value to them. And as they begin to see themselves as writers, they will notice the conventions of written language.

Limitations of traditional grammar instruction

The quality of correctness in presentation partly determines the value of writing, and a knowledge of the use of components of functional grammar is necessary in good writing. There are standardized conventions of mechanics such as spelling, usage, and grammar. The degree to which a writer follows these conventions often measures the strength of his message. Alan Weber (1996) describes formal grammar as an abstract sets of rules that, when followed, make language meaningful. But its accompanying activities of identifying parts of speech and diagramming

sentences have little relationship to the writing process. The labels and language of grammar, found in component instruction, can get in the way of teaching writing.

Calkins (1986) observed two groups of third grade students receiving language arts instruction differently, one through traditional grammar instruction, and the other through writing workshop. When she asked them about punctuation symbols, the children who studied punctuation through classwork, drills, and tests were able to define or explain an average of about four (3.85) kinds of punctuation. Not surprising to those who promote the value of a writing workshop approach, the students in the second group were able to define or explain more than twice that number (8.66) of punctuation marks. Calkins concludes that students certainly need to learn grammar to help edit their work. But Calkins points to a natural learning process in which, just as children learn to distinguish between cats and dogs without being taught, young writers learn spelling, punctuation, and other grammatical concepts not through defining and drilling, but through talking about their own writing.

Loss of creativity can be a result when language is taught with the traditional approach. Graves and Stuart (1985) report that most schoolwork requires students to search for the one "right" answer. The repetition of that process hundreds or thousands of times effectively trains students to become convergent rather than divergent thinkers; they seek safe and predictable answers, shunning alternatives. Conversely, divergent thought is the foundation of creativity, the source of new ideas, a handy tool not to be neglected in the classroom. In general, the assessments often used in traditional grammar instruction require convergent thought.

There are some who feel traditional grammar instruction is misplaced if it replaces writing instruction. Graves and Stuart (1985) concluded that beginning in 1906, study after study has shown that knowledge of grammar fails to correlate with an ability to interpret literature, to learn a foreign language, or to write or speak well. Hillocks (cited in Newkirk and Atwell, 1988) made a sharp plea to end the study of traditional grammar: "School boards, administrators, and teachers who impose the systematic study of traditional grammar on their students over lengthy periods of time in the name of teaching writing do them a gross disservice which should not be tolerated by anyone concerned with the effective teaching of good writing."

Graves and Stuart (1985) also criticize the traditional grammar approach and its use of the component model. In the component model, the end—learning to write—is meant to justify the means—drilling isolated skills. But the means too easily become the end, and children schooled in this approach come to dislike the activities for which they are so arduously prepared. The effects of this fill-in-the-blank mentality on students encourages them to expect simple, one-step solutions to problems.

The writing workshop is more suitable to provide the opportunities missing in component instruction.

Students studying the components of grammar in isolation from writing do not automatically make application of grammar skills in their own writing for several reasons. Graves and Stuart (1985) write that the formal study of grammar may have intrinsic value, but it should not be confused with writing instruction or allowed to usurp writing time. Traditional exercises often fail to enhance students' ability to write or even to understand grammar. Time-consuming drills prevent students from getting needed practice in writing. And most grammar exercises remove words from the contexts that make them meaningful and interesting, thereby weakening motivation. Isolated drills divorce instruction from the largely intuitive but substantial knowledge of grammar that all competent speakers possess.

The research of Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer (1963) drew a strong conclusion in unqualified terms: "The teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing."

In a review of some 2000 research studies from 1963-1982. Hillocks concluded:

> In short, the findings of research on the composing process give us no reason to expect the study of grammar or mechanics to have any substantial effect on the writing process or on writing ability. Experimental studies show that they have little or none. These findings have been consistent for many years. (1986, 24)

Giacobbe (cited in Newkirk and Atwell, 1988) added strength to the argument for departing from grammar textbook instruction by examining eight different language arts textbooks in use around the country. She collected data from the third and fifth grade texts of each series. Although there were some differences in textbooks, they generally defined writing as transcribing and copying, paraphrasing and summarizing, and crafting. The publishers of these books presented students with tasks that have definite solutions and answers, and expected young writers to perform in ways that conform to the expectations of authorities, in this case, the publishers. The nature of the activities presented made evaluation easy: The teacher checks to see if the writing was right or wrong.

Giacobbe found that in fifth grade texts, three percent of the time is spent on authoring, and no authoring is allowed for in six of the books. In the four books that do provide opportunities for authoring, the amount of writing opportunities range from as low as two to only fourteen percent. In brief, it seems that most of the kinds of writing students do in the individual textbooks falls into three categories: crafting, copying, and summarizing. There seems to be a consensus among publishers that writing does not include authoring.

The conclusion is clear: although publishers are in agreement as to what writing is, their definition has little to do with what researchers have discovered about the composing process. Publishers fall far short in their claim to support recent research on writing as a process. While they do use the terminology of prewriting, writing, and rewriting, they ignore the recursive nature of composing by providing rigid step-by-step plans and guidelines, with all students proceeding through these steps at the same rate. All of this conflicts with research that demonstrates the differences in writers and how they view audience and purpose of writing, showing writing to be a highly complex, problem solving process for each individual.

Faithful teachers will not want to ignore what research clearly shows. Teaching grammar is certainly important and necessary in our classrooms, but we do our children a disservice if grammar instruction displaces opportunities for students to learn to express themselves through written language.

(To be continued.)

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Memory Work or Memory Treasures?

Owen A. Dorn

MEMORY WORK IS a pain. You've heard it. You've seen it. Frustrated students reciting again and again until they get it just right. Bored teachers listening for hours on end. Exasperated parents grudgingly drilling, drilling. Memory work is a pain!

But teachers asked us to speak of memory *treasures*, not memory *work*, in the new *Christ-Light*® religion curriculum. They wanted children to *treasure* the gems of God's Word that they memorize.

Memory *treasures* are a joy! You've heard it. You've seen it. Excited students telling others the Word they've learned. Enthusiastic teachers motivating, guiding, patiently listening. Supportive parents discussing God's Word with their children. Memory *treasures* are a joy!

Teachers not only want children to know the meaning of God's Word, but to commit it to memory so it is nestled in their minds and hearts when they need it in life. And they want the process of memorizing to be a joy—for everybody involved. So how do they accomplish that? Here are six ways to move from memory work to memory treasures.

- *Teach memory treasures in context.*

Give the students connections. Help them understand the biblical context of a passage by sharing the Scripture that surrounds it. Or, as in *Christ-Light*®, teach how the passage relates to the truth of the Bible lesson being taught.

Example: When teaching "The Parable of the Loving Samaritan," teach Matthew 22:39b, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Remind the students that in both this parable and the passage, God is teaching us to see all people as his children, as people we should lovingly serve.

- *Assign a limited number of memory treasures.*

Students can become "turned off" to God's Word if they have to spend mega-time memorizing and reciting—families have less time to interact about the truths of God's Word, and teachers lose valuable teaching time.

Select a limited number of memory treasures and review often. Slowly add new memory treasures as students progress through the grades and continue reviewing previously learned treasures. Set a pace that works for your

It is important that students view memory selections as treasures rather than work.

class—a pace that won't require excessive time memorizing and reciting. This approach can foster a positive attitude towards memorization and enhance retention.

- *Don't grade memorization.*

Many teachers give students a "memory work" grade. Some grade by the number of mistakes students make. Some consider the number of times students attempt to recite. Others factor in the amount of effort students seem to exert.

All that is really important is that students know the assigned memory treasures; not the number of times they tried before learning them—or whether they recited them with A, B, or C quality. Perhaps all teachers need to do is set a standard—"miss no more than one or two words"—and check "completed" when the students have met that standard. Goal accomplished?

Teachers should also note that, in *Christ-Light*®, core memory treasures come up several times during the school years. So the standard chosen doesn't have to be perfection; if students don't learn a memory treasure perfectly the first time, they will get another chance.

- *Consider individual needs, frustration levels.*

Some teachers feel it is unfair to set individual standards for memorization—if one student must recite perfectly all that has been assigned, so must they all. Most teachers make some allowances for the very slow learner and for the transfer student who has not learned the art of memorization. Should other individual differences be considered? What about students with short attention spans? who are easily distracted? who quickly lose interest in repetitive tasks?

Can teachers find effective ways for these students to memorize in smaller pieces? reduce distractions? learn in a less repetitive manner?

- *Find interesting ways to memorize and recite.*

Regularly use a variety of interesting and stimulating activities to help students learn assigned memory treasures. The more students work with a specific memory treasure, the better they will commit it to memory—without even realizing it. Consider the following activities condensed from *Christ-Light*®

lessons:

- When retelling a Bible story, sing the related hymn stanza as you teach the Key Point to which it applies.
- Have students make a poster depicting the truth of the Third Commandment (hearing the Word at home, at school, and in church).
- Put the words of the Third Commandment on a scroll (paper wrapped around a cardboard tube), partially unroll it, and have the students recite the words that are still hidden.
- Have students use actions to help them memorize John 3:16.
- Have students write Mark 16:15 as a rebus sentence.
- Have groups of students recite the petitions of the Lord's Prayer sequentially. Randomly point to a different group, cueing that group to recite the next petition of the Lord's Prayer.
- Write each word of a memory treasure on a separate index card. Give the cards randomly to individual students. Ask them to line up in front of the room with the words in order.
- Write a memory treasure on a stiff piece of paper and cut the paper into a puzzle. Have students put the puzzle together.
- Have students make mobiles depicting a memory treasure.
- Play the eraser game. Alternately erase a word, then have students recite the memory treasure. Continue until all the words have been erased.
- Have each student design a heart-flower to reinforce the learning of 1 John 4:19. (Write one word of the passage on each petal.)

● *Train parents to help children.*

Teachers don't have time in the school day to work as extensively with memory treasures as they might like. So give parents the opportunity as well. Help them make memorization at home a pleasant experience for students. Encourage—and even train—parents to use the same techniques used in school. Parents also have unique opportunities teachers don't have: family members can discuss, sing, or recite memory treasures while traveling to and from family events, while doing dishes, while working in the yard, while....

It's difficult to make the transition from thinking in terms of memory *work* to memory *treasures*. But it is important that students view memory selections as *treasures* rather than *work*. Obviously, teachers can't make memorization all fun and games—there will always be some "work" involved. And teachers can't always expect students to respond to their "stimulating" teaching methods—they can't eliminate the Old Adam. But teachers can develop a memory treasure mind-set. They will then continue to look for ways to make memory treasures a joy for students.

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Service-Learning in the Lutheran School Curriculum

John R. Freese
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THE CONCEPT OF service-learning is gaining popularity and significance among educators and communities. In some ways, this may be yet another program that will come and go as far too many education fads have in the past. In other ways, service-learning may be a tried and true educational effort that has a long history of value and an inspired scriptural basis. To the latter point, any number of our schools no doubt already are involved in a multitude of service-learning activities; we just may not be aware of the terminology or the growing interest in this type of learning. In this article we will examine the concept of service-learning and discuss its relevance within the Lutheran school curriculum.

> *Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess,*
> *For He who promised is faithful.*
> *And let us consider how we may spur one another on*
> *Toward love and good deeds.*
> (Heb 10: 23-24)

Definitions

First of all what is service-learning? According to Rahima Wade, a professor of education at the University of Iowa and a strong advocate in the study and encouragement of secular service-learning, it is a deliberative effort to connect classroom instruction with non-paid opportunities to work on needs within the local community. The scope is as limitless as the needs to be found in the community. Examples could be, but are in no way limited to, secondary students helping elderly neighbors wash their car, clean house, mow the lawn, rake leaves, shovel snow, or paint. Children in the third and fourth grades might pick up litter in a local park. Students in the fifth and sixth grades could possibly organize a food drive, collect non-perishables, sort products into boxes, and distribute goods at a community center. Perhaps first and second grade children could make cards for shut-ins and residents in nursing homes, or sing at a near-by hospital a number of songs they have already learned. Students in seventh and eighth grades might collect gloves and coats for the needy to use during winter. School parents and faculty may assist in community literacy programs. In all these examples, and in a myriad of other possibilities, students would learn and model valuable lessons by working with and serving others.

Secondly, we should consider the curriculum. Webster defines curricu-

lum as "the aggregate of courses of study, or the regular or particular course of study, in a school." Most of us would probably feel comfortable with this as a starting point. However, in a rather dated but still refreshingly irreverent book, Neil Postman and Charles Weigartner (1973) offer several interesting observations on the curriculum:

> Frequently, a progressive school will dazzle its PTA with a fireworks display...proclaiming some new course of study constitutes a...relevant new curriculum. When this happens, duck.
>
> Sans mumbo jumbo, a relevant curriculum would be a program of study that is extremely interesting to students. Most commonly, a curriculum is a random collection of subjects, tenuously alleged to have something to do with culture or education.
>
> According to some school critics...no school curriculum...has the impact on children's lives that the "hidden curriculum" of the school has... In other words, the particular conventions used to order the lives of students are insignificant when compared with the basic fact that the children are supervised and evaluated, that their time and activities are structured, and so on.... The message of the hidden curriculum is that school is for the purpose of processing children so that they can fit into society. So what else is new?

Using one of these latter points—specifically "school is for the purpose of processing children so that they can fit into society"—and ignoring the blatant cynicism, how do we in Lutheran schools "process" children and into what "society" are we attempting to "fit" them? Using the means of grace in the Word, and relying upon the Holy Spirit to work and strengthen faith, our Lutheran schools feed—not process—God's lambs and lead—not fit—these souls with the sure hope of eternal life in heaven. The intent of this article is not to describe the Lutheran school curriculum as simply a cognitive endeavor such as memorizing numerous passages or providing excellent reading and math instruction, although those are certainly valuable and ought to be done. Nor is this article promoting an exclusively affective or behavioral approach to service-learning as mere civic righteousness, although there is certainly nothing improper with Lutheran schools encouraging piety. In this article, service-learning in the Lutheran school curriculum is the intentional, school planned and supervised effort to encourage faculty, parents, and students to serve Christ, out of love for him, by physically and spiritually learning to care for others. This is not social gospel or trying to establish heaven on earth; this is not work righteousness or trying to earn our way into heaven. This is learning that serving "the least of these" is serving Christ, and that the Lutheran school can facilitate this opportunity as part of its mission.

> *"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat,*

I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink
I was a stranger and you invited me in,
I needed clothes and you clothed me,
I was sick and you looked after me."
Then the righteous will answer him,
"Lord, when...?"
The King will reply, "I tell you the truth,
What you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine
You did for me."

(Mt 25:35-40)

Examples

Our Lutheran schools are wonderful mission tools, laboratories for the Word of God to be applied in the lives of souls bought by Christ, and that includes *all* the community and all the congregation, not just the children of young to middle-aged members. This must be increasingly emphasized. Otherwise, our schools run the risk of becoming separated from the community and the congregation—or worse, viewed by some called workers and lay members as pricey private schools that emphasize only academics and are irrelevant in the "real" work of the church. This danger is all too real, and in some congregations this tragic misperception has already occurred.

Service-learning is one means by which Lutheran schools can study God's love for us in the gospel, Christ Jesus and his perfect sacrifice to take away our sins, and carry that love in word and deed to others. Service-learning is one opportunity for our schools, which sometime all too often appear to be segregated, even hidden, from the local community, to apply what is learned not just in Word of God classes but also in history and in literature and in all the subjects in our curriculum, and carry those truths out to others. Through deeds, and certainly through clear proclamation of God's Word, students and parents and faculty and members of the congregation can be the light and salt that Christ has proclaimed us to be (Mt 5:13-16; Mk 4:21; Lk 11:33) in a world of sin and suffering. The words of Jesus, "In the same way, let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Mt 5:16), seem particularly relevant.

Service-learning can be a natural extension of

other curricular endeavors. Connections to reading, math, science, art, music, history, and health abound. Furthermore, service-learning need not be yet another "issue" wrapped into the already over-crowded school load, or a "good idea" learned in isolation. This concept can be incorporated as a culminating project in an already developed unit, or as an alternative activity to assignments, papers, or tests. Following are two simple, yet effective, service-learning examples.

Instead of teaching an isolated unit on nutrition and health, have the school organize a food collection, have children sort products based upon the food pyramid, and have children, teachers, and other members of the congregation deliver packages, during the school day, to shut-ins of the entire community. Shut-ins who are members can hear a devotion delivered by students, sing along with familiar songs that praise God, and enjoy Christian fellowship. Non-members in the community can hear a Law and gospel message as well as receive food for the body. In return, children can experience group work, understand the importance of nutrition, even learn oral history by asking questions about the Great Depression or World War II. More importantly, everyone involved would have the pleasure of sharing needed goods, caring love, and God's Word. This activity would integrate several important curricular components; it could be done as a change of pace instead of opening a book, reading the next section, and answering four or so questions; and it would bring God's Word into the lives of everyone concerned.

Encourage students to plant flowers, or a vegetable garden, on available ground near school. Have them research and plan the items to be grown. Have them work the soil, plant, and care for the results. Invite in community clubs and the congregational membership to help, or see what has been done, or teach, or learn about the various organisms present. Write up the activity for the local paper and invite people to visit during the school day and pick flowers or take produce home. In all verbal and written communication, have the children present their plans and efforts. Finally, have the children witness to the glory of God in what has been done, how he creates, and how he provides. Such a project provides real service to the community. Children will learn many integrated lessons. A love for a worthwhile lifelong physical activity may be kindled. Best of all, God will be glorified.

In these, and thousands of other possibilities, the opportunity to reach out into the congregation and the community with physical service and God's Word will be encouraged. In the writers' opinion, the children should have the regular occasion to take ownership of this process, to vote on and select projects, not just do the "grunt" work on projects adults have selected for them. Such ownership will encourage and enable planning, research, studying, physical effort, working with others, communicating, and witnessing.

Therefore, as we have opportunity,
Let us do good to all people,
Especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

(Gal 6: 10)

Evaluation

Service-learning is not going to be like taking a 25-point multiple choice test after the next social studies chapter. Here we have an encouragement to avoid our strong tradition and natural inclination of assigning percentages and grades. Not every class or individual activity requires a letter or numerical grade. Service-learning lends itself to other types of assessment. Having students keep a journal or producing a video could be a valid assessment activity. Pictures along the way would demonstrate the effort and physical results, and at the same time provide the benefit of having a bulletin board practically make itself. Have the students interview the people they worked with for their comments and observations. Save letters of thanks. Be as creative with evaluation as with service-learning itself.

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking,
But of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,
Because anyone who serves Christ in this way
Is pleasing to God and approved by men.
Let us therefore make every effort to do
What leads to peace and mutual edification.

(Ro 14:17-19)

Conclusion

Service-learning seems to be an activity that has merit. Secular society certainly appears to be recognizing and encouraging it, but for all the wrong reasons. Lutheran schools legitimately can use this learning experience not only to promote integrated academic outcomes and affective values, but, most importantly, to provide the means by which the Holy spirit can bring spiritual treasures to our students.

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.
Honor one another above yourselves.
Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.
Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.
Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

(Ro 12:10-13)

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REVIEWS

Dowley, Tim, ed. *Atlas of the Bible and Christianity*. Grand Rapids MI:Baker Books, 1997.

Anyone who has used previous books edited by Tim Dowley, such as *Eerdmanns Handbook of the Bible*, will pick up this book with high expectations. In general, they will not be disappointed. The book has English origins, and Dowley has three excellent editorial consultants — Alan Millard on biblical matters, David Wright on church history, and Brian Stanley on mission history. The concept was to combine a Bible atlas with an atlas of church history and maps of the world's current religious situation.

The general reader will find the maps to be colorful, easy-to-read, and covering most of the subjects one might expect. Only occasionally is one disappointed: the block map of Israel's topography (p. 8) and that of the Sea of Galilee (pp. 62-63) do not communicate visually as well as similar maps (pp. 21, 32). The additional color pictures add variety, but seldom much substance for the user, and at times are either of very poor quality (pp. 26, 3 6, 46, 7 1), poorly chosen (p. 19, 43, 48, 60, 72, 110, 120, 141), or of inadequate size (p. 22, 57). The text is accurate and concise, perhaps overly concise for many readers. Since it is intended for use by a wide range of readers, theological and interpretive issues are avoided. For example, one will look in vain for a date on the map of the Exodus since the editor did not wish to take sides in the debate over a 15th-century or l3th-century date. Following are a few specific problems of presentation and content.

The Bible atlas is not as complete as volumes which only cover that subject (*Macmillan Bible Atlas*, etc.), but it will be adequate for most users. The background maps on Palestine's climate, vegetation, and economy are well done, although the Mediterranean sand dunes were much less extensive in biblical times than they are shown (p. 11), and some commentary on the lack of fresh water and its historical implications should accompany the map of rivers and streams (p. 12). The map on Gideon and the Midianites is one of the few that is too small to understand clearly the geographical and historical information represented. There is also no map showing the larger Near Eastern political situation between the periods of the Sea Peoples (p.24, c. 1200 B.C.) and the period of the Assyrian Empire (p.43, c. 800 B.C.). In the New Testament section, the map

showing the Church of Asia Minor is not dated (p. 70). It can scarcely be meant to show a date earlier than AD 100, but one could argue for many more congregations by that point than the map would indicate.

Turning to the section illustrating the history of Christianity, the map of early Christianity in the Roman Empire (p. 74) is minimalist, showing no congregations in North Africa, Spain, or Gaul. The map of the 4th and 5th-century church (pp.76-77) is uneven, leaving out some important fathers (Hosius of Cordova, Lucifer of Cagliari, Synesius of Cyrene, Rufinus of Aquileia), omitting important churches (Terragona, Trier, Cyrene), and not mentioning important councils (in the west in Spain and Gaul, in the east at Gangra, Ancyra, Antioch, Laodicea, and Neocaesarea). Islam spread further down the Atlantic coast of Africa than is shown on page 88. The text should mention that the "artist's impression" on page 96 is the ideal monastery as reconstructed from the famous "Plan of St. Gall" in Switzerland. A map of 19th century America showing the religious changes due to the great European emigrations would have been helpful. (Lutheran and Catholic growth between 1750 and the present is nowhere shown.) In the era of modern mission expansion Lutheran and Catholic missions are again consistently slighted or ignored, while the traditional Protestant contributions are well illustrated.

Despite the aforementioned inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and shortcomings, no other one-volume atlas will be as useful to the student of biblical and church history. With its index and gazetteer, it will be a frequently consulted book on any teacher's shelf.

GT

Wangerin, Walter. *The Bedtime Rhyme.* Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1998. Illustrated by Benrei Huant.

Some books have a voice. *The Bedtime Rhyme*is one of those. Anyone who has ever heard Walter Wangerin Jr. tell a Bible story on Lutheran Vespers or in his re-telling of the Bible, *The Book of God*,can hear Wangerin in this children's book. The words in this book about a child's question of how much he is loved are story-telling words—words that are meant to be read aloud, sonorous words that roll off the tongue. The book is a bedtime story that describes nighttime scary things from which the mother promises to protect the child as a way of showing how much she loves him. But beyond that mother's love, as the book shows at the end, is the love that God has for the child. In that comfort the child sleeps safely. The illustrations by Benrei Haunt complement the story; they are luxurious and subtle, reminiscent of Maurice Sendak.

JI

Reviewers: Glen Thompson, John Isch

Martin Luther College Accreditation Visit
Opportunity for Third Party Comment

Martin Luther College is seeking comments from the public about the college in preparation for its periodic evaluation by its regional accrediting agency. The college will undergo a comprehensive evaluation visit March 22-24, 1999, by a team representing the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Martin Luther College has been accredited by the Commission since 1995, when the college opened as a new institution formed by the amalgamation of Northwestern College, Watertown, WI, and Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, MN. Its accreditation is at the bachelor's degree level. The team will review the institution's ongoing ability to meet the Commissions' Criteria for Accreditation and General Institutional Requirements.

The public is invited to submit comments regarding the college:

Public Comment on Martin Luther College
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400
Chicago, IL 60602

Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs. Comments must be in writing and signed; comments cannot be treated as confidential.

All comments must be received by February 20,1999.

THE LUTHERAN EDUCATOR