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Editor — John R. Isch

Editorial Board — Mark J. Lenz, Cheryl A. Loomis, Philip M. Leyrer

Editorial correspondence and articles
should be sent to *The Lutheran Educator*, Editor,
Martin Luther College, 1995 Luther Court, New
Ulm, MN 56073. Phone 507-354-8221. Fax 507-
354-8225. e-mail: lutheraneducator@mlc-wels.edu

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Assessment and Accountability

The passage of the federal act, *No Child Left Behind*, forces schools to examine accountability systems. Beginning in 2002, each state was expected to have a single statewide system based on academic standards and assessments. *No Child Left Behind* mandates testing. The same assessment must be used to measure achievement of all children at each grade level. Assessments must be aligned with state standards and must include a variety of question types. While states have the freedom to establish their own accountability system, each must identify schools that are underachieving. The pressure to meet annual performance goals is high. Sanctions will be put in place for districts that do not meet the goal.

Educators and legislators need to establish a common ground of understanding for what education is all about. Is the measure of learning found in the assessment? Are assessment results used to make changes in curriculum and improve instruction? Standards based reform sparked debate regarding how teaching should be done. Process and product were discussed. Assessment included authentic demonstration with the encouragement for learners to “show what they know.” Alternate forms of assessment were encouraged to demonstrate the process of learning.

Assessment is bigger than testing. Assessment needs to be a part of curriculum and instruction. No act of measurement in education can remove the human factor. The relationship among families, students and teachers cannot be quantified. Are students equally prepared for test taking? Presumed knowledge along with background information for the “how-to’s” in test taking are factors to consider in test preparation. Educators need to question the purpose behind assessment. Reg Allen, Director of Statewide Assessment for Minnesota, suggests that all schools be able to give an answer to stakeholders involved in education on each of the following questions.

What does the student know?

How can this knowledge be demonstrated?

How good is this test in the context of my state?

How good is this test in a national context?

How good is this test in an international context?

Are the results a gain on the same group’s results from last year?

These questions help educators put testing into perspective. While legislation may mandate certain tests, educators can explain the purpose of assessment. Rather than subject children to additional testing for the sake of testing, educators need to consider the purpose for assessments and choose wisely. Assessment is an integral part of teaching. Regular, periodic observations of ongoing classroom activities provide an accurate picture of the learner. Finally, assessment needs to be beneficial for the learner. It should give the student a chance to reflect on his growth and progress over a period of time.

CL



Encouragement for Those Who Feel Overwhelmed

John R. Schultz

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:9

At the risk of being criticized as judgmental, my observations seem to indicate that one of the negative characteristics frequently found among us is lack of encouragement in our relationships with others. Think about it. When did you last encourage someone else? The Scriptures teach by word and example that being Christ-like also involves compassion for those who are down, discouraged, or forgotten.

Remember Barnabas? The book of Acts tells us his name means "Son of Encouragement." He encouraged the infant church in Jerusalem by example as he laid the proceeds from the sale of a field at the apostle's feet. His words encouraged the church in Antioch to remain true to the Lord "with all their hearts." He sought out Saul in Tarsus and led him to Antioch where the names "Barnabas and Saul" soon switched to "Paul and Barnabas." He recognized that this younger man, Paul, was called by the Lord for a great min-

istry and he encouraged him with his full support.

Life in this sinful world is dangerous. Even if we live in a safe neighborhood, bad things still happen. People die in car accidents or get terrible diseases. Parents divorce, children suffer. The dangers are real and fear is often the sinful response. Experiences in the teaching ministry are sometimes stressful and threatening. Troubled children can disrupt classrooms. Parents can be unreasonable. Colleagues are sometimes irritable. Workloads can be overwhelming. The stress is real and discouragement is often the sinful response.

But the Word of God gives us perspective on our fears and discouragements. God told Joshua not to tremble, be terrified or discouraged, even in the face of real dangers. Why? Because the Lord his God would be with him wherever he went. We believe that the Lord's presence transforms even bad experiences. This Spirit-given faith can turn our fear and discouragement into courage.

What are you afraid of? Take your fears and discouragements to the Lord.

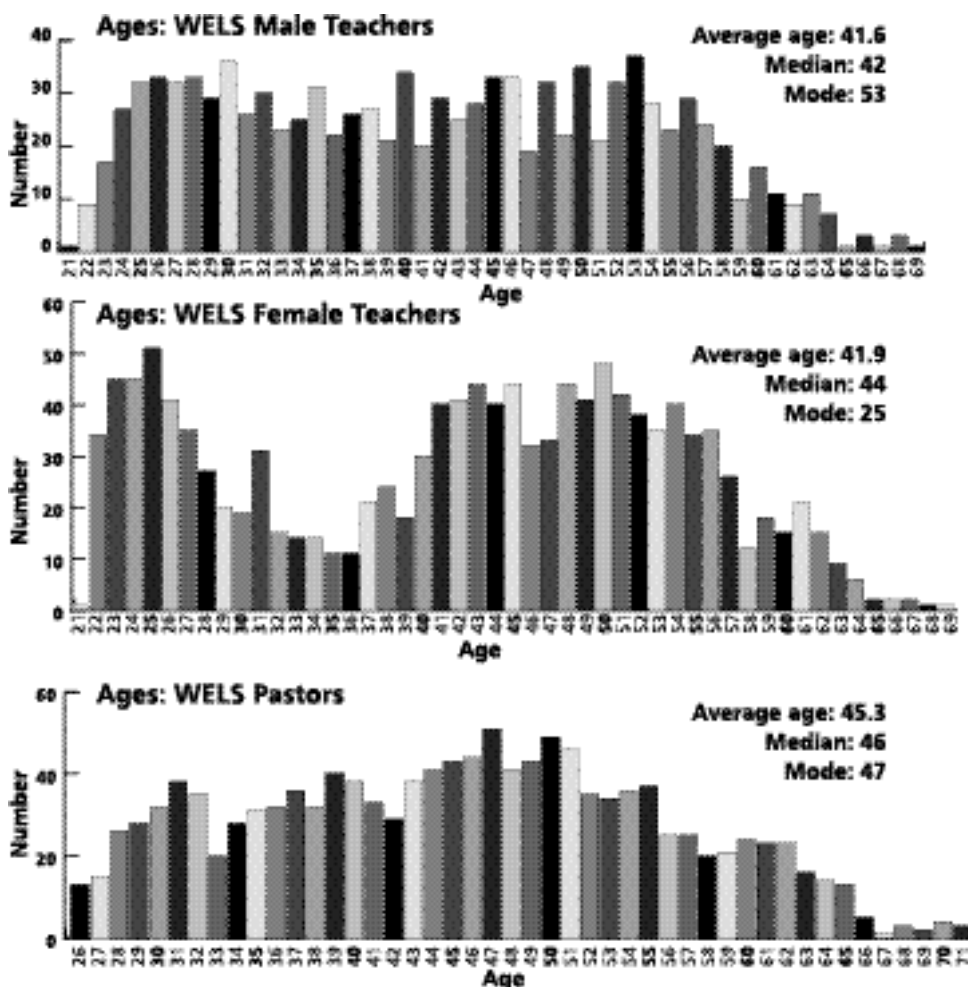
Ask him to give you courage and strength. And your teachers and staff members? Be a Barnabas. Encourage them with this Word of God and others. Do it often. The Lord will richly bless this Christ-like characteristic of compassion.

Read some more: Joshua 1: 1-9

Dear Lord, increase my faith in your promises that I may rely on your presence. Help me to encourage others so they may remain strong and courageous. Amen.

John R. Schultz until recently served as principal/administrator of Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School. He is currently retired and living in New Ulm, Minnesota.

WELS Factoid



Classroom Assessments

Carla Melendy

What is Assessment?

The collecting of information regarding teaching and learning in classrooms is referred to as assessment. Brookhart (1999) described assessment as gathering and interpreting information about student learning and evaluation as making judgments about the information gathered. "Good assessment yields good information about the results of instruction; it itself is a necessary component of good instruction" (Brookhart, 1999). Bednar, Cunningham, Duffy, and Perry (as cited in Burke, 1994, p. xiii) stated,

Learning is a constructive process in which the learner is building an internal representation of knowledge, a personal interpretation of experience. This representation is constantly open to change. Learning is an active process in which meaning is developed on the basis of experience.

Each day, teachers assess students by collecting information about the teaching and learning that is occurring in their classrooms. Wiggins (1998) stated, "One cannot improve or learn to improve unless one knows how one is doing in performance" (p. 44). Tests, checklists, interviews, performances, observations, daily assignments, and

class discussions are examples of classroom assessments. They may be collected formally or informally and may be graded or non-graded.

According to McTighe and Farrar (1998) "Classroom assessment should: (1) inform teaching and improve learning; (2) use multiple sources of information; and (3) provide valid, reliable, and fair measurements" (p. 6). Many elementary teachers use a variety of assessments in their classrooms. "The challenge is to develop a picture of the whole person using a variety of evidence, including tests, and to do so in the most feasible and helpful (to the student) way" (Wiggins, 1993, p. 23). Many elementary teachers include class participation, discussion, effort, and extra credit as part of the summative evaluation that yields a grade (McMillan, Myran, & Workman, 2002).

"Assessment directly affects learning in that it provides the necessary feedback for effective learning. It indirectly affects learning in that instruction is commonly skewed toward what is assessed; and, obviously, what is taught affects what is learned" (Marzano, Pickering, & McTighe, 1994). Therefore, the principles of good instruction are a priority. "Instead of teaching children what to think, we

need to teach them how to think” (Daniels and Bizar, 1998, pp. 233-234). Stiggins (1999) believed, “If assessment is not working effectively in our classrooms every day, then assessment at all other levels (district, state, national, or international) represents a complete waste of time and money” (p. 193). Therefore, before assessments are undertaken, authentic instruction must be planned so that assessments support and encourage authentic learning.

Authentic Instruction

“Students, like adults, do their best work when there is a clear opportunity for self-satisfaction—the feeling that comes from having mastered something or contributed something of obvious value” (Wiggins, 1993). Newmann and Associates (1996) viewed most work in school as the transmission of knowledge to students, reception of the knowledge by students, and finally, the reproduction of the knowledge by the students. They believed that deeper understanding consists of connecting learning, building relationships among concepts, and working on focused topics rather than spending time memorizing and reciting lists of facts. Authentic instruction, according to Newmann and Associates, is a combination of authentic pedagogy and authentic student achievement. “The effectiveness of any teaching technique or activity, such as lecture, small group discussion, or independent research project, depends in part on the educational goal sought for students” (Newmann and Associates,

1996, p. 17). Authentic instruction leads to authentic tasks.

Authentic Tasks

McTighe and Ferrara (1998) describe authentic tasks as realistic, requiring judgment, stimulating active learning, simulating life situations, using knowledge and skills, allowing time for practice, and encouraging feedback. Stiggins (1999) defined success as continual improvement and advised, “We must stop delivering the message to students that failure is a bad thing” (p. 196). Students need to see learning as more than a one-time demonstration of knowledge or skill. Learning occurs over time and is confirmed or disconfirmed based on new knowledge and understandings.

Authentic tasks should be encouraged for all levels and for all abilities. Kindergarteners learn to sing songs that are used in various contexts, predict story outcomes, and to make choices of activities. Elementary students build on the learning from previous years. Integration of subjects allows for skills and concepts to be embedded in the curriculum. Authentic tasks can be designed for every subject. For example, authentic language arts tasks would include children choosing their own books, sharing their books in creative ways, writing to relatives or people of their choice, writing their own books and stories to share with others, and learning to use a word processor. Authentic art tasks are integrated with other subjects when children create

illustrations, puppets, models, designs, sculptures, and other creative representations. Students might use their math skills to look for best buys in supermarket ads, to measure a one-mile path for physical education class, to plan the costs of a field trip, or to mentally calculate the cost of items on sale.

Authentic tasks in science would include opportunities for students to ask questions, make hypotheses, test their ideas, and report their findings as scientists would. Authentic social studies tasks could include mock elections, comparisons of culture, and taking neighborhood walks and mapping the neighborhood. Physical education builds positive attitudes for fitness for life, team building skills, and sportsmanship principles. Music has a performing aspect and an appreciative aspect. Some children will enjoy performing while others will find listening to music more appealing.

Authentic tasks can be tailored for children of all abilities and interests. The open-ended nature of many authentic tasks allows freedom within structure that encourages students to be responsible for learning. Children will be active rather than passive.

Authentic Achievement

Authentic tasks lead to authentic achievement. Newmann and Associates (1996) believed authentic achievement “stands for intellectual accomplishments that are worthwhile, significant, and meaningful, such as those undertaken by successful adults: scientists,

musicians, business entrepreneurs, politicians, crafts people, attorneys, novelists, physicians, designers, and so on” (pp. 23-24). Newmann and Associates listed three criteria for authentic achievement. They are construction of knowledge, disciplined inquiry, and the value of achievement beyond school. Although these three criteria may not be evident in every lesson, having them as goals can help teachers in planning quality lessons.

Authentic achievement involves hard work on the part of both students and teachers. Preparation for teachers involves more than following a book or prescription. Making adaptations in lessons to benefit and to activate students requires thought and time to plan. Students, too, will have to be actively engaged in learning. They will be challenged to use multiple forms of representation rather than relying solely on workbooks, worksheets, or pre-packaged materials. They will be asked to make decisions and to contribute to their own learning. They will be actively involved in the learning process that leads to lifelong learning. Process and product will be important and collaboration as well as competition will be encouraged. Individuals and society will benefit from this training of lifelong problem solvers (Newmann & Associates, 1996). However, if authentic achievement is the goal, then traditional assessments that require only paper-and-pencil tests will not be effective in showing student growth. Authentic achievement requires authentic assessments.

Authentic Assessment

Brookhart (1999) stated, "Authentic assessment' means that assessment tasks, whether test questions or performance assessment tasks, are grounded in the kind of work people actually do in a discipline" (p. 50). Wiggins believed, "student assessment should improve performance, not just monitor or audit it" (Wiggins, 1993, p. xiv). Wiggins (1993) and Newmann and Associates (1996) believed assessments needed to be authentic, connecting learning, thinking, and life applications. Authentic assessments support authentic instruction and measure authentic achievement. These assessments would include a variety of techniques that would encourage students to go beyond mere rote learning and to construct meanings and to apply knowledge in meaningful ways (Marzano, Pickering, & Brandt, 1990). Since many schools still use lecture as a primary teaching method and tests as the primary assessment, assessment reforms must be undertaken (Anderson, 1998). "We will be reforming our assessment environments productively when we use classroom assessment not merely as a sorting mechanism but as a means of expanding the range of students who want to succeed and who feel capable of doing so" (Stiggins, 1999, p. 195). Researchers found that when teachers taught for understanding and meaning rather than memorization and when they connected the material to students' experiences, their students consistently outperformed students in more conven-

tional classrooms on advanced skills and did as well as or better on traditional tests (Newmann and Associates, 1996, p. 43).

Stiggins (1999) suggested three ways to obtain authentic assessments: (a) Keep students involved in assessments, (b) keep students involved in keeping their own records, and (c) keep students involved by having student-led conferences. Newmann and Associates (1996) stated, "Our research suggests that students who think carefully about subjects, study them in depth, and connect them to their personal experiences are more likely to remember the facts and definitions called for on conventional tests" (p. 43).

The role of teachers in authentic assessments is critical because they help students to set high expectations of themselves. Stiggins (1999) suggested that teachers must make expectations clear, must develop high quality assessments, must involve students, must be able to communicate student achievement, and must understand the theories of effective assessment, record-keeping, and communication.

Wiggins (1993) suggested using performance or portfolio assessments instead of multiple-choice tests. However, some people believe that authentic assessments are not worth the time and money invested in them. Steinberg and Tovey (1996) reminded educators that authentic assessments are not a panacea for the problems with assessment. How assessments are used or misused is more important than the assessment itself.

Types of Authentic Assessments

How do educators assess authentic tasks and student learning? “Educative assessment means that a primary purpose of students’ participation in assessment is to teach, to help students improve on dimensions of performance that are required for genuine or authentic work, to help them conceptualize what that work looks like” (Wiggins, 1998, p. 51).

Daniels and Bizar (1998) listed six types of assessments that could be used at any grade level and in any subject. They are portfolios, conferences, anecdotal records, checklists, performance assessments, and classroom tests. They can be classified as authentic if they are used to show student learning in and beyond the classroom.

Portfolio assessments have become an important assessment tool in many schools. Williams (2000) described four types of portfolios: (a) personal, (b) academic, (c) integrated, and (d) group. Personal portfolios focus on the person and may be autobiographical or may contain a collection of a person’s best work. Academic portfolios contain graded pieces of student work. Integrated portfolios include collections from several years, cooperative work pieces, and other multifaceted pieces. Group portfolios include time capsules, school profiles, or collections of group work.

Portfolios usually have many performance assessments. “Performance assessment refers to a variety of tasks and situations in which students are given opportunities to demonstrate

their understanding and to thoughtfully apply knowledge, skills, and habits of mind in a variety of contexts” (Marzano et al., 1994, p. 13). Performance assessments include videotapes, audiotapes, concept maps, journals, investigations, graphs, artwork, pictures, computer-generated pieces, performances, and other items selected to show student growth.

Scoring Authentic Assessments

Letter grades, percentages, and scales that range from excellent to unsatisfactory are most often thought of when scoring student work. However, authentic assessments require feedback that encompasses more than a single letter grade or mark for effort. Scoring rubrics are often used in scoring authentic student work. According to Stenmark (1989), a rubric describes the requirements for varying degrees of success in responding to a problem or question. They can be analytical and holistic. Analytical scoring involves comparing responses to a standard so that scoring variations among the responses are minimal. Holistic scoring involves separating responses into broad categories. Marzano et al. (1994) believed, “If learning occurs in a holistic fashion, then assessments, too, should be able to provide holistic information, not just bits of information” (p.11). Brookhart (1999) stated, “Analytical scoring is more helpful as feedback to students than holistic scoring, because students can see where their strengths and weaknesses are and work on their skills

accordingly. Holistic scoring takes less time, because one judgment is required of the scorer instead of many. Analytic and holistic rubrics for performance assessments are similar in form to rubrics for essays and partial-credit test problems" (p.51). Assessments, whether holistic or analytic, ought to inform teachers about teaching and learning in the classroom and to give feedback to the students.

Wiggins (1993) differentiated between effective and ineffective feedback. Effective feedback is specific, descriptive, comparative to standards, usable immediately, and focuses on the process and product without judgment. Ineffective feedback praises or blames, is given too late to help students, focuses only on student attitudes, encourages competition, lacks standards, and focuses only on the product.

According to Stenmark (1989) and Wiggins (1998), self assessment is an important and necessary part of authentic assessment. Marzano (2000) stated, "Although the most underused form of classroom assessment, student self-assessment has the most flexibility and power as a combined assessment and learning tool" (p. 102). Self assessment, according to Hansen (1994, as cited in Marzano, 2000, p. 102), is critical to developing higher-order metacognitive skills and to identifying individual learning goals. However, students must have clear goals, developmentally appropriate standards, necessary tools, and support for their learning.

Suggestions for Teachers

Wiggins (1998) encouraged teachers to make changes in assessments, but he also suggested starting on a small scale. Using some performance tasks on tests, developing a few authentic tasks, and changing time limits or other constraints will begin the process. Wiggins (1998) cautioned against trying to "reinvent the wheel" (p. 330). Commercial checklists and rubrics can be a good source for teachers beginning to use authentic assessments. Teachers should enlist the support of colleagues for suggestions and feedback. Beginning work should concentrate on gaining consistency in scoring. "Attaining assessment integrity is certainly more difficult than testing what is easy to test, but consider its benefits to our goals, credibility, and self-respect" (Wiggins, 1998, p. 326).

Conclusion

"The ultimate goal for all education is to improve student learning" (Cross 1997). Assessment is a vehicle for gaining information about the teaching and learning in the classroom. "However, our legacy of defining assessing as testing rather than as performance improvement has also worked to prevent us from understanding student understanding" (Wiggins, 1998, p. 291). Banta (1999) emphasized assessment as a means to an end, not the end itself. "In education, the end is to benefit students, and assessment is but one of many possible bases for making decisions that affect our students' lives" (p.

25). Brookhart (1999) wrote, "If assessment is to improve performance, not just audit it, the techniques of measurements must be accompanied by quality feedback provided to learners" (p. iii). Focusing learning on the needs and interests of students is time consuming and a change from traditional assessments that focus on summative evaluations. As Anderson (1998) observed, "An alternative assessment paradigm, however, contributes greatly to formative evaluation. It connects teaching, learning, and assessment" (p.13).

Wiggins (1993; 1998) encouraged the use of formative as well as summative assessments in order to empower students. Stiggins (1999) stated, "We assume that the reason students do not learn is that teachers and students are not putting forth the effort required to succeed" (p. 192). "Instead of having an adversarial relationship, teacher and student are allies" (Wiggins, 1993, p. 2). This is a goal for all students whether they are just beginning school or have been in school for many years.

Assessments have different purposes and values based on the learning goals of students, teachers, and schools (Brookhart, 1999). Formative and summative assessments can be added gradually to teacher toolboxes. Teachers can seek out professional development opportunities, read assessment research, or form collaborative groups. Teaching and learning are cyclical. Teaching means little if no learning is occurring, and learning cannot happen without guidance or assessment. As McTighe and Ferrara (1998) stated,

Assessment is an essential component of the teaching and learning process. Without effective classroom assessment, it is impossible for teachers to know whether students are "hitting the target"—that is, learning what is important for them to learn. What we assess, how we assess and evaluate, and how we communicate results send a clear message to students about what is worth learning, how it should be learned, what elements of quality are most important, and how well we expect them to perform" (p. 32).

"The ultimate effectiveness of teaching depends not simply on whether a technique is used but how well it is used to promote intellectual quality" (Newmann and Associates, 1996, p. 18). "In the end, however, effective education depends upon the quality and commitment of the personnel who are involved on a daily basis" (Gardner, 1993). If the children are exhibiting understanding and the ability to apply their learning to new situations, education is happening.

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Carla Melendy is professor of education and supervisor of student teachers at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

The Parallels Between Islam and Mormonism

Frederick Wulff

A Bible class I recently attended studied the timely topic of Islam by using the text of the Qur'an (Koran) as the basis for discussion. The instructor provided valuable guidance to overflowing classes of interested students and members of the congregation. In the very first discussion session, one church member made the observation that just as Islam started with a vision(s), so did the Mormon religion of the Church of Latter Day Saints. My first reaction was that while this was true, comparing these religions is like comparing apples to oranges, especially since no one would ever expect a suicide bomber on a jihad mission to come from among our very American Mormon neighbors. Upon further reflection, I thought that these two religions, though originating in different parts of the world in totally different cultures, and in a completely different time frame, did have parallels.

Known to Unknown

A fundamental axiom of educators is we should bridge that which is unfamiliar to that which is familiar. Most of us teachers live in communities that have little contact with Muslims. What little

we know about the Islamic religion has reached us through the media accounts since September 11. On the other hand, we know quite a bit about the Mormons.

Many of us WELS teachers have visited some of the well publicized Mormon historic sites around the country and have been met with eager guides passing out all kinds of informational pamphlets. All of us have encountered the ubiquitous Mormon missionaries at the front door. Then too, we are acquainted with Mormon history because it is an integral part of 19th and 20th century American history found in our classroom textbooks.

Starting with this common background, we could engage in a little mental exercise and make some comparisons of Islam with the Mormon religion.

Revelations/Holy Books

First of all, these two religions both believe that biblical teachings have been imperfectly preserved or understood and can be full reconstituted only through supplemental revelation. In the case of the Muslims, Muhammad felt that Jews and Christians have tampered with the Bible. Both of these religions,

therefore, have their origin with visions resulting in a new alleged holy book. The revelations or visions of these two religions were brought about by an intense climate of religious strife. Muhammad (or spelled Mohammed), living at Mecca (also spelled Makkah) on a caravan route between Asia and Africa, was confronted with prevalent polytheism, along with the theological factionalism in Christendom over the person of Christ (resolved partially at a church council in 451 AD). Somewhat similarly, Joseph Smith was confronted with the factionalism of five different churches vying for members in his hometown of Palmyra. The religious strife was intensified by the fervent revival preaching of the 1820s on what was an east-west trade route from Albany to Buffalo in New York. The



introductory display at the Salt Lake City Mormon Information Center on Temple Square attempts to illustrate the different factions of Christianity encountered by Joseph Smith. Smith claimed that at the age of fourteen he had already been cautioned in a vision

that all existing religious beliefs were false (Ludlow, v II, 515). Three years later, he offered what he maintained was a simple alternative to the confusing proliferation of Christian sects (Ludlow, v III, 1334). Both Muhammad in 610 AD and later Smith in the Second Great Awakening had visions from angels (Gabriel to Muhammad and Moroni to Smith) that they were to become prophets of what was alleged to be the one and only true faith.

Ongoing Revelations

Both have a theology of ongoing revelations, although in the case of Islam the 23 years of visions ended with the death of Muhammad. The Koran stated, "If we abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten, we will replace it by a better one or one similar" (Koran 2:106). Joseph Smith said in 1842, "We believe He will yet reveal many great and important things," as confessed by Mormons in the Ninth Article of Faith. In the Mormon church, the apostles claim to receive additional visions to revise theology, as evident by the LDS changing positions toward polygamy after an 1890 Supreme Court decision and a revelation by the Mormon President Woodruff (Ludlow, v III, 1109). More recently, in 1978 after the civil rights era, Mormon President Kimball received a revelation that reversed the prohibition of accepting Blacks into their priesthood and participating in temple ordinances (Ludlow, v II, 908). Actually, the Mormons are better at adaptation to the times than the Muslims. The Mormons firmly believe

in separation of church and state with religious tolerance (Ludlow, v II, 942; v IV, 1483); but Mormons survive in the intolerant Muslim state-controlled countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran by giving their members strict instructions to refrain from any mission activity within the countries (Ludlow, v II, 902-903).

Historical Inaccuracies

Of greater significance, both religions draw upon the Apocrypha, and both have major historical inaccuracies in their sacred books. The Koran, when it refers to biblical accounts of the Old and New Testaments, is confusing and full of errors (Koran 15:26-35 and 26:23-48). References to Alexander the Great in secular history are garbled as well (Koran 18:85ff). Similarly, the Book of Mormon, published in 1830, preposterously refers to an ancient Christian history of Nephites and Lamanites in the New World before Columbus (Ludlow, v II, 804; v III, 1003; v IV, 1477). The native Americans, whom we consider the first Americans, are regarded by Mormons as descendants of the Lamanites (Ludlow, v III, 981). According to Joseph Smith, Moroni buried special golden plates at Hill Cumorah, near Palmyra in 421 AD, 1400 years before revealing the incident to him. The time framework cannot be reconciled by archeologists or historians.

The Bible of Christianity, in contrast, is firmly rooted in real history, and consequently there are many witnesses throughout the centuries substantiating

its historical and geographical references as factually accurate.

Growth

Joseph Smith initially encountered some intense hostility from the larger community. He was persecuted and moved westward, eventually to be murdered by an angry mob at Nauvoo, Illinois. Muhammad's preaching angered and frightened the Meccans and some of them even plotted to kill him. In 622, Muhammad fled to the city of Medina (also spelled Madinah) where a group of people helped him. Both religions subsequently grew at a rapid pace. Mormons increased through vigorous mission activity and, initially, from a high birth rate. In the case of Islam, Muslim calif Abu Bakr and his successors pursued militancy and built an Islamic empire. Today, the two faiths are among the United States' fastest growing religions, the former through conversions and the latter through recent immigration. Unlike Mormons, the Muslims are not primarily interested in gaining converts. Reaching out to new members is hindered by their insistence that the original Arabic language of the Koran is inseparable from its message. Many people of the world, who earlier had converted in Muslim conquered regions, had done so, not so much from conversion pressure or persecution pressure, as for relief from oppressive taxation. Whatever the case, growth was phenomenal in both religions.

Schisms

Both churches, soon after their founding, had similar schisms over prophetic succession and subsequently split into two main factions. In the case of the Mormons, the main body of believers accepted the Quorum of Twelve Apostles with its president Brigham Young, while the smaller branch that rejected this affiliation and followed the lineal successor of Joseph Smith III, became the Reorganized Church of the Latter-day Saints (Ludlow, v III, 1212). In similar fashion, the followers of Muhammad splintered into two factions over prophetic succession into what are known today known as the Shiites and Sunni Muslims. The less numerous Shiites (in Iran and southern Iraq) claim allegiance to Muhammad's descendants.

Shrines

Muhammad and Joseph Smith are closely associated with what became revered holy sites. Other sites significant to the founding activities or establishment of the respective religions have been made into historic shrines (Ludlow, v II, 592ff). As a study tour student or as a tourist on vacation, you may have visited many of these sites. Mormon sites include Palmyra in New York, North Omaha in Nebraska, Liberty Jail in Missouri, Nauvoo in Illinois, and the famous Mormon Tabernacle in Utah. Muslims most highly regard Mecca and Medina, but I would guess that high on the list for Islamic sites would be the

Pavilion of Holy Relics in the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul. Here one may view a footprint of Muhammad, a lock of the prophet's hair, a strand of his beard, a tooth, a handwritten letter, and soil from his burial site. In Istanbul, you may have also toured Muslim mosques like the oft-visited Sultan Ahmet Mosque (Blue Mosque). Other significant mosques, like the Taj Mahal in India, and the Alhambra in Spain, are also popular shrines. Yet, both religions have very firm restrictions banning outsiders' attendance at some particular sites. The interior of the LDS Mormon Temple, or any Mormon temple for that matter, is not open to the public and only those having proper credentials of worthiness are admitted. In these temples, the living may be baptized for the dead (by proxy) and provisions made for eternal marriages, both for the living and the dead. Muslims, too, have some stringent restrictions. The entire city of Mecca, with its sacred Kaaba, is strictly off limits to non-Muslims.

Outward Behavior

Both Islam and the Mormon church stress work righteousness, which includes a firm prohibition of alcohol. Conformity to strictly prescribed behavior is essential to eternal salvation for both. Muhammad exhorted his followers to submit to the five pillars of Muslim obedience. Giving alms to the poor is quite important, most notably in the month of Ramadan. The Mormons are well known for charitable endeavors, above all for taking care of the eco-

nomic needs of their own (Ludlow, v II, 661; v III, 113). My own personal experiences, in leading study tours through Mormon country and then later visiting Muslim countries as a tourist, were that outward behavior was extremely important to the believers of those respective religions. Joseph Smith had promoted a mutant Puritanism of sorts, derived from the influence of early New England revivalists, whereas Muhammad required total submission to Allah. Followers of both religions are repulsed by the low community standards and prevailing loose morality of our present modern society.

Sin and Redemption

On the most vital issue, both religions make references to Jesus Christ as a prophet, with the Mormons, relatively speaking, treating him more favorably. Neither give Christ due credit. Interestingly enough, Mormons use the hymn text of "I Know That My Redeemer Lives" by Samuel Medley, but their interpretation of Jesus as redeemer is unique and limited (Ludlow, v IV, 1700). Muslims believe: "The messiah Jesus, the son of Mary, was no more than God's apostle... God forbid that He Himself should beget a son" (Koran 4:171). In the Muslim Koran, Christ did not rise from the dead: "They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but they thought they did... They did not slay him for certain" (Koran 4:156-158). The Koran further states that Christ is not God and should not be worshiped "instead of God" (Koran

3:47). Both religions maintain we have no original sin, and all people are perceived as capable of doing good and satisfying God with their behavior (Ludlow, v III, 985 and Koran 35:29,3). Mormons teach that children younger than eight are not capable of committing sin and are not held accountable for sin. They believe that "men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression" (Ludlow, v I, 13; v II, 673). Most alarmingly, Mormons teach that "Christ's atonement gifts are conditioned upon obedience and diligence in keeping God's commandments in life's journey. The kind or nature of the resurrected body, as well as the time of one's resurrection, is affected very directly by the extent of one's faithfulness in this life" (Ludlow, v I, 84).

Materialistic Hereafter

The salvation that Muslims and Mormons believe they earn takes them to a materialistic heaven. For Muslims, God will say, "Eat and drink to your heart's content." Heaven is a fleshly paradise of delights with "dark eyed houris (virgins)" (Koran 52:15-17). For Mormons, a physical hereafter awaits them, "to experience physical sensations of all kinds" (Ludlow, v I, 401; v II, 466) and even their animals will enjoy eternal felicity praising God in languages God understands (Ludlow, v I, 42). There are, however, among Mormons degrees of glory or rewards, commensurate with the law they have obeyed. Those in the highest level and who have an eternal marriage will now have spiritual chil-

dren. (Ludlow, v I, 368; v II, 465). If any are judged unworthy, they are given time in hell where they learn to abide by the laws they rejected; eventually they receive a lower glory depending on the lives they had lived (Ludlow, v I, 369). It's all up to the individual. In the religion of Islam, the unworthy who do not



totally submit to Allah, face real hell (Koran 4:13). Many, if not most, of the verses in the Koran threaten hellfire if your works are not sufficient. Yet, like the Apocryphal type purgatory of Mormons, in Islam a person suffers refining punishment before being received in heaven.

Conclusion

Of course these two religions have many differences besides the positions on freedom of religion and religious toleration. The topic of differences could pro-

vide fodder for a lengthy discourse. The core of all man-made religions, however, is the same. After a perusal of the Koran and the Book of Mormon, one cannot help but come away with a greater appreciation of the uniqueness of the Holy Scriptures in our Christian faith. What a contrast between man-made religions based on a futile work righteousness and a Christian's assurance of a loving God who has done it all for us. Assurance of salvation in Christ is revealed in the sure foundation of the infallible Word! With the WELS hymn writer Kurt Eggert we could sum up this love for us as "amazing grace." It is this amazing grace that prompts our expressions of appreciation to our loving God.

*Amazing grace-that chose us e'r the
worlds were made*

*Amazing grace-that sent your Son to save
Amazing grace-that robed us in your righ-
teousness*

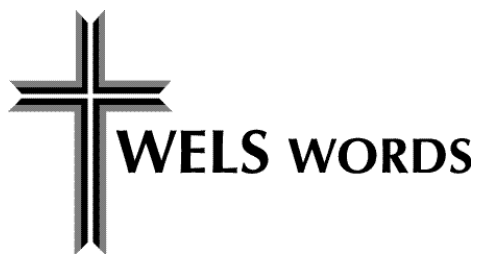
*And taught our lips to sing in glory and
praise*

Christian Worship 392:2 ♪

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*Professor emeritus Frederick Wulff
(wulff@newulmtel.net) taught history and social
science at Martin Luther College. He currently
lives in New Ulm, Minnesota.*



Evangelism

Geoffrey Kieta

Everybody knows what evangelism means, right? It means getting new members. It means knocking on doors. It means forming a new board and a new position on the church council. Well, what would you say if I told you that that isn't entirely correct? Evangelism is what we might call a BSTW ("big scary theological word"). Like most BSTW's, it really means something very simple: it means sharing the good news of Jesus.

There is an old word in English for gospel: *evangel*. It is also the Greek word for gospel. It is the reason that we are the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and why your congregation is probably called something like Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church. What those names mean is that we are the Wisconsin Gospel-preaching Lutheran Synod and Grace Gospel-preaching Lutheran Church. In the same way, evangelism is "gospelism," it's sharing the good news of Jesus. So while we may be thinking about getting new members into our church, that is really secondary. First of all, evangelism is about telling people that Jesus died for their sins. If

they chose to join our church and celebrate that truth with us, wonderful! If they believe the message, but wind up with another church body, that is something of a disappointment. But we still pray that God would get them to heaven. If they reject the message and are hardened in their unbelief, that is truly sad. But it doesn't mean we didn't "do evangelism"—we did. We shared the gospel.

In our church, we tend to use the word evangelism in a more technical sense. That is where the idea of knocking on doors comes in. We often use "evangelism" to mean the formal program that we have in our congregation to share the gospel. Then we tend to use "outreach" for the things that we do individually to share our faith.

God has given us the commission to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations. That Great Commission includes us. In 21st century America, we don't have to "go" very far—God is bringing all nations right here to us. Every one of our congregations is surrounded by thousands of unchurched people. For that reason, we "do evangelism" and we "do outreach." Our con-

gregation makes concerted efforts to invite people with the gospel, and you and I, on a personal level, share our faith.

St. Paul says, "For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task?" (2 Cor 2:15,16) These words have special poignancy for us, because Paul was talking about the ministry. Even though teachers often are not the people out there knocking on doors, what Paul says here is still true. Every elementary school teacher is "the aroma of Christ." You smell like life to the members of your congregation, and especially to the children God has committed to your spiritual care. The gospel that you teach to them is your "perfume." And as you spend time in the homes of those children, that aroma continues. While "evangelism" and "outreach" may not be the central issues of your call, in most schools, they are a part of your call, especially as more and more Lutheran elementary schools come to be viewed as outreach arms of our congregations.

Obviously, we want people to hear the message that gives life. But very few people are "on fire" to serve in evangelism programs in congregations. Busy teachers may have difficulty fitting that activity into their schedule, especially during the school year. But on a deeper level, I think many called workers (including myself) have to admit to a certain level of discomfort with the whole idea. This may have something to do with that

idea that an evangelism program equals knocking on doors. But that is not the case. An evangelism program really is nothing more than a commitment on the part of your Evangelical Lutheran Church to share the gospel with those who are outside of our congregation. That commitment can take the form of

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If every unchurched person who was a friend, acquaintance, or relative of our members came to church, we wouldn't have time to teach all the adult information classes that we would need to hold.

”

a board, but it doesn't have to. It can mean knocking on doors, although in my opinion there are much more effective ways to reach out to our community. But it does mean that as a congregation, we make a commitment to reach out to our community.

When I say that, I don't want to put down the personal efforts that I am sure

many of us are making. In fact, statistically speaking, the most effective way to share the gospel is through our own network of friends and acquaintances. If every unchurched person who was a friend, acquaintance, or relative of our members came to church, we wouldn't have time to teach all the adult information classes that we would need to hold.

May God so bless our efforts!

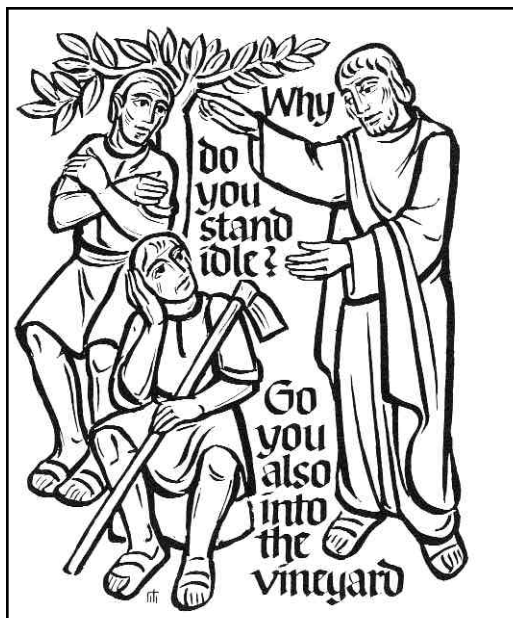
So, do we need to have a commitment to "do evangelism" in our congregations? I think so. After all, God has richly blessed us with many different gifts, and has given us a field full of opportunities to work. Does that mean that we will be forming committees and knocking doors? Maybe. But first we need to put our heads

together and look at what gifts and opportunities God has given us, what limitations we have. Then, if a committee is the way to go, we can decide that together. But remember, an evangelism board does not an evangelism program make. The commitment of God's people to work together to reach out to our community, with or without a committee, does. The teacher's role in that commitment may have more to do with spiritual leadership within the congrega-

tion than it has to do with the actual activities the board for evangelism comes up with. That leadership needs to be exercised in more settings than just in the classroom. Principals, especially, need to show a real commitment to being the "aroma of Christ" in and outside of our congregation.

Of course, one of the hardest things

about making a congregational commitment to reach out with the gospel is that it is really scary. After all, if the congregation makes a commitment, the members of the congregation have to do the work. At some point, we have to talk about Jesus. That can be very difficult. One summer when I was studying at the semi-



nary, I worked for a mission in New York City. One evening the pastor sent me to make a call on a "prospect." As I was walking through Brooklyn to talk to a person I didn't know, I could feel my stomach churning. All the way there, I kept thinking to myself, "I hope she's not home. I hope she's not home." (She wasn't.)

I understand that it is intimidating to share our faith with others. It's work, hard work. But God promises us that he

will be with us when we do his work. Success or failure are in his hands. If sharing the good news of the love of Christ means that we have to swallow our pride and even take the risk of being ridiculed or rejected, then we need to recognize that is part of being a Christian. If being called workers means that we personally need to model the willingness to step up and be ridiculed, then we need to recognize that is the price of admission to the high calling of the public ministry.

Does that sound too harsh? Well, the law is like that. We need to recognize that we are timid about sharing our faith because we are sinners. It was my sinful flesh that hoped that the lady in Brooklyn would not be home, and that brought me smack into the face of God's command to share the good news with the whole world, a command that I often have not fulfilled. But God doesn't leave me with my failure. The very message that God calls us to proclaim is the one that says to me that my failings as an evangelist, as a gospel-sharer, have been forgiven. Even my failing to teach and model and proclaim the great commission to the people God has called me to serve has been forgiven. Even before he created the world, God planned to save us from the many times that we would not share the gospel freely and with joy. For centuries, God guided history toward Bethlehem so that we would not pay the price for being content that we know the gospel, and doing little to help others hear it. God sent the gospel over land and sea and eventually brought it to our home

congregation so that you and I would hear the good news that Jesus has taken away the sin of poor spiritual leadership from every one of us. Jesus was the perfect gospel-sharer, and God gave his sharing to us. God gave Jesus all our failings, and he paid for them on the cross. When he rose, God promised you and me that we are perfect and forgiven.

A recent advertisement for evangelism materials that we received at church promised to "lay a real burden" on the congregation to do outreach. Lay a burden? That isn't what evangelism is about. That isn't what the gospel is about. Jesus did call us to reach out to all people. But God doesn't want it to be because we are under a burden. He wants it to be because we are full of the Holy Spirit, full of the joy of the gospel, full of the knowledge that our own sins have been forgiven. We are full of that knowledge—because we have heard that message of forgiveness. ✠

Pastor Geoffrey Kieta serves Grace Lutheran Church, Muskego, Michigan.

*Be my
disciples*



Homenetters: A Unique WELS Online Community

Rachel Mendell

I would like to introduce you to Homenet and Homenetters. I would also like to invite you to come visit this online community—teachers, pastors, parents, and learn from the WELS home educators on the front lines of home education.

It started with a teleconference of WELS/ELS home educators, a suggestion from Daniel Schmeling, and talent to create and maintain it. Homenet was begun to keep these unique home educators connected.

WELS home educators have been around for a long time. Ten years ago they were loosely organized by a grassroots newsletter called *WELL AT HOME*, pen pals, and phone calls. With the internet being available, an online community became possible.

Unofficial statistics report approximately 340 families that home school in WELS/ELS making the number of children about 1,000. These families are spread throughout the U.S. and other countries making communication and encouragement difficult. Homenet offers an online community for discussion, sharing, advice, and cooperation for those with internet access.

Everything can be discussed on Homenet, from household ideas to philosophical discussions. Here is a sample of the discussions held in the past:

- ✦ Emotional aspects of home education and child rearing
- ✦ Being a stay-at-home-mom (SAHM) versus getting a job or continuing in a pre-child career
- ✦ Fellowship with non-Lutheran home educators
- ✦ How other families “do school”
- ✦ Methods of education (traditional, unit study, classical, un-schooling, etc.)
- ✦ How to teach the Bible and other religious questions
- ✦ Books and curriculum
- ✦ Parenting advice
- ✦ Socialization
- ✦ Attacks on home educators from strangers, family, and friends
- ✦ Appropriate age levels for different topics and experiences
- ✦ Advice for new home educators
- ✦ Advice for veterans caught in a new situation
- ✦ Advice for families considering home education and where to get further assistance
- ✦ Advice about home education for high school age students
- ✦ Suggestions for devotionals and resources
- ✦ Swapping and buying used curricula
- ✦ Web sites for help, downloads, lesson plans, offers, tutorials
- ✦ Suggestions for school teachers and

others helping home educators in their congregation

- ✦ Airing opinions
- ✦ Prayer requests and encouragement

I asked Homenetters what they liked best about the loop. Here are some of the responses:

- * I love the fact that I can communicate with fellow Christians from all over the world who share my beliefs. (Martha)
- * The encouragement is wonderful, too, because we don't get that as much on a local level. (Jan)
- * The Christian fellowship with other homeschooling families, which I can't get at any local support groups: to me, that is so refreshing and supporting. (Lisa)
- * We need this list to talk to each other and it serves a perfect purpose. I feel much closer to the people on this homeschool list than local home-school groups I meet with. Just knowing this list is here helps my peace of mind. (Shelby)
- * I have had multiple folks let me know that Homenet is the best thing that ever happened to them during their home school careers (even long-time veterans). What a blessing God provides to his children in providing the technology to bind us when we are separated by such vast distances as Alaska to Florida! (Kelly)
- * Great ideas and the support of each other as fellow Christians. (Gina)
- * The almost instant help I get. (Mary)
Homenetters were also kind to share personal memories of how Homenet helped them in a difficult situation.

* I was one of the first on Homenet. I had just finished homeschooling my fifth grader and was anticipating teaching my second grader in the fall. Suddenly, my junior at LPS decided not to go back for her senior year! Panic, but Homenet to the rescue. Learned a lot fast thanks to many who had been there before me. I had instant info on GED vs. diploma, dual enrollment, etc. (Mary in FL)

- * There have been so many times when I've been blessed by this avenue for support and encouragement. There are many interesting and wise homeschooling parents among us! (Gina)
- * I [had] just started homeschooling this year with my [four year old] daughter and was very pleased to find Homenet when I had a miscarriage at 18 weeks. ... I wrote to fellow homenetters asking for support and advice. ... I was amazed at the response I received, and very blessed. ... I just wanted to let you know that Homenet fills a very needed spot within our synod and I'm very grateful for it. ... Homenet is so needed because most of us don't personally know of other WELS, homeschoolers that we can talk with on a daily or weekly basis. When I started homeschooling, we were the only family at our church, but now our pastor and his wife are homeschooling, too! (Sheryl)
- * When I did join (before actually homeschooling) and asked for advice, the response was wonderful, so much love and support and

encouragement! I'd probably have stayed with Homenet even if I hadn't homeschooled! (Lisa)

* Martha in NH told us about Homenet and so we decided to join for helpful advice from fellow WELS homeschoolers since we are rather isolated out here. I have a folder set up for the messages I want to keep from Homenet and last count there were 116 e-mails in there! I really enjoy the fellowship and friendship shown on Homenet, the willingness to help each other out, and the wisdom shared by those who are farther along on the path. (Jan)

* The outpouring of love and support that I've received over the past few years from fellow homenetters, has been incredible. The prayer support especially has been wonderful. It is also terrific knowing that we are not alone. Every time I had a question about anything, there was someone "out there" in Homenetland who had advice to give or thoughts to share. (Martha in NH)

I asked homenetters what they would want readers to learn about home education and homeschoolers:

* I think non-homeschooling people will get a good idea of what the day-to-day joys and challenges of homeschooling are and how people feel about what they are doing. Also why they do it. I am now a non-homeschooler again, and I still read the posts. It is just good interaction between Christians with similar values and goals. (Truda)

* We're very opinionated people, but

quick to forgive and receive forgiveness. God's Word is the basis for our lives. There is a lot of work and responsibility in teaching our children. Lots of different types of people from all walks of life homeschool and for many different reasons, but we are all tied together in Christ ... we freely give advice to each other on what works and what doesn't. ... homeschooling is a lifestyle. Homeschooling is fun! (Jan in NY)

* I hope non-homeschoolers will see that we are serious about both our children's education and more importantly about living lives worthy of our calling as God's people. We aren't just placing workbooks in front of them but are busy on Homenet discussing best practice, looking for ideas and materials and thoughts on keeping balance in our lives. (Debbie in WI)

* I think that non-homeschoolers will learn more about their own children from Homenet such as how children learn, when certain windows of learning are open, some activities to do with their children after school to supplement their learning. Also, they might learn how to handle different situations when their children are having trouble in school and maybe even figure out why they are having trouble in school. I just think that with so many veterans (and new teachers, as well) giving advice and opinions, you can't possibly walk away with nothing! And there is also much to be learned on the spiritual training of children. Not that home-

schoolers are experts, but that is a definite focus when we are teaching our children at home. And the ideas and support in that area are terrific for non-homeschoolers, too! (Lisa in MI)

- * My hope would be that onlookers would see that homeschooling is another option and even an alternative for our children. Many people seem to have such formulated opinions on homeschooling, I hope that the attitude can change and people can see the positive side of it ... Homenet educates ... It is a gift from God. (Stephanie in AZ)
- * Hopefully... readers of Homenet will learn that there are many ways to approach anything, including school choices and homeschooling. They will learn that there are many programs and curriculum choices to purchase, as well as just the homegrown variety. They will have the opportunity to read about how someone else worked out a problem, or how to teach a certain topic or idea. (Sandra in NE)

The networking regarding issues related to curriculum and instruction (textbook selection, approaches to teaching, daily schedules, assessment) has been a significant help to parents homeschooling their children. It is really neat to observe parents helping each other with their experiences and openly sharing their concerns, fears, and needs. I wish that our teachers would be so open in sharing their concerns and fears and so willing to empathize with one another and provide help. In that

regard, Homenet is like a teachers' conference.

"The homeschoolers often discuss tangential issues such as relations with homeschooling associations of different denominations, amounts of time appropriate for "recreational" activities, doctrinal concerns, and family illnesses. Although these discussions cause discontent among some of the homenetters, I believe that they are the kinds of things that you might discuss at a PTA. In that regard, Homenet is like a PTA or congregational gathering of friends who share general concerns with one another." (Daniel Schmeling)

I would like to thank all the homenetters that helped create this article. I hope this is useful information about home education for you. Please come visit us any time. We will be more than happy to answer any questions you have, help out if we can, and pray for you. ❀

Rachel Mendell lives in Ohio with her husband, Dave and their seven children. She is a graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College. She assists home educators with consultations, advice on curriculum, classes, and end of the year assessments and testing. She also home schools her children.

The web site and listserve Ms. Mendell refers to in this article can be accessioned through the WELS website in the page for the Commission on Parish Schools. There is also apparently an "unofficial WELS Homeschool Page" which contains extensive links to other resources and information about homeschooling. The editor was able to find this page with a Yahoo search. Ms. Mendell did not provide the address for the listserve or the website. (ed)

Who Pushed You?

Paul Willems

How do you respond to the question, “Why are you in the ministry?” It is difficult to answer such a question. Many of us did not seek the office. Some actively ran from it. Yet, here we are. How can we explain why we are who we are? Of course God’s purpose is the ultimate answer. He has chosen and called each of us. Yet, I would like to reflect on events and individuals who encouraged us in ministry—those who pushed us.

There is often a need to be pushed. We WELS people have been schooled in humility. This sometimes works to cloud our impressions of our gifts and we have an inaccurate view of our potential. Others who see objectively may see more clearly. Finally, our old self rebels against God and his kingdom work. We would not choose to become ministers on our own. He must choose us. However, God may give us notice of his choice through those who pushed us.

Teachers are pushers. Christian educators encourage excellence in their students. They are often used by God to seek out and push their students toward

ministry. Christian teachers are told they are important recruiters for ministry. They can make objective judgments. They see potential and promise along with achievement and activity. They can and do give direction to their pupils.

Parents, grandparents, and other relatives are pushers toward ministry. Parents influence their children far more than their children may wish to admit. Their prayers may be unseen, but they are no less effective. Their kind words, smiles, monetary gifts, and heart-to-heart talks work in positive ways. Loving encouragement by relatives is an invaluable push toward ministry.

Pastors, friends, and congregation members are important in encouraging youth toward ministry. A touching sermon, a private personal message, or a wise comment mean a lot. A card, bulletins, or other congregational ties are important to those far away studying to become ministers. A personal visit is also welcome.

It is easy to recall the class bully. Can you also remember the school chum who helped you toward ministry? How

wonderful to be reassured by an upper class person. A quiet talk, a hug, or a serious discussion go far. Maybe you never thought of their help and their efforts remain unknown. However, God placed them along our paths to push us toward ministry. Such Christian friendship is a precious gift.

Who can fail to acknowledge or fail to appreciate the words and actions of our spouse? This person has stood by when all else failed. Your spouse has worked unceasingly on behalf of your ministry. Your devotions and prayer time together are important. Private conversations, mutual support, and other acts of love are forceful ways of pushing us in our work.

Sometimes adversity is a powerful push towards ministry. The anguish a Christian experiences in a job staffed by unbelievers may be an example. Second

career ministers can well relate to such trials. Our successes in our ministry can also encourage us.

Adversity or joy, family or spouse, pastors and teachers, friends and relatives are all used by Christ to push you and me in our ministry. They may have been used as tools to help us begin our first steps in ministry. They may have encouraged us along the way. They may still be important supporters in our calling. Even with this reminder we may be unaware of the many and varied people and things that pushed us. We do know that Christ is the force behind their push. We know his love inspires us in all we are and do. Who pushed you? ✝

Paul L. Willems is an instructor at Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, New Ulm, Minnesota.



Where is Herman?

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REVIEWS

REVIEWS

Turansky, Scott and Joanne Miller. *Good and Angry: Exchanging Frustration for Character—in You and Your Kids*. Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2002.

Have you had it with Brad? Will Harriet ever stop her whining? Will you ever stop your complaining about your kids? Then this book might be just the one for you.

Written for parents, this material could well be applied by anyone who is associated with child training. The co-authors have joined their expertise as a pastor and “family coach,” and a pediatric nurse to produce some simple, practical advice for dealing with anger and frustration. They have taken samples of letters from their clients that express real problems and outcomes for real life situations. They then offer suggestions for others to deal with these problems, backed up with Scripture references and more anecdotes. Each chapter ends with a summation, questions for further discussion, and expanded searches in Scripture.

Some of the topics covered include responsibility, habits, grumbling, annoying, lying, and forgiving. Usually a parent or teacher may be forced into a “boxing ring” with a child. The resulting scene is shouting, unusual punishments, grudges, and the like. Anger is not always wrong, but often is the only means that people have to deal with a

problem. They don’t have a plan to deal with either the anger or the offense. Parents and teachers may view a child’s acceptable behavior as something that has already been learned rather than something which is a work in progress. Just as athletes and musicians need to practice over and over to get it right, so also children need to practice acceptable Christian behavior until they get it right; and so also parents and teachers need to learn how to deal with and plan for the training of their children until they get it right. Mistakes will happen, but pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and start all over again.

This book would also make an excellent discussion manual for parent-teacher group meetings, parenting classes, or for counseling parents and faculties.

James Tank



Gritsch, Eric W. *A History of Lutheranism*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002.

It’s an ambitious undertaking to tell the story of Lutheranism in 260 pages, but Gritsch is quite successful. From the 95 Theses of Luther to the contemporary attempts at union with other denominations, Gritsch leaves out few details.

Of great significance among the contributions of Luther, Gritsch says, is that he insisted that the purpose of the Bible is to attest to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The interpretation of the Bible must always be based on the gospel which is at its very center, and such a view of the Bible, Gritsch claims, is the most cherished treasure of the church of the Lutheran Confessions. Only later does it become clear what Gritsch means by the 'gospel.'

Gritsch claims that Lutheran orthodoxy resurrected Aristotelianism because it provided what theologians thought was a fuller way to teach theology and because their opponents used it. In the baroque age with its concern for elaborate manners and taste, orthodoxy believed it could preserve the purity of Christianity in a systematic way. At the end of the Thirty Years' War, when Christians longed for order and security, Gritsch says that orthodox theologians looked to Scripture as an inerrant source of divine truth.

Pietists, Gritsch says, stressed a religion of the heart over against the religion of the mind championed by the age of orthodoxy. In their attempt to make Christianity practical and relevant, however, Pietists sometimes engaged in mystical, theosophical, and even parapsychological speculation. In the process they lost the objective truth of the gospel.

What seems to interest Gritsch most are the contemporary ventures of the Lutheran church to take the lead in the ecumenical movement. Eagerly he tells the story of Lutheran dialogues with

Roman Catholics, the Reformed, Anglicans, the Orthodox, and other denominations.

The final chapter is entitled "Forward to Luther?" Quoting Anders Nygren at the founding assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in 1947, Gritsch says that our purpose today is not to repeat what the Reformers said but to re-think the gospel and to express it in terms of today. This means, Gritsch claims, that "one can be a naive, untrained Christian charismatic who enjoys God. But one must also be a wise, alert Christian in the harsh reality of this world and learn the serpentine ways of winding through to those who are in need of help and faith" (p. 259). Gritsch's secularization of the gospel is clear, and typical of the direction many in the Lutheran church today have taken.

It's a good book to read if you'd like to review the story of the Lutheran church, or if you'd like to study it for the first time. But you'll want to read it with caution.

Mark Lenz



Lund, Eric, ed. *Documents from the History of Lutheranism: 1517-1750*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002.

An impressive new collection of primary sources from the story of the Lutheran church came on the market last year. Published by Fortress Press, this 7" x 9" well-bound, 310 page paperback carries the title of *Documents from*

the History of Lutheranism: 1517-1750.

Together with readings, some by Luther, others associated with his life and times, this work carries its story forward through the controversies which threatened to fracture the church after Luther's death, then into the cataclysm of the Thirty Years War, followed by readings from the age of Lutheran orthodoxy and pietism in the 17th and 18th centuries. The book is impressive for the scope of its selections, many of them found in no other set of readings from Reformation history. Miniature illustrations of people, structures, events, and printed materials scattered through its pages add to reader interest. Of special value for students of our Lutheran Confessions, besides many excerpts from Luther's writings as well as evaluations of Luther by friends and

opponents, are the documents that deal with the intra-Lutheran controversies after the Reformer's death, which then resulted in the Formula of Concord.

The editor's introductions to the readings are mercifully brief, and the documents themselves, by and large, are kept at a manageable length to obviate weariness. In this reviewer's opinion, there is no better way to enjoy the authentic flavor of a historical age than by reading the primary sources, by letting the past speak for itself, understanding Luther by reading Luther. The documents may often lack objectivity, even total accuracy, as products of their own times. Nevertheless, they are unequalled for viewing the past on its own terms.

Theodore Hartwig