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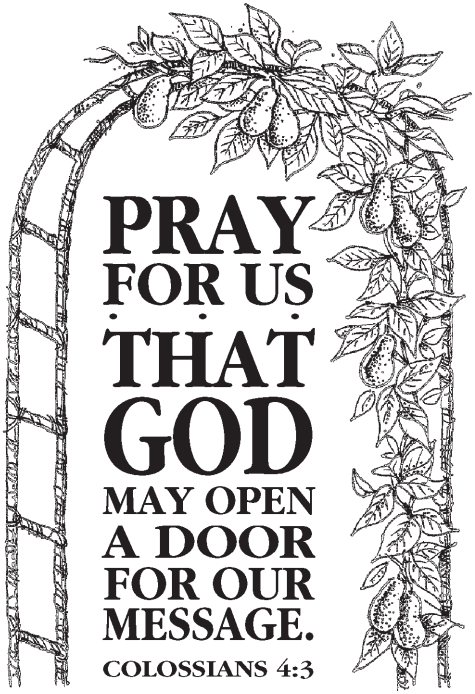
The Lutheran Educator

The WELS Education Journal



The Lutheran Educator

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

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ARTICLES

DEPARTMENTS

Finding Elisha

Last May Martin Luther College graduated 154 men and women qualified for the teaching ministry. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graduated 31 men qualified for the pastoral ministry. The Conference of Presidents assigned or re-assigned 123 teachers, staff ministers, and staff minister interns; and 80 pastors and vicars. After these assignments, there were still estimated to be 70-80 pastor vacancies and an equal number of teacher vacancies. At the time of the writing of this editorial, there were thirteen undergraduates who accepted a one-year emergency teacher call. In a survey of pastors, teachers, and laypersons (WELS 2000 Survey), 45% of the respondents strongly agreed that WELS does a good job of recruiting candidates qualified for the public ministry.

The WELS is not alone in this empty-pupit, empty classroom, "who will go?" crisis. In 1999, a survey of the Catholic church in the United States showed 12% of the parishes were without a priest. In the same year the LC-MS reported that 7% of their parishes had no pastor and 40% of the teachers in their elementary schools were not synodically certified.

The reasons for this shortage are many: a profession—that has few material rewards, that demands a great deal of time and energy, that requires a long period of preparation, that has low prestige in the eyes of society, that is viewed as unexciting and "uncool," that has a lot of stress, (and you fill in your own). Perhaps, also, young people are not attracted to the ministry because their experiences with pastors and teachers have been less than positive.

The solution to all this begins with you, dear reader. Certainly, our college and seminary are active recruiters, but you must find your own Elisha, that one to whom you will pass on your mantel, your red pen, your set of commentaries, or whatever marks the passing of one generation to another. You need to tell your Elisha about the miracles of God's grace in your life, how you saw the fire on Mt. Carmel and heard the gentle whisper on Horeb. You should also tell your Elisha about the broom tree and about the strength that God gives in those down times.

Do a show and tell about the joys in your ministry: the hours are long, but they are hours spent doing God's great work; the material results may be small, but the jug of oil never runs out; being a teacher or pastor may not be a cool thing to do in the eyes of the world, but it is right in the eyes of God.

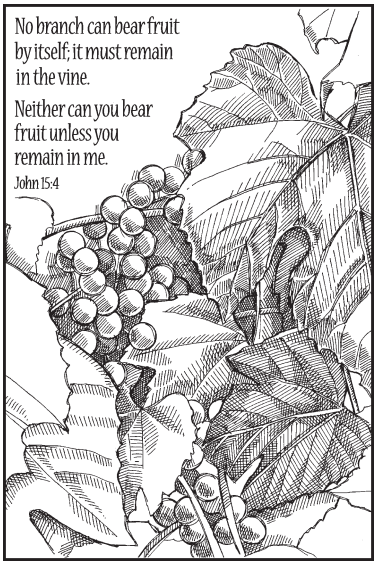
The best recruitment sermon is the one your life preaches. Your joy in your work, your enthusiasm, your commitment, your faithfulness, these are the sermons your Elisha hears from you—even when you aren't aware of it.

Look around that second grade classroom, that confirmation class, the young peoples group. Find your Elisha. Encourage him or her. Then pass on your mantel.

JRI

Good Wine

Paul L. Willems



I LIKE TO MAKE WINE. I enjoy gathering the glistening fruit. I delight in the earthy smell of fermentation. I relish the first taste of the new wine.

I find the best grapes are grown from vines grafted to a robust root. Good wine grapes are grown in the rocky soil on sunlit slopes. The vines must be carefully pruned. The ripe grapes are then gathered, crushed, and allowed to ferment. It takes time and effort to make good wine.

God likes to make good wine too. The wine he makes is faith and the fruits of faith, good works. To make Christians fruitful he grafts them to a vigorous vine, which is Christ. Unless we are firmly attached to the Word, we waste our lives. He prunes the dead wood of pride from our lives. The life-giving sap that flows from the root of the Vine gives us life and causes us to burst forth in good works. It is only the vitality of the Vine that stirs life within each branch and bursts open the buds so they ripen into the full fruit of the Vine.

Any vintner knows good wine demands a balance between the grape's sugar content and its tannin. The sugar is necessary to produce the alcohol which makes grape juice wine. The minerals and acidity of the tannin add flavor and bouquet which distinguishes a fine wine from a lesser wine. Both are needed to make good wine. If we only experience the sunshine of good days how can we become experienced ministers filled with good wine? If we only dwell in the darkness of despair how can we know the joy of ministry?

Drama and humor come from delight and sadness. It is interesting to observe that painters, poets, and musicians of note experienced distress in their lives. They struggled physically. They experi-

enced mental anguish. They produced masterpieces. The great grape, cabernet sauvignon, produces wine of distinction only when it is grown in poor, rocky soil. It is no coincidence that God blends both joy and sorrow into our lives so that we may bring forth good fruits.

Poor soil or personal conflict is fine, but without sunshine branches form no grapes at all. The sunshine of our Savior is the energy that fills our lives and produces the fruits of faith. Gloomy skies and drizzle-filled days droop grapevines and mildew the harvest. If we stray away from Jesus and choose the shadows by neglecting devotions and Bible study we will produce few fruits. Those who flee from God, like Jonah, discourage the work of the Holy Spirit. Ministers of God need to bask in the full glory of the Word. When Martin Luther faced his busiest days he spent his longest hours in prayer. Jesus took time to commune privately with his Father. We, too, must stay in touch with the Master before we can master the skills of a sanctified life.

Have you ever noticed that the fruits of the vine are not eaten by the vine? Grapes are produced for others. Even wild grapes are eaten by birds and beasts in the forest. The vine does not nourish itself with its grapes. Our good works are not to enhance our self image. They are there for others. Our good works reflect our Father's goodness. We are encouraged to "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us" (1 Pe 2:12).

Finally, before wine can be made from grapes, the fruit must be crushed. Our pride and arrogance must be subdued before we can become useful in God's ministry. This strange work of the Holy Spirit is necessary in his winery. We must understand ministers are servants. All this work requires time and effort. Grafted to Christ, struggling in this sin-filled world, yet basking in the gospel, God shapes our lives to do his will. We gradually become beneficial to others. Crushed because of our sins, Jesus presses us close to his heart and supports us by his righteous right hand. We need to be still and consider God's vineyard work in our lives. God can do much with our little. God enjoys making good wine. ❧

The sunshine of our Savior is the energy that fills our lives and produces the fruits of faith.

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

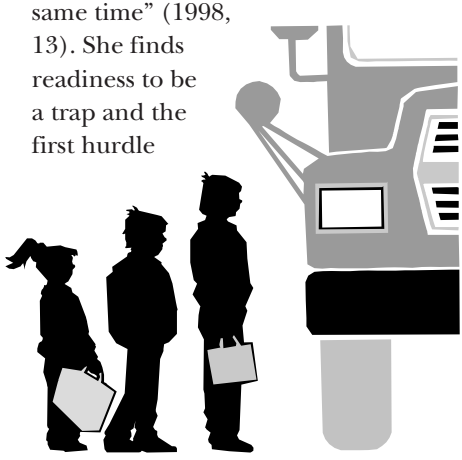
School Readiness

Cheryl Loomis

MAKING CHILDREN ready to learn has long been a topic of concern in America. The concept of school readiness is not new. Kagan, as quoted by Katz (1991), states "this concept has been debated for more than a century." Two philosophical beliefs lie at the heart of this debate. Maturationists state that all children progress at individual rates. The passage of time during which growth occurs enables a child more or less to benefit from formal instruction. Developmentalists argue that all children are born with a "disposition to learn" (Katz 1991) and that time combined with experience contributes to learning.

Readiness factors

Readiness generally includes three aspects of a child's development: attention span, social readiness, and the presence of requisite knowledge for the activity to be undertaken (NAEYC 2000). Graue defines readiness as a "murkey idea integrally tied to our ideas about how children develop and what we can do to support that process" (1998, 13). She believes that readiness is in the eye of the beholder as much as it is in the skills, maturity, and abilities of those we behold (Graue 1998). Graue's observations of young children lead her to state "not everyone is ready for the same thing at the same time" (1998, 13). She finds readiness to be a trap and the first hurdle children experience in moving through the educational system. "By interpreting variability in development as a problem to be solved by time for growing, we miss an opportunity to help children through their developmental challenges" (Graue 1998, 14).



The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

states that any discussion of school readiness must consider at least three critical factors:

- the diversity of children's early life experiences as well as inequity in experiences;
- the wide variation in young children's development and learning; and
- the degree to which school expectations of children entering kindergarten are reasonable, appropriate, and supportive of individual differences. (NAEYC 2000, 1)

Preparing children who come to school ready to learn was the topic of the National Governors' Association meeting in 1990. The nation's governors along with the President of the United States formulated Goals 2000 (Katz 1991). The first of these goals was that all children would start school "ready to learn" (Kagan 1999). Three objectives were needed to meet this goal. Communities and schools must:

- provide disadvantaged and disabled children with access to high quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs designed to help prepare them for school.
- recognize that parents are children's first teachers and encourage them to spend time daily to help their preschool children learn; provide parents with training and support.
- enhance prenatal health systems to reduce the number of low birthweight babies; ensure that children receive the nutrition and health care they need to arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies. (Kagan 1991, 1)

The myth of readiness

Kagan refers to school readiness as a mystery and states that people talk of school readiness as though it were a measurable goal (1999). At the present time, no indicators have been identified that can accurately measure school readiness. "None of the readiness tests educators use work to help teachers determine who is ready from who is unready" (Kagan 1999,2). Severeide (1998) identified seventeen factors establishing a baseline for readiness.

Determining school readiness is an uncertain undertaking since educators themselves disagree about factors that contribute to a child's success in school

She concluded that school success depends on the "match" between a child's skills and knowledge along with the expectations of the school (Severeide 1998). Determining school readiness is an uncertain undertaking

since educators themselves disagree about factors that contribute to a child's success in school (Hills 1998). A child may be ready for one type of instructional program but not another. Any consideration of the preparation a child needs to be successful in school must take into account the type of educational program and the teacher's expectations of the child (Nurss 2000). There is no one quality or skill that a child needs to do well in school. A combination of factors contributes to school success. These include physical well being, social and emotional maturity, language skills, the ability to solve problems and think creatively, and general knowledge about the world (Nurss 2000).

Readiness testing has become a high stakes event for preschoolers in the United States. Test results provide some children with entry to school while other children are denied access. Inflexible criteria for success makes for more "unready children" (Kagan 1999,2). "The most important strategy for addressing the school readiness goal is to prepare the school to be responsive to the wide range of experiences, backgrounds, and needs of the children who are starting school" (Katz 1991,2). Zill states the challenge facing kindergarten teachers is in meeting the needs of a population that is both demographically and developmentally diverse (Zill 1995).

Making schools ready for children

The position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) states "the traditional construct of readiness unduly places the burden of proof on the child. The responsibility of schools is to meet the needs of children as they enter school and to provide whatever services are needed to help each child reach his potential" (NAEYC 2000,1). Schools are responsible to provide a solid foundation for lifelong learning. "The nature of children's development and learning dictates two important school responsibilities. Schools must be able to respond to a diverse range of abilities within any group of children. Curriculum in the early grades must provide meaningful contexts for children's learning rather than focusing on skill acquisition (NAEYC 2000). Early intervention may be needed to enrich the lives of those children who have not had a rich background of experience prior to entering school. Effective intervention programs meet a wide range of individual needs, strengthen parental roles in supporting their child's learning, and provide a variety of firsthand experiences and learning activities (NAEYC 2000). The National Association for the Education of Young Children believes that family support is one component in the readiness factor. Expectations used to determine readiness must be legitimate and reasonable. "It is inappropriate to determine school entry on the basis of acquiring a limited set of skills and abilities" (NAEYC 2000,3).

Schools can respond to the readiness challenge by preparing teachers skilled in child development. Educators must also be prepared to meet a diverse range of abilities. Curriculum and prac-

tice must reflect sound principles of child development. Expectations of children must be developmentally appropriate. Finally, readiness tests should not be used as the primary measure of entrance decisions (Grau 1998).

Making children ready for school becomes a collaborative effort. Educators must assist parents in realizing that they are their child's first teacher (Graue 1998). School systems need to develop partnerships with parents and communities alike. Teachers must provide experiences that will support the growth and development of young children. In doing so, educators can rethink the concept of readiness. The burden of proof for readiness should rest with the schools as people think about making schools ready for children. ❧

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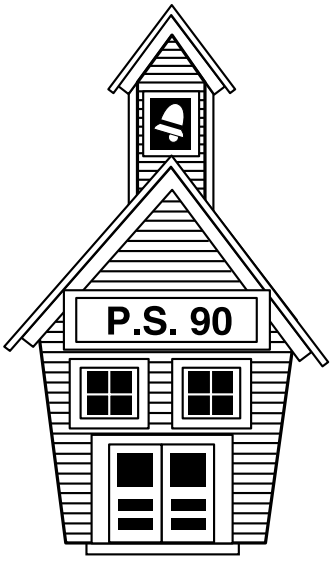
"*The burden of proof for readiness should rest with the schools as people think about making schools ready for children.*"

Christians Teaching in a Public School

John Isch



Introduction

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give reason for the hope you have. (1 Peter 3:15)

Here we have Peter, a repentant sinner, probably reflecting on a missed opportunity to speak in that cold courtyard many years ago. There is in this passage a gentle admonition and an encouragement to us, particularly when we find ourselves in a similar cold and dark courtyard.

There are two points to note in this passage. The points are "always" and "prepared."

Always is an absolute. Our willingness, indeed eagerness, to give an answer is not constrained by time, place, or circumstances. Nor is it limited to a certain time in life, a setting, or a particular calling in life. Whoever we are, whatever our position, whenever the opportunity arises, wherever we find ourselves, whatever the circumstances, we are to be ready and willing to give a reason for the hope we have. To do otherwise would be to deny our faith and our Lord, as Peter once did on that cool evening in spring.

There are no good reasons to remain silent. Peter could not plead a hostile audience, nor could Abram plead extenuating circumstances. Pretending to be someone other than a Christian is a dangerous and potentially faith-destroying role. The great calling card of the Christian faith is not hidden. A lamp under a bowl is not a guide to life.

Nor can we hide behind "who asks you," and defend our silence because no one asked who we are. That is the

story of a mother who was concerned when her son went off to college and how he might be teased and ridiculed because he was a Christian. When he returned home for semester break, she anxiously asked if his classmates had made fun of him because of his Christianity. He replied, "Nope, they never found out." People ask about us in many ways and the invitation to speak of the hope within us can be as subtle as a smile or a question unrelated to religion.

The second term in this passage, "be prepared," is also important in understanding a Christian's responsibility to testify. Preparation is familiar to a teacher. The term suggests that the person has anticipated opportunities, he is able to analyze circumstances and people, he is familiar with ways of expressing himself and his beliefs, and, most important, he knows the basis of his faith and testimony. Peter, in this text, does not deny the spontaneity of some testimony; no one has a prepared speech for every possible occasion. When Peter advises Christians to be prepared, he is suggesting three things: a willingness, a confidence, and a sensitivity. The willingness comes from the first part of the verse: "in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord." When Christ rules in a Christian's heart, he cannot help speaking what he has seen and heard. The confidence comes from knowing that the Holy Spirit will guide and bless what a Christian says. The sensitivity is described in verse 16: "But do this with gentleness and respect." We will return to these characteristics later. Bur first we must go to God's left hand: his rule over this world through earthly powers.

What the state says about religion in public schools

Whether the Supreme Court in its numerous rulings regarding religion and religious activities in schools and public forums has turned our public institutions and society itself into some godless bastion of immorality, relativism, disrespect, and violence is a political, not a theological issue. Certainly the place and influence of religion in the public square is of concern to the Christian. The Roman world of Peter's time would be difficult and different for a Christian in the United Sates. But we live in the time and place where God has placed us and we are salt in whatever society we find ourselves.

We also do well to remember that the Supreme Court removed the outward trappings of religion from public education. Some, usually conservative commentators, have suggested that the Supreme Court has made wholesale changes in the First Amendment. Actually the Supreme Court has ruled on and declared as violating the First Amendment only six specific practices (the seventh is still unclear) in public schools. These are (1) state-directed and required on-premises religious training (*McCollum v. Board of Education,* 1948); (2) state-directed and required prayer (*Engel v. Vitale,* 1962); (3) state-directed and required Bible reading (*Abington School District v. Schempp,* 1963); (4) state-directed and required

posting of the Ten Commandments (*Stone v. Graham,* 1981); (5) state-directed and authorized "periods of silence" for meditation and voluntary prayer (*Wallace v. Jaffree,* 1985); (6) state-directed and required teaching of scientific creationism (*Edwards v. Aguillard,* 1987); and (7) state-directed prayer by clergy at graduation or promotion ceremonies (*Lee v. Weisman,* 1992).

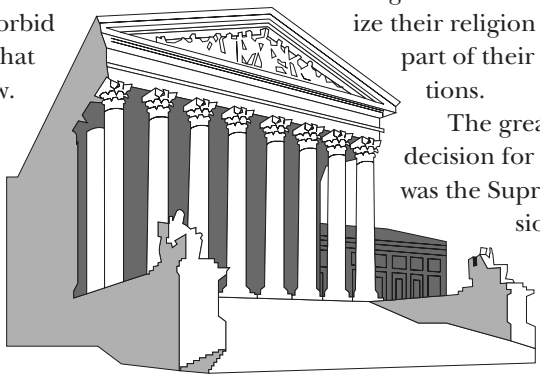
All these decisions did conservative Christians a favor. A major consideration of the court in the adjudication of these cases was their concern for the constitutional right of the minority not to have an alien religion imposed on them. The justices did not have a covert agenda to introduce godless humanism in public schools; they, more simply and directly, did not want students who objected to religious practices coerced into participating. Certainly among those objecting students were children of the late and infamous atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair. But also in that objecting minority were the more quiet conservative Christians such as those in the WELS who said the New York Regents' mandated prayer to an unknown god was a perversion of Christianity and an unacceptable invitation to fellowship. It is quite likely that a goodly number of WELS pastors gave a sigh of relief when the Supreme Court rejected school-sponsored graduation prayers or baccalaureate services (*Stein v. Plainwell Community Schools,* 1987; *Lee v. Weisman,* 1992; *Verbena United Methodist Church v. Chilton Country,* 1991). Peter and Paul would likely to have cheered the Supreme Court decisions and dearly wished the government at their time to have such a concern for the persecuted religious minority of Christianity. Religious minorities need to be cautious about asking for more religious practices in public life; they may find themselves with something worse than silence.

In a discussion of what can and cannot be done in a public school classroom regarding religion, one has to consider what is known as case law. Case law results from decisions by the courts. (There are a few instances, such as the Equal Access Act passed by Congress and the recent congressional action on posting the Ten Commandments where there are specific laws passed by legislatures.) Only a U.S. Supreme Court decision is biding throughout the United States. Other rulings in state courts, federal district courts, and appellate courts apply only to states or federal districts in which these courts have jurisdiction. In those cases where the Supreme Court refuses to review a lower court decision, the application of that lower court ruling outside the jurisdiction of that court is unclear. Certainly other courts can consider the ruling of courts in different districts or states, but they are not bound to do so.

There are also states, particularly in the West, that have provisions in their constitutions that restrict religious activity even further than federal statutes and case law. In addition, when local school districts develop policies for religious expression in public schools, they may or may not follow rulings in the courts. Sometimes school boards are

unaware of those rulings, or school boards wish to err on the side of caution, or the rulings were made in other districts or states.

This explains, in part, the differences and even contradictions in court decisions, legal actions taken by school boards, and the policies of those boards. The analysis that follows of what students and teachers can and cannot do comes partly from silence (the courts did not forbid it) and partly from what courts explicitly allow. Lawsuits and court rulings continue to reexamine these issues however.



For convenience, the analysis which follows looks at two groups, students and teachers. They are separated because more is allowed for students than for teachers.

Students

Case law allows classroom students more protection and more latitude in religious expression than any other group. In point of fact and law, court rulings are designed to do just that.

Students can pray in public schools. They can read Bibles alone and with other students. They can read these Bibles in study halls or in special Bible classes they organize during non-instructional time. They can create artwork with a religious theme and they can sing religious songs. They can invite others to their church. They can urge their own faith and belief on others. They can gather around the flagpole for prayer before school begins. They can design and give graduation prayers (this particular issue is currently in debate). They can (according to lower court cases) distribute religious literature. They can leave the school premises for religious instruction. They can wear clothing or ornaments which symbolize their religion or which are part of their religious traditions.

The great watershed decision for student rights was the Supreme Court decision in 1969 (*Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*). In this case, three students, two from high school and one from junior high, were suspended from school for wearing black armbands to protest the war in Vietnam. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the students and said the school district had unconstitutionally restricted the students' free speech rights. Subsequently the Supreme Court provided guidelines to schools for permissible and inappropriate student expressions and the court extended this constitutional right to free speech to freedom of religious expression in schools. Students also have a general freedom of association, which allows them to organize in groups for Bible study. Court opinions differ, but the free speech

issue also allows students to distribute religious literature, although the time and place could be litigated.

The free speech right extends for students also the right to know. This issue deals with school curriculum issues and the courts have traditionally been hesitant to involve themselves in matters over which the local community or state has control. In two cases, one dealing with the removal of objectionable books from the school library (*Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico,* 1982) and one dealing with the removal of the Bible from the school library (*Roberts v. Madigan,* 1992), the court prohibited the school board from removing these books. The key determinant was the motive of the school board, which the court saw as arbitrarily denying information to students.

Nearly all these free speech issues were decided in a secondary school (or college) setting. The courts view the rights of children, teenagers, and adults differently. But it is not an absolute whereby teenagers have the right of free speech and association and grade school children do not. It seems to be more a matter of degree and, given the trend, it is not impossible that the court will one day treat children and young adults in a similar manner.

The courts are also sensitive to the need for schools to do their task of educating young people without disruption. Students have these rights of free speech, assembly, access, and exercise of religion as long as the speech and assembly are not disruptive of the school's operation; disrespectful of the rights of other students; coercive to other students; obscene, lewd, or sexually explicit; or unsuitably commercial.

The courts have ruled (*Widmar v. Vincent,* 1981) that schools cannot forbid religious activity on school premises. In *Mergens v. Board of Education of the Westside Community Schools* (1990) the Supreme Court affirmed the constitutionality of the 1984 Equal Access Act. This act stipulates that when a school creates a "limited open form"—that is, it allows non-curriculum related student groups or clubs to meet on school premises during non-instructional time, it cannot deny the same rights to groups that want to meet for religious purposes such as Bible study.

Teachers

All these are student rights. What can teachers do in matters religious? The actions of a teacher are more restricted than students' actions. There are important distinctions courts make between the constitutional rights of students and the constitutional rights of teachers. Public schools are agencies of the state and public school employees are agents of the state. The Bill of Rights was designed to protect citizens from intrusions by the state into the rights the Founders believed citizens had as natural rights. Teachers, unlike students, are not compelled to be in a public school, so the concern of the courts regarding coercion is not as great a concern for teachers as it is for students. Teachers are also adults and the courts' concern

for impressionable youth does not apply to teachers.

This is not to suggest that teachers leave their constitutional rights at the schoolhouse door, nor do they lay aside rights and obligations that belong to the profession of teaching. Teachers also have rights of speech, inquiry, and association. The courts understand the importance of academic freedom, that is, the liberty to teach that which teachers deem to be appropriate in the exercise of their professional judgment. Teachers need to be free from pressures or threats by persons outside the school.

Issues of academic freedom in public schools have been addressed by the lower courts, not by the Supreme Court directly. School boards can impose restrictions on a teacher's academic freedom when such freedom moves from dissemination of information to indoctrination of the students. A teacher could be fired if he carried this freedom to the point where he is clearly no longer useful as an instructor. This might occur, for example, if a teacher devoted inordinate amounts of time discussing topics unrelated to the subject matter. A school board would, however, have to set clear guidelines so a teacher is not forced to guess as to what is and is not permissible. These guidelines cannot be overly general or arbitrary. A school board, for example, cannot forbid all discussion of religion or exclude a particular idea or ideology from discussion. Such a restriction violates the freedom of speech, which includes the freedom to know, of both teachers and students.

The Supreme Court has never applied its freedom of speech decision in *Tinker v. Des Moines* to teachers, although some lower courts have done so. Those courts that have made this extensio, have included the two restrictions of the *Tinker* decision: teacher speech cannot materially and substantially jeopardize the maintenance of order and discipline in the school nor can it invade the rights of others. In addition, such expression cannot interfere with the teacher's obligation to teach. Teachers who claim that the First Amendment right of free speech allows them to teach or practice their religion in a public school classroom are not likely to prevail in court. Federal appeal courts have ruled that colleges and universities can forbid an instructor from intertwining religious views with instruction (*Bishop v. Aronov,* 1991). A school can be properly concerned that its courses be taught without the teacher imposing a personal religious bias on the students. The same decision, however, suggested the teacher could hold optional class meetings where he could hold forth on his religious views. In another case (*Roberts v. Madigan,* 1992) the Supreme Court let stand a decision by a federal district court regarding an elementary school teacher. This teacher used a type of reading activity where students read silently from material of their choice for a specified period of time. During this time the teacher read silently also, frequently from a Bible that he kept on his desk during the day. He never read it orally nor did he discuss what he read with his students. He

had other religious books in his classroom and a religious picture on the wall. Some parents objected, the principal asked him to stop, he challenged the school's decision and lost in court. It is worth quoting the standard that the court used to reject the free speech claim of the teacher.

> If ... the conduct endorses a particular religion and is an activity "that students, parents, and members of the public might reasonably perceive to bear the imprimatur of the school," creating the requisite state action, then the activity infringes on the rights of others and must be prohibited.

The teacher's actions (reading the Bible) was part of the regular classroom activity, a reading class, and as such provided an improper symbolic link between government and religion because it gave the appearance that the school (the state) sanctioned and encouraged such activity. A student, presumably, could read the Bible in this Sustained Silent Reading exercise, but a teacher could not. The issue remains cloudy, however, because courts have also been vigilant in protecting constitutional rights of teachers and students in public school, and this may some day be judged a right of free speech.

Recently, in a Second Circuit Appellate court case (*Marchi v. BOCES of Albany,* 1999) the court ruled that a special education teacher's freedom of speech right was not violated by a school district when it required him to cease and desist from making religious references in his classes. In this case an experienced special education teacher had incorporated noncurricular religious references into his classes. He also included private religious discussions and prayers with students and parents. The court ruled that the education agency could not risk giving the impression that it endorsed religion and thus it acted appropriately when it restricted the teacher's expression of religion.

The same free speech grayness applies to religious garb or clothing. Generally teachers are allowed to wear clothing or emblems which indicate a particular religious order, sect, or denomination. States and school boards can, however, restrict this freedom of expression, particularly as a regular or frequent practice. A member of a Catholic teaching order who teaches in a public school would likely be prohibited from wearing a habit or surplice for example. A clerical collar would also likely be excluded. On the other hand, religious jewelry or less prominent religious insignia or emblems would probably be allowed. There are few specific court cases in these areas and school boards probably have considerable latitude with policies that range from silence to prescriptive.

School curriculum, as noted above, is a particularly sensitive area and one in which the courts have been reluctant to interfere with decisions by school boards that represent the community. Courts see a school curriculum as reflecting the values of the community as well as complying with state requirements. Courts are hesitant, therefore, in second-guessing school boards or states.

Nevertheless, courts also understand that students must become acquainted with numerous viewpoints if they are to develop the critical judgment needed for participation in a democratic society. Teachers have the right and they cannot be punished for telling students that there are other approaches or views on a particular subject. Evolution and creationism is a case in point and a touchy subject. A lower court did not uphold a teacher's claim that a non-evolutionary account of the origins of the world should be included in a science class (*Webster v. New Lenox School District,* 1990) in a junior high school. At this level of education, the court said a school board can impose restrictions on whether a teacher can deviate from the set curriculum. Teachers who are conscientiously opposed to teaching certain topics, and such objection is religious based, should be accommodated the court said. The state however can override a teacher's objections if the state has a compelling interest in the prescribed instruction. Exchanging with a teacher who does not object to teaching the topic would likely be an appropriate accommodation. Terminating a teacher's employment would not be an appropriate solution. Thus, a teacher who objected on religious grounds to teaching a state-mandated or school board accepted curriculum on birth control could request re-assignment to a subject that she could teach. The subject of birth control would be taught, but by some other teacher.

The Supreme Court in *Abington School District v. Schempp,* 1963, specifically allowed the study of the Bible and comparative religion in public schools. Case law since that decision has suggested the following guidelines for such teaching. References to religious matters are permissible if (1) they are presented objectively, (2) no disruption occurs, and (3) they are relevant to the subject matter. Teachers, however, cannot engage in religious indoctrination nor can they introduce religious activities into the class when such activities are not relevant to the established curriculum.

Teachers may discuss religious matters with students on an individual basis. A federal district court, for example, found that a public school guidance counselor had a right to discuss religion with a student (*Roman v. Appleby,* 1983). The only restrictions on such discussion are that the students initiate the topic and the student not be forced to discuss the topic nor accept the teacher's views. If a student, for example, asked a teacher privately about her religious beliefs or practices, the teacher could properly discuss religious matters with the student who would be free to discontinue the discussion at any time. The setting of such discussion, whether in the classroom or during other, non-classroom time is a matter of debate. Some court decisions have made a distinction between class and non-class time.

Teachers and schools need to be cautious regarding religious holidays. Such holidays as Christmas, Hanukkah, and Ramadan may be recognized but not celebrated or observed. The distinction between recognizing and observing a

holiday may be a bit vague. If, however, students participate, even in the form of a drama, the holiday is probably being celebrated and in violation of the court rulings on the First Amendment. Nor may a teacher assume that if the students observe holidays of all or several religions equally, there is no violation. Observing one or many is still inappropriate; two violations of the First Amendment don't make it right.

Teachers cannot hold organized meetings for religious purposes on the school grounds. A teacher could not, for example, organize and conduct a Bible class. The students, however, could do just that provided the school has allowed a limited public forum, that is, a policy that allows groups to meet at school on topics unrelated to school matters during non-instructional time. What the teacher could do is not clear; perhaps she could sit in back of the room listening. The Equal Access Act (1984) specifically allows employees or agents of the school to be present at such meetings only in a non-participatory capacity. If she took a more active role, the impression could be given that the school is sanctioning or sponsoring the particular religious group. A teacher may, however, engage in private, personal religious activities in a faculty lounge, an office, or an empty classroom.

Finally, the public school teacher has all the rights of association and speech outside the school and classroom. A school board in taking action against a teacher must establish on the basis of inferences drawn from facts, not suppositions, that a teacher's activities would interfere with her ability to teach or with the operation of the school. Take, for example, a public school teacher who picketed (legally and at the proper distance) an abortion clinic on a Saturday. To take action against such a teacher, the school district would have to prove that her actions interfered with her ability to teach or that those actions detrimentally affected the operation of the public school.

Local regulations

Many school boards in establishing local regulations and guidelines refer to the "Lemon test" established by the Supreme Court in the 1971 *Lemon v. Kurtzman* decision. This case involved government aid to parochial schools, but the criteria used by the court in deciding that case have been used by the Supreme Court and lower courts in other cases involving the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

The first criterion reads, "Does the law, or other government action, have a bona fide secular or civic purpose?" In the context of this discussion, the teacher would ask herself whether a particular activity she is planning for the classroom has an educational purpose, which for public education is its "secular purpose." If she is planning a Christmas pageant to celebrate the holiday, she is probably violating the First Amendment (as the courts are interpreting it). If, on the other hand, she allows students in her art class to draw pictures of their choice and several draw religious pic-

tures, she is properly allowing students their freedom of expression (a secular education objective in art). If a music teacher uses a religious song to illustrate a particular harmony or contrapuntal sequence, she would be using the music for an educational or "secular" purpose.

The second criterion reads, "Does the primary effect neither advance nor inhibit religion?" The point here is that the First Amendment, as interpreted by the Supreme Court in *Lemon*, forbids the government to promote or advance religion, as to a particular denomination or religion in general. A school may announce that a student group is meeting at a particular time and place for the purpose of Bible reading, but the school cannot promote such a meeting by preferring it over other, non-religious meetings or by encouraging or coercing students to attend. There is some grayness here because apparently the school can advance a religion indirectly such as when it allows a church to use its facilities on Sunday for services. Such use does not, however, violate the Lemon test as lower courts have interpreted it.

The third criterion reads, "Does the law avoid excessive government entanglement with religion?" This criterion is rarely at issue in public schools; it deals mostly with matters raised in the original case of aid to parochial schools. An argument for excessive entanglement could be made in a situation where a public school took upon itself the task of editing student-led prayers for graduation.

Local school districts may or may not carefully follow these three guidelines the Supreme Court has laid down. School district policy often depends on how homogeneous the district is in religious practices. When a district contains a predominant conservative Christian denomination, such as Southern Baptist, the school district may attempt or allow more religious expression in schools. When the community is more diverse, a school district may apply more strict regulations regarding religious activities in the school. The writ of the Supreme Court is the law of the land, but it does not always find its way into every local school district. To help schools apply the court's rulings, Richard Riley, the Secretary of Education in the Clinton administration, distributed a statement of principles of Religious Expression in Public Schools (1998).

Applications

In pondering these court cases and legal distinctions a Christian teacher is likely to be puzzled and confused. In the face of all this, "How can I," the teacher says, "be always prepared to give an answer to the hope I have? I'll spend so much time checking the law and policies, that I'll never say anything. Or I'll be so intimidated by the legal talk that I'll be afraid to say anything."

Schools, clearly, are more restrictive

in what its employees can say than are other secular occupations. Certainly litigation over what employees say about religious issues must be rare indeed for fast-food franchises, for example. Where is the case law dealing with a McDonald's employee humming "Amazing Grace" while flipping hamburgers. Schools are also more restrictive regarding the religious expressions of teachers than are other government agencies overagainst their employees. Can a soldier lead a prayer in a foxhole, can the President attend a prayer breakfast, or can Congress begin its daily sessions with a prayer? The Supreme Court rarely speaks to such examples of religion in a government setting.

Public elementary and secondary schools are obviously more restrictive today than they were fifty years ago. Prior to 1950 public schools had many religious activities. Parents today are also more sensitive about what is taught their children and they are much more likely to go to court to seek redress. Parents are particularly sensitive to school teaching that contradicts their own beliefs. Public schools are in the spotlight and those who teach in those schools have to accept that center stage position.

Peter's encouragement to give an answer includes sensitivity in preparing and delivering that answer. A person who is unaware of the scrutiny that public education imposes doesn't have much of that sensitivity.

For some Christians, teaching in a public school would be a burden, and for some of those, it would be an unacceptable burden. Teachers for whom public school teaching is an unacceptable restriction on their Christian testimony would likely leave a public school to teach in a Christian school. Some Christian teachers also believe they could teach in no school other than one whose sponsoring church, fellow teachers, and students share the same religious beliefs they hold. Putting all these differing views together, there are Christians teaching in a public school, there are Christians teaching in their own denominational schools (e.g., Seventh Day Adventist), there are Christians teaching only in conservative Christian schools, there are Christians teaching only in Christian schools regardless of denomination, and there are Christians who are willing to teach in any school, public or private.

For some, where they can teach is not merely a simple discomfort with what the law allows. Many conservative Christians see this also as a fellowship issue. Accepting a teaching position in a school sanctioned, supported, sponsored, or philosophically in tune with a religious or ethical organization whose teachings and practices contradict what a teacher believes Scripture says would be against her conscience and thus unacceptable and a sin. Whether the employment occurs through a call or a contract is usually irrelevant. For some, the type of work may also be irrelevant, although here there may be gray areas such as a business manager in a Catholic school, a science instructor at Brigham Young University, or a house mother at Notre Dame.

Some Christians apply this fellowship issue to the public school. For these persons, the problem is not so much the restrictions which the courts have laid out for teaching and practicing religion in a public school classroom. The real issue for these Christians is the humanism or atheism that they believe is the implicit religion of public education. Teaching in a public school for them would require an acceptance as truth what humanism asserts. For them teaching in a public school is no better or worse than teaching in an Islamic school.

Unfortunately for those persons who prefer monotones, the decisions Christians make in these areas are personal decisions based on the wrestlings they have with their own consciences. Those who see the public schools as fostering a humanistic religion are following a tradition in fundamentalism and in some Lutheran perspectives. Certainly such concerned Christians can cite many examples showing the relativism and amorality in public school curriculum. From deconstruction through *Heather has Two Mommies* through stories about witches and warlocks through gay-pride day through condom dispensers in the restrooms through sex education which encourages experimentation; the list is endless.

When a Christian by choice or by circumstance finds himself teaching in a public school, he ought to begin with the assumption that he serves a state which is performing a legitimate function in educating a citizenry and whose policies and laws support that function. He should also assume that the state has used the appropriate methods, natural law and reason, to develop its laws, policies, and legal decisions. He should not assume, without clear evidence, that the public school has some diabolical plan to turn the children in that school into godless, self-centered humanists. If the state says that teachers cannot teach the creation account in a science class, the state is applying its reason to a potentially divisive issue. A Christian teacher who works under that ruling asks, first, is the state conducting itself in its proper sphere and using the appropriate methods when it makes such a ruling, and second, does this ruling put the teacher in conflict with what God says.

To the first answer, the Christian will say, yes, the state can make this decision as part of its earthly function. The state can and should educate for this life in the best way that it can. The state used reason to determine that it does this education best when religion is excluded from the instruction. Reason is the driver of the state's decisions.

To the second question, whether this law contradicts what God commands, the Christian also concludes that this restriction does not contradict what God says, although, for example, the theory of evolution certainly does. The state is limiting what that teacher says in a particular place at a particular time. The state's decision is neither arbitrary nor part of a scheme to oppress Christianity. A similar situation would exist if Burger King forbade its employees from announcing table prayers over the public address system. The state is

not preventing all speaking; in fact it specifically allows the teacher to speak at other times and places. The restriction on time and place the state is imposing is one which the teacher has chosen to be in and which that teacher is free to leave if he finds the restriction onerous.

We should not think of oppression and persecution when state requirements make it difficult or inconvenient for a Christian to live his or her faith. State regulation of Lutheran schools, the use of my tax money for purposes with which I disagree are two examples of inconvenience and irritation, but they are not persecutions. When we think of persecution and suffering for our beliefs, we should more appropriately think of situations where there is no escape and we are truly faced with a situation where we must obey God or obey men and to obey God means we will suffer. Making an analogy with the apostles in the early Christian church doesn't really work because their world was different from ours. Suppose, to strain for an example, the Jewish leaders had told Peter that he ought not preach this Christ within the precincts of the Temple, but if he wanted to preach, he should go into the streets of the city. Peter would probably not have classified that as persecution nor would he have asked whether it would be right to "obey you rather than God" (Acts 4:19). In this case he could have obeyed both the Jewish leaders and God by preaching in the streets. It sometimes appears that Christians living in a country exceptionally tolerant and even approving of religion have a problem finding real persecution. Such Christians mistakenly confuse a civic right with a moral imperative. Perhaps discussions of real persecution today are best done by those Christians who live in Iran or China or who lived in the former Soviet Union.

We return to Peter's instructions regarding our testimony: always and prepared. There is implied in these words a willingness, a confidence, and a sensitivity. The willingness and the confidence are gifts of the Holy Spirit. He both inspires us to speak and he gives power and efficacy to our words. Consider, then, the third characteristic, sensitivity.

Sensitivity has its root in love, and it may be one of the hardest gifts to acquire because it runs counter to that most enduring of human characteristics—self-centeredness. Sensitivity means that you leave yourself, you look not to your own interests, but rather to the interests of others. Sensitivity is particularly important for those who care for children or for the helpless and infirm. Those who are weaker need others who are sensitive to their needs. A child psychologist once observed, "Every child needs at least one person who is insane." By insane he meant someone who is willing to go against human nature and put a child's interests above his own. A sensitive person has that kind of insanity.

Insane sensitivity can also be a good evangelism principle. Much is made today in both reaching out to unbelievers and nurturing believers of the importance of being sensitive to the cul-

ture, the race, and the gender of those we seek to serve with the gospel. Such sensitivity does not imply or demand compromise in what is said. Rather it recognizes that thoughtless remarks, policies, or practices can put barriers to the preaching of law and gospel when those remarks, policies, or practices insult or denigrate our audience. Being always prepared as Peter encourages includes being sensitive and aware of the time and circumstances. Think of how the early Christians used an understanding of the circumstances and the people when they proclaimed the good news. Philip began his conversation with a question about the Ethiopian's reading material. Paul knew the worship practices of the Athenians. Paul also urged Christians to be sensitive to those who saw things differently and not behave in ways that would be unloving (Romans 14:13-23).

A Christian teacher in a public school needs this sensitivity. A public school classroom has the same diversity as the general population of this country. Even if the school policy and case law did not forbid it, a teacher would be insensitive if she imposed her own prayer on such a mixed group, without their request or permission. Having worship or prayer in a group which includes unbelievers, non-Christians, and the usual mix of Christian denominations can result in a prayer that is meaningless and it can give the impression that all religious beliefs are equal. This not only is insensitive, it contradicts what Scripture says. Her prayer or worship is universalism and unionism.

Likewise, to use a science class or some other subject to present a particular religious viewpoint is also insensitive. Some might suggest that if students can do this in a public school classroom, a teacher ought to be able to do so also. But a teacher's position is not the same as a student's. A teacher's view versus a student's view is an unequal contest; which is precisely why the courts restrict such activity by the teacher, but not by the student. In addition, such speaking is not comparable to an evangelism call.

“Being always prepared as Peter encourages includes being sensitive and aware of the time and circumstances.”

The student is more or less helpless. Such helplessness may cause the student to resent and reject both the message and the messenger.

It is also worth noting that presenting the creation account as a refutation of evolution or telling why abortion is wrong is not an evangelism witness or even an evangelism lead in. The topic of creationism is neither a law nor a gospel presentation. It is not a good place to begin a witness.

To cite another example: In correcting a student in a discipline situation, a teacher who uses a Christian approach could act insensitively and inappropriately. The motivation for Christian discipline is the Christian's loving response to God who first loved him. The law for such a Christian has become not only a threat, but also a wonderful opportunity to show love to God in return. Saying to an unbelieving student, "Don't you see how your misbehavior isn't what your Savior looks for in a person he has redeemed?" would be meaningless because the student would not know what he had been redeemed from; he would not know the law as a conviction of sin and therefore the gospel is foolishness.

It seems clear that giving a reason for the hope we have, as Peter encourages us, with the intent of showing someone the great gift he or she has in Jesus Christ, is more than a quick reference or comment. In fact, a quick reference or comment can be confusing or erroneous ("What would Jesus think about that?"). The law needs to be used thoroughly and carefully to prepare the heart for the gospel. That gospel that brings new life must be shown as an undeserved gift of God. Both these are more than catch phrases we can throw out.

Being prepared as Peter encourages includes knowing what can't or shouldn't be done, but it also includes knowing what can be done by the Christian teacher in a public school. Preparation includes the sensitivity to know when and where it is appropriate to speak. What teachers can do legally must be inferred from what is not forbidden in court decisions, but some things do seem clear. In a classroom setting the teacher can give her personal beliefs, sincerely and honestly, either when asked directly or when the asking is implied. For example, if a teacher were asked whether she accepted a homosexual marriage as an appropriate alternate to a traditional husband/wife marriage, she could say what she believes and why she believes it. A discussion on such a topic in a classroom may also imply a request for the teacher's views, as for example, when the class has discussed the issue and many students have given what they believe. Although some would disagree, it would seem appropriate and legal for the teacher to do the same. The sensitivity, however, is shown in how she responds, even as a response to this issue in any setting must be done in a sensitive manner. For example, a teacher would give her views in a way that leaves open the possibility to continue the conversation in private and in a way that does not begin a contentious debate.

Teachers, when asked, may privately speak at greater length about their religious beliefs. Here the sensitivity lies in the teacher not being coercive and in allowing the student to discontinue the discussion.

A Christian teacher can show by her manner of life who she is and what she believes. Teaching by imitation is a tricky thing, particularly where giving the reason for the behavior may be restricted as it is in a public school class-

room. People can be kind and loving for many reasons, many of which are unrelated to Christianity or even religion. Christian teachers act in loving ways, they avoid using language that is offensive to God, they carry out their responsibilities diligently, they put extra effort into their work, they are fair to children, they treat compassionately children who struggle with school work, they give respect to those in authority. But so do some vegetarian teachers, or humanistic teachers, or Republican teachers. So how is someone to know why the teacher is doing those things and does it matter if a student becomes a vegetarian, a humanist, or a Republican because of what he or she observed in a teacher? Yes, it does matter, and a Christian teacher who lives a life of her faith encourages students to ask why. Then, when they ask why, she can tell them.

Christian teachers can also pray for their students, silently in school and at home. A Christian teacher could be the only person who brings that child's name before the throne of grace. Teachers can also pray for God's success on their work and the work of public education. Such prayers for both students, the teacher, and public education will be answered.

Finally, a Christian teacher in a public school is not fettered in her life outside of school. There she can speak freely and act clearly in the assurance that she is giving a reason for the hope she has.

Yes, there are restrictions on the Christian teacher in a public school, and they appear to be greater than restrictions in many other secular occupations. But Christians should not forsake the public schools. We cannot surrender public education to the unbelievers and the humanists. If indeed our society and public education is floundering and desperately in need of some moral direction, Christians have an important function in public schools. They, of all people, know what God's law says. That natural law is the basis of what the state needs in school and society. Christian teachers can teach civic righteousness. Lying and murder and stealing and disobedience of parents are all wrong. Public schools should teach that and it is morally and legally proper to teach that. Christians can in good conscience with both God and the Supreme Court teach that every day.

But knowing only the law, with nothing else, will take that child to hell. The church awaits, across the street, with the news of salvation in Christ. Christians in public schools can with willingness, confidence, and sensitivity help students cross that street. ❧

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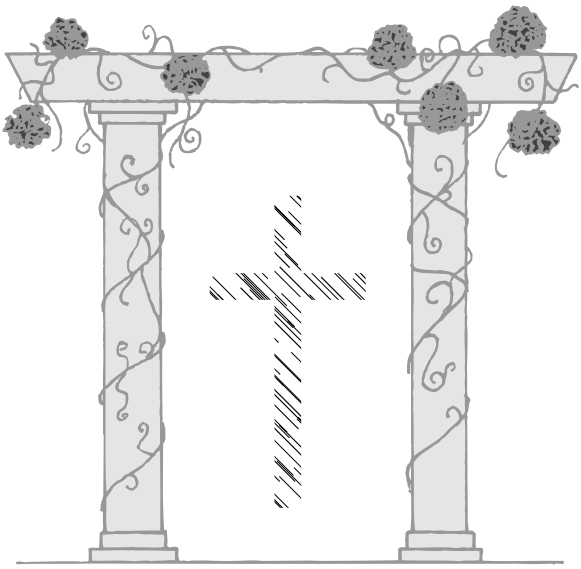
A Prayer on Reading Burtchaell

A review of *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from their Christian Churches* by James Tunstead Burtchaell

Brenda Griffith



When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase, and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and forget the Lord your God ... You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.'
(Deuteronomy 8:10-14a,17)

Forget the Lord our God? Look to ourselves as the power and source behind all we accomplish? Become complacent and self-satisfied? Could this ever happen to the WELS? James Tunstead Burtchaell delivers all Christian churches a powerful warning against forgetting the Lord our God and following in the ways of the world. *The Dying of the Light* chronicles the history of seven mainline churches and their attempts to use higher education to maintain and pass on their distinctive Christian cultures. For each example, Burtchaell records in painful detail the process of forgetting the Lord our God. Factors common to each church's experience demonstrate the sad pathtaken by these schools, and, ultimately, their churches, to become a people of the world, not in the world. The conditions are those which are common to many people: desiring to fit in, needing to compete with the best of the best, wanting to be looked upon as

scholarly and intellectual, grasping for material gain. The conditions may be common, but they do not have to rule our hearts and our minds. Could this happen to the WELS? Absolutely, unless we constantly keep our eyes and minds on the will and the ways of the Lord our God.

Few would argue that conflict and debate are in and of themselves evil and undesirable. Attack from within and without can lead to growth and development. But what about organizations that do not have a secure foothold with which to begin? Are they then in a position to withstand conflict and dissention? Without exception, each Christian college claims at some point to exist to foster its own distinctive doctrine and culture. In his discussion of Catholic schools Burtchaell posits the following, which could apply to the Lutheran schools as well:

> More significant and more interesting is the failure of nerve, the defiance of purpose, and the degradation of public discourse which have drawn these schools, severally, to abandon their calling to be ministries of the Catholic Church. The who, what, when, where, why of the stories are there to be seen, and will be spread upon the page. The "whether"— might it have happened otherwise?—each reader will have to ponder afterward. In doing so he or she will perhaps be drawn to wonder whether ... the who or what threatened is not the who or what that survives (563).

Burtchaell later considers whether a "Catholic school without Catholic teachers, Catholic students, or sponsoring Catholic intellectual community" is indeed a Catholic school (714). Again, the same can be asked of the Lutheran colleges under consideration, and a brief look at Burtchaell's study shows that in all the colleges, the spiritual deficits of teachers, students, and a fostering community contribute to the dying of the Christian light.

Gettysburg College, St. Olaf College, and Concordia University have all claimed, and to some point still claim, to exist for the purpose of fostering Lutheran identity and passing on Lutheran heritage. St. Olaf's 1935-36 catalogue read, in part: "As a college of the Lutheran Church, it is loyal to the beliefs and practices of this church. In its religious teaching it lays special stress on specific Lutheran doctrines and traditions...." However, non-Lutheran students were assured that they would not be subjected to Lutheran "propaganda." By 1992-93 the catalogue had dropped any reference to maintaining a Lutheran tradition, seeking instead to be "an inclusive community, respecting those of differing backgrounds and beliefs" (501). Perhaps their goal was realized; by 1991 only 52% of the students claimed to be Lutheran.

Gettysburg began a little differently; it was assumed that because Lutherans founded the college and the faculty was Lutheran, a Lutheran atmosphere would "just happen" (535). However, from the beginning, non-Lutherans were invited to attend, and non-sectananism was the rule—even though the

college would be Lutheran, an obvious and confusing contradiction, but maybe not so obvious in the atmosphere of Pietism that dominated some Lutheran churches in the nineteenth century. President McKnight in 1892 had claimed that Gettysburg was typical of colleges "... which teach religion without interfering with anyone's conscience .... You might attend such colleges for months without discovering what denominations patronize them." A dubious distinction, we would assume, but this attitude was at the heart of Pietism (470). Since there was no solid Lutheran base, things naturally deteriorated at Gettysburg, as the following examples illustrate. In 1968 a committee from Gustavus Adolphus College released a report that "explained that colleges associated with the church, which it avoids calling 'Lutheran Colleges,' do not exist for the church's benefit, nor are they agencies of the church. They are a vehicle of service by the church in the world." The committee suggested that Gettysburg and other colleges adopt a chapel-for-credit option. Apparently "worship had caused 'uneasiness' in the past," and offering credit for attending chapel would transform the experience into one with ... genuine educational value" (482). It may only make sense then that the 1977 inaugural remarks of Charles Glassick, Gettysburg's first nonLutheran president, promised, "We will not require the students to adopt any particular set of doctrines and beliefs; in other words, there is no doctrine required to graduate from Gettysburg College." He goes on, however, to assure his audience that the Lutheran atmosphere of the school will "round out [the students'] education" (479). By this time it had become clear through enrollment numbers alone that a Lutheran experience was not what the students desired; in 1991 only ten percent of the student body was Lutheran.

Perhaps most distressing to us as WELS Lutherans is the story of Concordia University, an LCMS enterprise. As recently as 1958 Concordia publicly professed a "firm faith in Jesus Christ as the only Savior from sin ... a sincere acceptance of the Holy Scriptures as the revealed truth of God ... a grateful consecration to the ministry of the Word and to the extension of the Kingdom of God..." (522). And, unlike the other Lutheran schools, which had dropped serious teaching expectations for their graduates, Concordia still expected that its graduates would teach in LCMS elementary or high schools and teach religion in those schools in accordance with the doctrines of the LCMS (523). These are commendable aims. Partially as a result of the growing number of LCMS schools which needed to be subsidized, and partially because many incoming students did not intend to teach in the church schools, the strong theological grasp of the synod over the college began to slip. Then came the inner turmoil of the LCMS over critical matters of doctrine, so critical that some churches severed themselves from the synod and many heterodox teachers left the college. All of this happened in

front of the students, many of whom did not profess an interest in serving the church following graduation.

For the Catholic and Lutheran schools alike, the most disheartening element of their disengagements from their churches has been the attitude and aptitude of the faculty. Each Lutheran model follows the same course initially: Lutheran scholars are sought to inculcate the values of Lutheranism into the students through their teaching, lives, and attitudes. For the Catholic colleges under study, only members of each founding order were included in the faculty, seemingly a foolproof plan. Yet in both churches, the desire to be seen as scholarly, the pressure to be "inclusive," and, in a most tangible way, the drive for government funding, led to the abandonment of solid qualifications for faculty. If the faculty cannot pass on the Lutheran or Catholic culture, how can that experience possibly survive in a school?

A survey of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities conducted in 1996 "shows that though 90-100 percent of them identify their institutions as Catholic in faculty recruitment notices, only 2-7 percent specify any preference for Catholic faculty, and only 2-11 percent attempt to have a predominantly Catholic faculty." Most of the universities claim to hire the most qualified candidate regardless of religion (712). In 1978, Sister Alice Gallin, O.S.U., gave this astounding warning to college faculty: "[Colleges] must be extremely cautious in trying to develop a faculty conducive to our central purpose [fostering faith]" because it might threaten academic freedom (713). God protect us from this kind of academic freedom.

The Lutheran model has not fared much better. There has been a definite attempt to procure non-Lutheran faculty, for all of the worldly reasons mentioned above. In 1968, Lutheran theologian William Jennings suggested that "a church-related college needs honest atheists, for in a secular age atheism is for some the most tenable position" (483). In 1975 Francis Gamlein stated in a study of Lutheran colleges, "No measure of presidential eloquence or chapel emphasis can compensate for faculty ignorance of Christian experience, indifference to it, or sequestration of it in a religion department" (487). One of the colleges he was specifically referring to was Gettysburg. One study conducted in 1980 found that only one third of the faculty in colleges related to the Lutheran Church in America were Lutheran. A minority of the two-thirds who were non-Lutheran considered themselves religiously active, and the majority of the two-thirds non-Lutheran was indifferent to their college's religious emphasis. Considering all of this, it is not surprising that the same study found that only one third of the students believed that most faculty should be professing Christians (488). Notice that this did not say "Lutherans." The fall from the high ideals of the all-consuming Lutheran experience seems to be complete.

My reaction to my reading can best be understood by examining the prayer I

have been inspired to raise almost daily since beginning to read this book. I pray, "Thank you, God, for giving us the Scriptures, for leading us out of the darkness through the Reformation, for preserving the purity of your doctrine in the WELS, and for maintaining our churches and schools in the teaching of the true Word. God, preserve our teachings, guard and protect our schools, prevent sin, Satan, and the world from allowing us to turn either to the left or to the right from the truth you have given us." Admittedly, I am not always this eloquent when I pray, and sometimes the prayers are much more impromptu, like, "Lord! How could someone say something like that! Send someone to him to straighten him out!" However, I think we can look at the more formal prayer above in its parts to see why I was inspired so to pray from what I learned in this book.

First, I am moved to thank God for the Scriptures. One factor which should motivate all Christian educators is the zeal to know the Bible as well as possible and to jealously defend it against attack from within and without. What is the point of being a Christian school that ignores the sanctity of Scripture or allows for alternative readings of the text, readings which God clearly forbids? I was particularly saddened by the decision of Concordia, and apparently the leadership of the LCMS, to back away from serious biblical scholarship after the controversies at the college in the late 1960s. "The aftermath of the dispersal of the Concordia Seminary, which had been the only scholarly working group sponsored by the church, has imposed an informal but effective cloture on open theological renewal and inquiry in the colleges..." (532). Emerging, from debate and error can be the best time to reaffirm the right way to approach the Bible and can be the perfect opportunity to draw people

"God, preserve our teachings, guard and protect our schools, prevent sin, Satan, and the world from allowing us to turn either to the left or to the right from the truth you have given us."

together in the knowledge that there is only one way to approach God's Word-on his terms. Obviously, this approach is not inclusive of any and every fancy of the human mind, sometimes called "academic inquiry" exactly what every one of the schools in the study are trying to promote—to the detriment of the Scriptures.

Secondly, I thank God for our

Lutheran heritage. I certainly would expect the Lutheran colleges to acknowledge the importance of our past and endeavor to retain and promote our Lutheran culture. Far from this, Lutheran culture as a living reality in the lives of the students at the schools in this study is practically a non-issue. The key here is the faculty and how they live and teach: "Teaching styles and personal integration of faith and learning by individual instructors appeared to be the critical factor in determining the degree to which a Christian point of view was expressed in the educational process" (Donald Ray Just quoted on 533). If we want to retain the legacy of Lutheranism in our schools, our teachers must be strong, confessing WELS or ELS Lutherans who demonstrate an active relationship with Jesus through personal Bible study, church attendance, right living, and active, nurturing concern for their students and fellow instructors.

Finally, I thank God for our Lutheran stamina, a determination that comes only from the Holy Spirit. If we keep the Law and the gospel, ordered and taught as they should be, central in all we do, God will bless our efforts. I can see that we have to resist a multitude of worldly influences and temptations. The Catholics, especially, fell under the accusation that they were not scholarly enough and considered an abandonment of their Catholic identity as part of the remedy for this "problem" (711). There will be the temptation to seek money and resources from sources which can bind us to their regulations. It may be tempting to invite non-Lutheran "scholars" to grace us with their presence on the faculty. But, as can be readily seen in this study, this is a sure deathknell to distinctive Lutheranism.

How can we remember the Lord our God? One of the ways is to openly affirm why the WELS has Lutheran colleges. It is not to make money, not to produce, or to attract, dazzling scholars, not to be looked upon by the world as relevant or "inclusive." We are here to further the Great Commission, to spread the gospel, and to equip others to do the same in the classroom, the pulpit, the congregation, the workplace, the street. Then when we have "eaten and are satisfied" we can remember that it was the Lord who brought us out of captivity from sin. I want to share the good land that the Lord has given us with all other Christians. I do not pray that everyone become WELS; I pray that all the churches that claim Christ as their Savior examine themselves in the light of his clear Word and bring up their children in the purity of doctrine the Scriptures so clearly teach. Then we will never forget the Lord our God. ❧

Note: All references are taken from Burtchaell, James Tunstead. The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from their Christian Colleges. Grand Rapids:Eerdmans, 1998.

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Take us on the Quest of Beauty,
Poet Seer of Galilee.
Making all our dreams creative,
Through their fellowship with Thee.

Take us on the Quest of Knowledge
Clearest Thinker man has known!
Make our minds sincere and patient,
Satisfied by Truth alone.

Take us on the Quest of Service,
Kingly Servant of man's need,
Let us work with Thee for others,
Anywhere Thy purpose leads.

All along our Quest's far pathways,
Christ our Leader and our guide,
Make us conscious of Thy presence,
Walking always at our side.

Eleanor B. Stock

THE LUTHERAN EDUCATOR