

VOLUME 45
NUMBER 1
OCTOBER 2004

The Lutheran Educator



The WELS Education Journal



The Lutheran Educator



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

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VOLUME 45 **NUMBER 1**
OCTOBER 2004

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The Lutheran Educator (ISSN 0458-4988) is published four times a year in October, December, February, and May by Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 North 113th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226-3284. Periodical Postage Paid at Milwaukee, WI.

Rates: One year—USA/\$10.00—single copy/\$2.50. Canada/\$10.70—single copy/\$2.68. All other countries—air mail \$16.80. Postage included, payable in advance to Northwestern Publishing House. Write for multi-year rates. For single issue only, Wisconsin residents add 5% sales tax, Milwaukee County residents add 5.6% tax.

Subscription Services: 1-800-662-6093 extension 8; Milwaukee 414-615-5785. Write NPH, 1250 N. 113th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53226-3284. Order online: www.nph.net/periodicals

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Lutheran Educator*, %Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 North 113th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226-3284.

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Forward and Back

The October issue of *The Lutheran Educator* marks a new beginning of sorts. John Isch retires as editor of this journal, marking sixteen years of faithful service. We thank him for his wisdom, insight, and ability to spark thought provoking articles and editorial comment. His commitment to Christian education is evident in his work and serves as an example for those who follow. We thank God for his gift to the church and wish John God's speed in his retirement.

Let's take a look back at comments from Dr. Isch's first editorial. "A journal is owned by those who read it. Editors don't own journals, nor do publishers or authors. You, the reader, own what you are holding. You own *The Lutheran Educator* not just because you subscribe—and we hope you do—but because you read *The Lutheran Educator*." He states ownership brings responsibility. These responsibilities include that *The Lutheran Educator* retain its place among the myriad of educational journals available today. This is the only publication that addresses Christian education from a WELS point of view. A second responsibility is that this journal remains a professional journal. Finally, Dr. Isch states a responsibility to see that *The Lutheran Educator* is read.

Let's take a look ahead. What changes are planned for *The Lutheran Educator*?

Professor Jack Minch has been appointed editor-in-chief. The editorial board has been expanded to include a fourth member. As a board we are examining the mission and vision of *The Lutheran Educator*. We will be seeking your opinions. What improvements can you suggest? How can this journal better serve you in your ministry?

Encourage others to read this publication. Why not consider submitting an article for publication?

The look ahead is strangely familiar. Dr. Isch's comments are as applicable today as they were in October 1988. *The Lutheran Educator* may experience growing pains as we attempt changes but its purpose remains the same. Editorial staff may change but the responsibilities of the readership remain the same. We look forward to your feedback as we strive to make this publication a tool that can strengthen your ministry.

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A Friend in High Places

John Schultz

If God is for us, who can be against us. He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things. Romans 8:31b-32

It would seem to me that one of the loneliest situations in the world is that of a pilot-in-training taking his first solo flight. If one ever needed a friend, it's when looking at the empty instructor's seat and thinking "I'm all alone." How small the landing field looks, knowing one has to hit it just right the first time, while all alone. It seemed so easy when the instructor was there. Now one has to remember all that the instructor taught, knowing that a little mistake could result in serious injury or death.

It doesn't take much effort to think back in our own lives when we have had to take "solo flights." Starting kindergarten, the first day of high school, moving to the college campus – how about when you first walked into your own classroom? Perhaps you made a change in ministry or were assigned to your first congregation. You may have felt all alone, without a friend, but were you?

The Scripture reading pictures some-

thing far different from the solo flight of our pilot-in-training. We are never really all alone. How can we be all alone in our work in the kingdom when we hear the promise, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31b. God is for us. He is our Friend. Will such a God leave us alone? Not when we hear him say, "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things," Romans 8:32.

Oh, we may sometimes feel alone. We may think it's up to us to do this or that without help. We may enter a situation with an empty, gnawing feeling in our stomach. That "all alone" feeling is really Satan and our sinful flesh making us feel isolated and completely dependent upon ourselves. How the devil grins when we forget our true Friend and go solo.

We are never alone. Believe it! We read the promise of him who came to earth to be "God with us" (Matthew 1:23), "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age," Matthew 28:20. The LORD attached that promise especially to those who are called and

sent to work in his kingdom. That includes you.

With confident hearts and prayers of praise and thanksgiving we move ahead, trusting that he who loved us so much that he died for us is with us. We are not “flying solo,” but have a caring Friend at our side.

Read some more: Romans 8:31b-39.

Dear Lord Jesus, as you have promised, be with me as I work in your kingdom. Grant that I may never feel alone. Amen.

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

If God is for us,
who can be against us?



Teaching Social Studies: The Controversy Over Standards

Frederick Wulff

The neglected subject

A strong case can be made that instruction in social studies has been shuffled to the bottom of the deck by teachers and administrators. Those of us who have taught college courses in American history have noticed a discernible change among entering students over the years. Students seem to know less about their nation's history with each passing year. It is not just a question of faulting either public schools or private schools, for this trend appears quite universal.

If high school graduates across the nation are as weak in the knowledge of U.S. history as polls suggest, think of the future of the nation if prospective teachers attend a college where American history is not even taught or is diluted in some world studies course. There are university history professors who lament the fact that college students can avoid American history courses entirely and still graduate from their program in

education.

In the past, Minnesota public schools were guided by the Profile of Learning. In a study commissioned by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, Sheldon Stern complained that Minnesota's Profile of Learning standards for social studies, "in keeping with the substantively watered-down approach advocated by many American schools of education since the early 20th century, reject anything resembling a real academic curriculum." One critic complained in the St. Paul Pioneer Press: "We don't need students bogged down in pointless Profile projects, like carving sculptures for a European history class, classifying movies and dogs for a high school science class or using board games and pop movies to do research for a high school history course – to cite just a few examples I've seen." In 2000, the Council for Basic Education judged the Profile to be "inadequate preparation for a solid sequence of history and civics courses in high school."

This slighting of social studies is not only in Minnesota. Michigan is another case in point. Lori Higgins, an education writer for the Detroit Free Press, laments that three-quarters of Michigan's teens in the Class of 2003 couldn't meet the standards in the subject. Since the social studies portion of the test debuted in 1999, Michigan never has had more than 26.6 percent of high school students meet or exceed the standards. Social studies experts worry one of the reasons is that the emphasis on the three R's is turning social studies into a neglected subject. If social studies is devalued the consequences for our nation are severe. The national No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law has had the effect of marginalizing social studies education at all levels, but especially at the elementary level. Since federal mandates under NCLB do not include civics or history, they are being dropped in many schools to allow more time for testing in the mandated areas. The Fordham Foundation argues that if NCLB is not modified it will have done more to eliminate history and/or social studies than any other event, person or movement. If we do stress the noble subject of reading more, we do well to include substantive reading assignments on social studies topics.

The Minnesota standards: lightning rod for controversy

A heated controversy has been brewing in Minnesota over what should replace the discarded Profile of Learning which had been criticized as

too heavily weighted in favor of process. A proposed set of social studies standards was recently written by a committee of 44 teachers, parents and business representatives appointed by the state Department of Education commissioner, Cheri Pierson Yecke. Yecke herself is a former history teacher. Chester Finn Jr., president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, notes that Commissioner Yecke came to Minnesota from Virginia, where she helped write history standards for that state that are widely judged among the best and most rigorous in the nation. She faced criticism there, he adds, but overcame it. Finn concludes: "Virginia's children are benefiting from her vision and her perseverance. We hope that Minnesota youngsters will be able to do likewise." The first Minnesota draft drew some criticism. After considering massive input from the public, Commissioner Yecke presented a final revised draft to the 2004 Legislature

Hard work and effort went into creating the new standards, and they have been improved with substantial modifications. The debate that the standards have provoked is beneficial reading. It behooves the faculties of our Lutheran schools to follow such debates (<http://education.state.mn.us> and www.mcass.org) and set our own appropriate standards for quality instruction. Social studies, after all, is a critical subject that provides us Christians the opportunity to both promote knowledge and appreciation of our country as well as critical thinking necessary for responsible citizenship.

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The argument for stress on historical content

Some comments submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education applauded the first draft of standards because it weighed heavily on content. Julie Quist, director of EdWatch/Maple River Coalition, a vocal group that fought for the repeal of the Profile standards, maintains a knowledge-based system is important. "Knowledge is not useless," Quist argued. "It is very valuable for the building blocks of being able to do critical thinking. You can't bring stu-

Students seem to know less about their nation's history with each passing year.

dents into a classroom and teach them critical thinking until you have a body of knowledge that they can think about." Another supporter of Supervisor Yেকে, stressing emphasis on content, is Gary Marvin Davison who praised the revised standards: "A sequenced, content-rich, highly specified liberal arts education made available to all children in our diverse society is the most powerful engine of social and economic equity."

The final body of knowledge advocated in the revised standards, to its credit, are more than a list of facts. Quite a few critics of the initial standards expressed the view that content a mile wide and an inch deep made no sense. The Minnesota Association of School Administrators commended Yেকে for pressing for rigorous standards, but recommended that the focus should be on identifying major concepts to be taught at each school level as opposed to detailed listings of fact. A massive number of facts and dates may obscure the important larger focus area. Obviously, information acquired through interesting narrative or well planned units is retained longer than just items on a list. Specific items must be learned in a comprehensive context. And as for dates, they have value only if they are made meaningful within a time line framework and are necessary to visualize sequence.

The need for critical thinking in the standards

Some would argue that critical thinking is "process" and that it does not belong in the standards. Actually, it does belong, along with content. To understand history and the lessons that can be learned from it, critical thinking is extremely important. Good citizenship requires that we use critical thinking which helps us as citizens to correct wrongs in the government and to support that which is noble. Children must learn that the nation, warts and all, was shaped by dissent, rebellion and debate,

not simply blind allegiance. Critical thinking and analysis do not necessarily demonstrate hatred or disloyalty. Dissent can be healthy. A lively opposition in government within a two party system offers differing viewpoints and a balance. Sometimes a third party contributes a needed dose of fresh ideas. And then there are the contributions of many courageous women and non-whites who struggled with the system for a place in society. The Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals concluded: "Only by admitting, exploring, and analyzing these faults of American history alongside America's triumphs... will we be enabled to learn from our shared past and resolve its complicated legacies." They chide the initial proposed Minnesota standards for discouraging such analytical thinking. The National Council for Social Studies rightfully encourages presenting multiple perspectives when teaching history or any of the social sciences such as economics and political science, where a variety of interpretations and viewpoints exist: "Teach students that understanding causality, searching for evidence, and respecting the tentative nature of a considerable part of knowledge are valued habits of mind and heart."

Standards that promote democratic institutions

A number of professors from the University of Minnesota rejected the Minnesota standards' benchmarks for government and citizenship, along with

its history benchmarks. They objected, for example, to a first-grade standard that "encourages good citizen traits like honesty, courage, patriotism and individual responsibility." Why this opposition? They submit that portraying such traits as important components of citizenship is tantamount to "teaching patriotism as a reflex action of blind

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obedience or conformity." One critic of the standards wrote that "patriotic symbols, songs, and events represents the worst type of nationalistic propaganda and must be eliminated from the standards." However, many prominent educators and politicians agree with this particular aspect of the standards. Recently, the Albert Shanker Institute of the American Federation of Teachers issued a consensus document called Education for Democracy. "As citizens of a democratic republic," the document proclaimed, "we are part of the

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noblest effort in history.” Our nation’s schools, it went on, must encourage “a deep loyalty to American political institutions and prepare students to protect and extend this precious inheritance.” The document’s signers spanned the ideological spectrum, and included former President Bill Clinton, Sen. Edward Kennedy and Reg Weaver, president of the National Education Association.

The ongoing controversy and politics

The public is clamoring for reform, demanding higher standards and more accountability from schools. The teachers’ unions resist change and fight all notions of accountability. They use their political muscle to influence legislatures and selection of state education officials. Here in Minnesota they successfully blocked confirmation of Commissioner Yecke, who had been on the job for more than 14 months. The Senate Education Committee, which is dominated by Democrat Farm Labor Party (DFL) firmly in the pocket of the teachers’ union, voted along party lines to advise the full Senate to fire Education Commissioner Yecke. The standards had been revised before she was dismissed, and then later revised again in a closed door session by a conference committee. Reform will not come easy. Yecke was criticized for being too controversial, but any attempts at reform will be bitterly contested by those who favor the status quo.

Standards that serve students

May this debate help us to avoid an “either or” mentality as we set up or review our own standards in our schools and help us to strike a healthy balance between facts and analysis that best serve our students. Above all, let’s hope a discussion of this nature aids us to put social studies instruction on a front burner where it belongs.

Anyone familiar with our MLC students and Synod teachers knows they are highly motivated, hard working and dedicated individuals. One could argue that it takes courage to avoid the pitfall of contemporary society that has been softened by lower expectations and less accountability from students. Those of us who have interviewed foreign exchange students in our country are familiar with their testimonies that schools in their respective countries are much more demanding. Grade inflation and a comfort zone that rewards mediocrity does not really improve self esteem, nor does it prepare students for the real/hard world. At the risk of sounding too conservative, we might be a little more traditional (actually, reform minded) than the mainstream by maintaining higher standards in social studies, and strengthening those areas being neglected or overlooked.

Frederick Wulff is a retired professor of Martin Luther College and resides in New Ulm, MN

Irlen Syndrome in the Classroom

Margaret Harris

I JUST KNEW there was something wrong!

"Ashley appears so smart in class, at home, but her grades sure don't show it. She's been tested for learning differences, but that didn't tell us anything. I just can't figure out what is wrong." Have you heard a parent, another teacher, or even yourself say something similar to this about a student?



Background

Irlen Syndrome (also known as Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome) may be "what is wrong." Irlen Syndrome is a visual perception problem in which the brain does not accurately interpret what the eyes are seeing. Helen Irlen discovered it in California in the early 1980's. Even now, scientists are not really sure what causes the problem although several theories have been and are being tested. However, they do know that the problem really exists, that it can adversely affect reading as well as other aspects of life, and that color is the solution.

Mrs. Irlen began by asking college students with reading problems what they were seeing on the page as they tried to read. The answers were amaz-

ing. Students reported letters and words running together, words appearing to swirl on the page, and rivers formed by the white spaces running down the page. By accident, someone put a red overlay (similar to a transparency) over a page and found that the problems disappeared. But it didn't work for everyone. They began experimenting with other colors of overlays and found out that different colors or combinations of colors worked for different people. This was the beginning of the Irlen Method.

Who is affected?

Irlen Syndrome can affect anyone. There is no known cause, and there has been no correlation found regarding gender, age, IQ, or ethnicity. However, it is often hereditary, with siblings or one or both parents displaying symp-

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toms. People with ADD/HD or dyslexia often have Irlen Syndrome in addition to the other problems. It is estimated that Irlen Syndrome affects 15% of the normal population, 50% of the special education population, and 70% of the alternative school population. Some people have learned compensation strategies and live a normal life with the problem while others continue to struggle.

Effects

The effects of Irlen Syndrome are many and varied. The most obvious is reading difficulty. This can result in learning problems, inability to do homework, and poor self-esteem. Headaches are also common among individuals with Irlen Syndrome. Discipline problems can result if the visual perception difficulty over-stimulates the student, in turn causing hyperactive behavior. Behavior problems can also be a negative cry for attention since these students often do not receive positive attention for achievement. One of the more interesting effects is depth perception problems which can result in driving difficulties or poor performance in sports involving a ball. Perception problems make it difficult to determine the location of the shoulder of the road or the ball. Any or all of these problems can also lead to anxiety.

Symptoms

As a teacher, what do you look for? Since Irlen Syndrome is often found in

students with ADD/HD or dyslexia, they should be closely observed. It is easy to notice the student who reads with the page very close to his or her eyes. You may see a student shading his or her eyes with one or both hands or shading work with parts of the body. One of my students asked me to keep the lights off after using the overhead projector because the fluorescent lights gave him headaches. Other students have told me that they get a headache or become extremely tired from reading. Students who say that it is easier to do the work at home may not be using an excuse not to use class time but may actually be telling you the truth. Fluorescent lights and glossy pages (school!) are two of the things that cause the most problems. Since most homes do not have fluorescent lights, doing the work there is easier. Many parents have told me that their child is always "reading in the dark" and that the child gets upset when they turn on more lights. This is another strong symptom because light can make the distortions worse, even if it is not fluorescent light. Consistently not completing homework may be another clue since any of the above problems can make reading painful as well as take a tremendous amount of time, much more than needed by other students. These students are having to reread assignments several times to understand them and then may still not remember what they read because they put so much work into deciphering the words on the page. Finally, just listening to students and their parents can help you decide if there is a problem. When par-

ents tell me that they feel like they have exhausted all avenues that may diagnose or help problems, I suggest Irlen screening as one more diagnostic tool. Every child I have screened after hearing this from parents has had the symptoms of Irlen Syndrome. I told my students some of the main symptoms associated with Irlen and several of them quietly came and asked to be screened since they felt I was describing them. For probably the first time, they realized what they were seeing was not normal, and they might have a problem. Until that time, they thought everyone saw things the same, so they must be stupid, prone to headaches, or just not like to read.

Screening

Screening is the next step once a student is observed with the symptoms. This is done by a certified Irlen screener and is a relatively simple process. The student answers questions about reading difficulties and discomfort. Then he or she performs a number of tasks and answers questions about what he or she sees happening on the page. The answers are as varied as the people giving them. Finally, if the results indicate the symptoms of Irlen Syndrome, colored overlays are tried over a printed page until the student determines which one(s) get rid of the distortions. The number of overlays and combinations of colors vary by individual. For me, this is the most rewarding part. One girl had a look of complete awe after we put the correct overlays in place. I asked

what she was thinking and almost cried at her response: "I never knew a page could look like this." Words had always jiggled for her until this time. Another girl told me that she just thought she would always have headaches and never like to read. Several days after screening, she told me her headaches from reading were gone. Another boy found me four consecutive mornings to tell me that homework had taken half the usual time since he was not having to reread everything several times.

Treatments

After screening, treatments may vary. A person with minor symptoms may only need to use the overlays for reading or read in natural or dim light. However, people with more severe symptoms soon find the overlays cumbersome for both reading and written work and progress to colored filters (glasses that have been tinted by the Irlen Institute.) Only an Irlen diagnostician can determine the correct color (which will probably be different than the color of the overlays because of the distance between the color and the eye.) After getting her filters, one of my students quickly announced to the others with overlays that this was the way to go! A final or alternate step for some may be to go to colored contacts. This usually follows the filters since it is cheaper to determine if the selected color is correct with filters than with contacts.

Do I believe in this? You bet! I was a parent who made the opening com-

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ment about her own daughter. She's now 21 and was diagnosed with Irlen Syndrome last fall. She got her filters the beginning of this year. The change in her is absolutely remarkable. Her grades and self-confidence have increased significantly and her study habits have improved. She told me one day that she feels like she has a secret weapon when she puts on her filters because now she knows she can do it. Not every student will respond as quickly as she did because this appears to be her only problem. Some students may have to relearn reading since distortions prevented them from understanding what was taught in the early grades. For others, this may only be part of the problem with other learning differences still inhibiting their learning. However, being able to see without distortions should lessen the effects of the other problems. As in all things, God created everyone differently, so the symptoms, severity, colors, and results will differ.

Screener training

A teacher with at least two years of experience is qualified to become a screener. The training session lasts two days and finishes with screening actual clients. The Irlen website, www.irlen.com, gives information on training sessions and other information about the syndrome. There are examples of the various distortions as well as a self-test. This test is where I usually start people who think they may have a problem. A list of diagnosticians and a partial list of screeners are also avail-

able.

The United States is becoming more aware of Irlen Syndrome, but other countries, particularly Australia, are ahead of us in this area. There are screeners worldwide. Children's learning could become much easier if this screening would be implemented more and as a first diagnostic step with those experiencing problems. It is probably the most exciting thing I have done in twenty-one years of teaching, and I do not hesitate to share it with others. After all, isn't helping others what teaching is all about?

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Looking Back— Reflections on My First Year of Teaching

David Wendland

The school year

My first school year was filled with many blessings and challenges. There was no bigger joy this last year than being able to share God's Word with the students on a daily basis and watching them grow as young Christians. This was a tremendous opportunity that I had to witness my faith and an opportunity that I hope to have for many more years to come.

It was a real joy and exciting to finally have my own classroom to do and try different things that I had learned about in school or seen in other classrooms. Some things work great, other things need adjusting the next time they are done, and still others need to be redone all together. One activity that took some adjusting to for the students was doing various reading response activities with the novels that they read. Many of them when asked to write summaries or draw pictures of what they read started by putting little effort into their work. This was a change for them, though, as I think most of them had

never done activities like these before and didn't know exactly what to do. When I began these activities, I always took time in explaining them and giving rubrics on how they would be graded, but I never really gave them concrete examples of what I expected. I learned from this though and made sure to give them feedback on how they needed to improve their work. In doing these activities in future years with new students in my room, I now know that I need to give them examples of what "A" work would be or what "B" or "C" work would be. After giving the students feedback and showing them what they should be doing most of them really did a nice job and enjoyed doing these activities. Another activity I found needed some adjusting was taking notes. At the start of the note-taking process I took notes on the board and explained why I chose to write down the things I did. Then I let the students pick out what was important and take notes on that material. It seemed to go well when I was there to guide them, but when I asked them to take notes or summarize

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a part of the lesson on their own and then present the important concepts from what they read to the class it was as if they were reading it right from the book. It took some time to develop a skill for picking out the main points from the text, but by the end of the year they seemed to be catching on. One thing that I found helpful to do was to take notes on how different things went so that the next time I do that activity I know if I need to change things or try something different. I also realized that not all activities will always work with all classrooms depending on what types of students are in that class.

Challenges

The biggest challenge I faced was finding time for everything I wanted to do. It is hard enough trying to keep your head above water as a first year teacher, but then to add principal duties on top of that was at times overwhelming. There were many times I had ideas that I wanted to try in the classroom, but they were also very time consuming to get organized and so they didn't get done. This was most evident in science. I had big plans to do all of these activities and experiments. When I sat down to plan these I soon found out that it would take me quite a bit of time to find the materials, make sure it worked. Then I would realize all of the other things that I needed to get done yet either for the week to come or the next day. I also found interesting units and activities in social studies that would have tied in great with what we were

studying but also would have taken more than just a day on the weekend or a couple of nights to get ready and plan out so that they were done correctly and so that the students enjoyed them. Because of the time commitment in planning and organizing these activities, they didn't always get done. Now I know where my work in the summer months

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joy ... than being
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Word with the
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needs to be focused. These are things that I know will get better as I become more experienced as both a teacher and a principal.

A second big challenge that I faced in my first year was having students with such a broad range of academic skills. At times it was difficult not to move too fast for fear of losing those who were not as advanced academically and at the

same time not moving too slow for fear of losing those who were more advanced academically. One thing I tried was spending time one on one with a student after or before school trying to get the concept down. If I noticed the student was still struggling I would wait an extra day or two to give him the test the others took to make sure he had a handle on what was being taught. In math I encouraged all of the students to bring me their assignments before the day was over so I could check their answers over and let them know what problems needed to be corrected. I then could also help them with any concepts they didn't understand after seeing what they got wrong. If students were catching on quickly with their different assignments and projects I would always challenge them to do more or work harder at putting their best effort into their work, not being content with just doing what they needed to for an "A." Being able to find that comfort level was and still is a challenge, as well as, trying to decide what the best way is to adjust the curriculums to meet the needs of all the students.

Use what's available

One thing that I realized this year is that you shouldn't try to reinvent the wheel and believe that you can get everything done you want to in your first year or second year for that matter. I learned quickly to use the resources that were at my school whether it was things that were left behind, ideas from other teachers at my school or teachers

that I knew, and I also had many experienced public school teachers in my congregation. All of these people have years of experience and were more than willing to share ideas with me and help me out.

Getting involved

I found that being involved with things at church and school, while time consuming at times, was the best thing I could have done. It got me involved in the congregation right away, and I got to meet and know not only the families at my school better but also the other members of the congregation, and it was yet another way to be actively serving my Lord. I was able to serve and meet many new people through choir, men's club, ushering, brass choir, and other activities offered by the church and school that made my first year a memorable one.

Conclusion

In conclusion, keep the Lord as your guide and as the focus point in your life and he will bless you and provide for you as long as you live. Use the gifts the Lord has given you to serve him whether it be as a called worker or a lay person in the congregation to do the work the Lord put us on his wonderful creation to do as we use our efforts to baptize and teach all nations.

David Wendland serves as principal and upper grades teacher at St. Peter Lutheran School in Schofield, Wisconsin.

Lessons from the Past: The Story of General Charles Stone and the Battle of Ball's Bluff

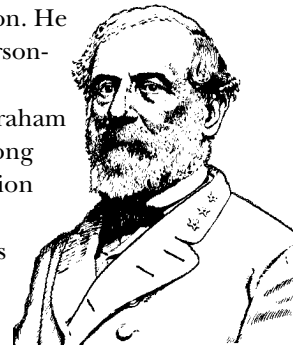
John Mattek

The study of history offers more than an exercise in learning names, dates, and events that scholars deem important for social remembrance. History, the record of human activity under God's grace and providence, should and does present many interesting, pertinent, and inspiring lessons for daily life in the twenty-first century. Past examples of human behavior, both good and evil, abound in the areas of government, citizenship, labor, marriage, family, and church. Sometimes history teaches the expected lessons such as 'crime does not pay.' At other times history reminds Christians that in this world they might experience troubles in return for their righteous living. Teachers alert to the didactic aspect of the historical record can find appropriate and poignant examples to enliven their devotions, their presentations of Bible stories and catechism lessons, and their history courses. The following American Civil War incident serves as a case in point.

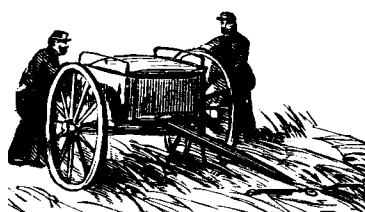
Brigadier General Charles P. Stone was an honor graduate of West Point. He served with distinction in the Mexican War and was one of the faith-

ful volunteers who guarded Washington at the outbreak of the Civil War before the arrival of regular Union troops. Raised by Puritan parents in Massachusetts, General Stone believed that personal integrity and honorable actions would prevail against the forces of injustice. He carried this credo with him throughout his life. However, his faith in that proposition was tested to the maximum during his Civil War military service.

In late October 1861 the North reeled over the recent military setback known as the Battle of Ball's Bluff. A major casualty in this defeat was the Union officer who led the charge, Colonel Edward Baker. Baker was the eloquent senator from Oregon credited with holding the West with the Union. He was also a personal friend of President Abraham Lincoln. Among the many Union soldiers captured at Ball's Bluff were two men



from well-known families, a grandson of Paul Revere and the son of Oliver Wendell Holmes. Coming on the heels of the Union defeat at the first Battle of Bull Run, the Ball's Bluff loss prompted scathing journalistic coverage and public outcry to find the person or persons responsible. On the House floor, Republican congressman Roscoe Conkling offered his version of the battle. He reported how General Charles Stone ordered Colonel Baker to lead his men into a Confederate trap, with the result that 940 of 1,700 Union troops were mowed down in less than an hour. According to Conkling, Colonel Baker questioningly yet bravely followed orders, leading his troops across the Potomac River into Virginia, over Ball's Bluff, and onto a six-acre plain surrounded by woods. Confederate troops stationed in the woods opened fire on the surprised and vulnerable Union



troops. Conkling believed the losses were abominable and unnecessary. "It was from the outset a mere sacrifice, a sheer immolation, without a promise of success or a hope of escape." A congressional investigation ensued and the blame fell upon General Stone.

General Stone was very cognizant of the accusations leveled against him in Congress and in many Northern news-

papers. In December 1861 he wrote a letter to the Adjutant-General in Washington defending his actions. In this correspondence



Stone explained that Colonel Baker indeed had his permission to engage Confederate troops at Ball's Bluff, but only if Baker determined from good military intelligence that Union soldiers held the advantage. Twice in January Stone left the field and traveled to Washington to answer the questions of Congress's newly-formed Committee on the Conduct of War. Stone's confident testimony, together with his impeccable military record, seemed to satisfy many on the committee. Some of Stone's superiors, including President Lincoln and General George McClellan, offered public support for him.

Still, the axe fell upon General Stone and ruined his career. On 8 February 1862 the General was awakened from sleep and placed under military arrest. Army personnel kept him in solitary confinement in a small room at Fort Lafayette. Stone remained in this state of isolation for the next forty-nine days, neither apprised of the charges against him, nor allowed to see his wife. Next the army moved him to Fort Hamilton. There the General experienced less confinement, but still received no information regarding the charges against him, who his accusers were, or when he would receive a military trial. For the



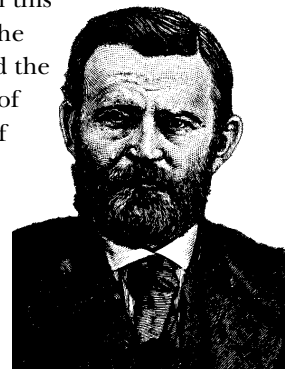
next five months his situation remained unchanged. Stone wrote numerous letters to the President, the Secretary of War, General McClellan, and others, requesting information about his continuing incarceration. President Lincoln responded that he regretted having little knowledge of the details of his arrest; the others were silent.

On 16 August 1862, after 189 days in prison, General Stone was finally set free without a word of explanation, without back pay, and without a commission. For the next forty days Stone sought assignment to a Union unit in the Civil War, but he received no orders. During that time he personally pressed his superiors for information regarding his unusual treatment. One after another they passed the buck of blame for his arrest. On 27 February 1863 General Stone testified once more before the Committee on the Conduct of War. The commission members finally informed him of the actual charges that had led to his arrest. The beleaguered general went into greater detail

than in his previous testimony before the commission in order to vindicate his actions at Ball's Bluff. At this point, according to Maine's Republican congressman James Blaine, the national government grudgingly admitted its error and assigned Stone to a command in the Civil War. However, the government offered Stone no reparations for lost income or unjust treatment. It made no attempt to retract publicly its error in judgment to restore his good name. There was not one word of thanks for his patient endurance of the ordeal. Sadly, some influential individuals persisted in their criticism of General Stone even as he continued to serve the Union cause at Port Hudson and in the Red River campaign. The result of this continued public calumny was that General Stone resigned his commission before the end of the Civil War. His military career in the United States was over. Before long he moved abroad, serving for thirteen years as Chief of the General Staff to the Khedive of Egypt. Stone eventually returned home to the United States and found employment during his remaining working years as an engineer.

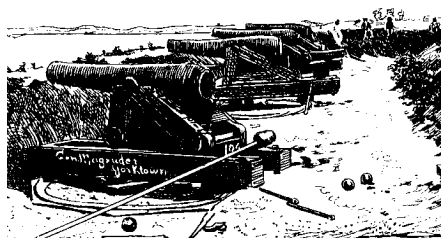
Ironically, in this occupation he helped build the foundation of the Statue of Liberty.

The treatment of General Stone during the Civil

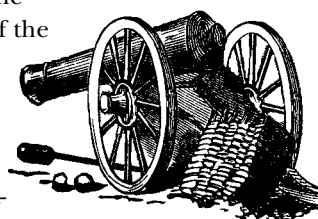


War provides the history teacher with several important lessons to share with students who are living through the United States' military involvement in Iraq. First of all, the news media are and have been for a long time powerful institutions impacting citizen perception of American military involvement. Most students recognize the large role of the modern media in presenting images of the war in Iraq. American government and military leaders would like to control the media's military coverage as much as possible in order to safeguard American troops, keep important information from the enemy, and encourage solidarity on the home front. Obviously, as the pictures of prisoner mistreatment in Abu Ghraib, Iraq, demonstrated, shocking news sometimes leaks out to the public that embarrasses the military, confuses the average citizen, and perhaps impedes the very progress of the war effort. Society's opinion of American military administration generally declined in the immediate aftermath of the media's military prison revelations in spring 2004. Cries arose from many quarters to find out who was ultimately responsible for the abuses.

History reminds us that American media coverage of military action has been pervasive if not controversial at



least since the Civil War. Large numbers of journalists accompanied army units during the course of the War Between the States.



Gory battle details and military scandal sold newspapers then as now. When Union officers refused to share tasty information that could be fed to the reading public, journalists often found plenty of gossip and innuendo from the regular soldier. Because of this, Union generals sometimes decreed battle areas to be off-limits to reporters. Persistent journalists were sometimes detained under military guard to prevent them from reporting damaging information. Newspapers sued in the courts to protect their First Amendment right to free speech, and usually won. In 1861, Union defeats at Bull Run and Ball's Bluff provided journalist with plenty of grist for the rumor and innuendo mill. Public reaction to the news coverage of these losses was predictable: find the persons responsible and punish them. General Stone's arrest and detainment are partially attributable to public hysteria created by the media's sensational coverage of the war.

Another history lesson involves the role of politics in conducting military operations. Most Americans are familiar with the congressional investigations of the September 11 attacks and the federal government's response to terror threats. The legislative branch has the

right to oversee the conduct of those who execute our laws and policies. But anyone who listened to some of the questioning of government officials by members of Congress heard obvious partisan posturing. Students are sometimes shocked at this type of political rancor that seems to place the securing of political votes and power ahead of honest investigation and national security.

The story of Ball's Bluff and General Stone reminds us that this is nothing new. Political factions competed against one another in Congress during the Civil War just as they do today during the conflict in Iraq. Within the Republican Party, represented in the White House by Abraham Lincoln, there was division over the purpose and conduct of the Civil War. The Radical Republicans, extreme abolitionists, were highly critical of the Conservative Republicans and Unionist Democrats who emphasized rapprochement with the South above the abolishment of slavery. Radical Republicans used the Committee of the Conduct of War to embarrass and punish Union officers who were not totally committed like they were to the cause of abolition. General Stone, a Democrat, who served under General McClellan, also a Democrat, became a tempting target for harsh treatment by the Radical Republicans on the Commission of the Conduct of War. The fickle winds of politics contributed to General Stone's unfortunate experience.

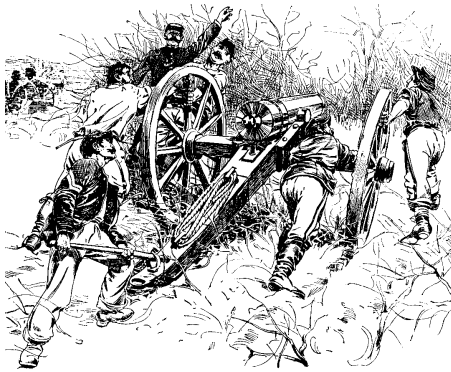


Another lesson from General Stone's experience concerns the complexity of war, a condition that frequently produces confusion and results in unjust treatment for some. The conflict in Iraq has already written into history its share of unfortunate setbacks and tragedies. Enemy suicide bombers as well as friendly fire have killed young Americans. Radical Iraqis have brutally butchered American civilians and Western intelligence agencies have profiled Iraqis, sometimes detaining innocent civilians in military prisons. The war on terrorism seems so complex and challenging one wonders if it is possible for our government or military to have a good handle on all the details.



Again, this is nothing new. In the case of General Stone's long and silent incarceration, it seems strange to us that someone in Washington did not take responsibility for this egregious breach of military and judicial protocol. According to Representative Blaine, one cause for this unfortunate situation was the myriad duties that simultaneously pressed themselves upon the key players involved in the Civil War. American presidents, cabinet members, and military officers never had to conduct a war

on this scale before. In addition to the war, thousands of other items were on the agenda of a country that was growing in wealth and size. There were decisions to be made about railroad charters, treasury shortfalls, tariffs, Indian policies, and office seekers. No wonder Abraham Lincoln's presidential portraits reveal an aging man. Not surprisingly, the sad plight of a brigadier gen-



eral languishing in a Union prison remained on the back burner for over a year.

According to Representative Blaine, General Stone's case ought to "stand as a warning against future violations of the liberty which is the birthright of every American, and against the danger of appeasing popular clamor by the sacrifice of an innocent man." Americans will no doubt still find Blaine's warning appropriate and timely.

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A New Endeavor

Carolee Alfred

Martin Luther College has stepped into another realm of the education world. Beginning in the fall of 2001 MLC began preparing their students to earn a state teaching license, in addition to their certification for WELS classrooms. In order to obtain this license an MLC student needs to complete public school experiences. Under the direction of the Director of Clinical Experiences, Dr. Gene Pfeifer, the college began the search to place over 150 juniors and an equal number of seniors annually in the public school classrooms throughout the surrounding New Ulm area. This search has now evolved into a wonderful partnership between the college and area communities.

As a participating teacher, I have enjoyed hosting students from MLC since the program began. The extra pair of hands is always a pleasure to have available. MLC students have been seen doing a variety of things to assist the teachers. Tasks can include one-on-one work with a student, small group work, and of course the requirement of whole class instruction. The duties don't end there...some have been seen



preparing bulletin boards, art projects, wiping tears and giving hugs.

The children in the classroom have enjoyed having the MLC student teachers. They look forward to their arrival every day and have been known to share many unique things with their "teacher." "Items can range from a special pencil to a handmade picture. The children are not aware of "that place in New Ulm where we go to the play." This of course refers to the Children's Theatre play put on each spring at MLC.

One of the best benefits I see is that the children are given wonderful role models and are introduced to the world of higher education through the MLC

students.

The program has also been an avenue for our future WELS teachers to experience a wide variety of student abilities and backgrounds. In many instances if there are special education issues within our WELS schools, the children can be or are serviced through the local public school system. Giving the college students an opportunity to see the inclusion of all students in the regular education classroom can be a very beneficial experience.

With the state licensure process now entering its fourth year, MLC continues its partnership with a large number of public schools in the surrounding area which includes eight districts and one charter school. Eyes, along with classrooms, have now been opened to the "college on the hill."

Carolee Alfred is a first grade teacher at Gibbon Elementary School, a part of the Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop School District. She is a member of St. John's Lutheran Church, Sleepy Eye, MN

Editor's Note – Beginning with the 2001-2002 school year, the Minnesota Board of Teaching certified the teacher education program of Martin Luther College enabling MLC graduates to be eligible to apply for a Minnesota teaching license.

In addition to the 9-10 weeks of student teaching and EFE experiences in Lutheran elementary schools, students are required to do a one day a week, one semester clinical experience and a four week all day, every day practicum in one of 15 area public schools under

the supervision of a licensed teacher. Each year approximately 150 public school teachers participate in the MLC clinical and practicum program. The students not only observe the classroom teacher but also interact with the children in one-on-one, small group, and whole class teaching.

The students are supervised by college supervisors who have worked with them in methods courses and during their Lutheran elementary school experiences.

The preceding article was submitted by a public school teacher who has worked with the clinical and practicum program since its inception.



Teaching methods, curriculum, discipline....none of these are relatively important. What the teacher is matters more than what he does. What the teacher is, and what motivates him in teaching, is far more important than what or how he teaches.

Karl A. Menninger

An Encouragement to Volunteer for Community Service.

Darvin Raddatz

I enjoy trees. Not firewood. Living trees. Trees extending sturdy arms outward and skyward. Each tree exercising an individuality nurtured by God and a uniqueness thinkable to him alone. I especially enjoyed the live oaks which I encountered on my only trip to Texas, none finer than the grand tree in the enclosure at the Alamo. No photograph can do it justice.

I also enjoy clouds. Not storm clouds. Good-weather clouds. The puffy, wonderfully white, free-form bundles of water vapor that our God paints across the sky in endless profusion to incite wonder and awe. But clouds are not sturdy enough. I prefer trees: sturdy, outreaching, uplifting, and capable of endless variety in their growth under God.

What does this have to do with community service, with voluntarism? I want to encourage you to think that somewhere in your community and under God there is a lovely role for you. With your unique gifts you too can serve sturdily in a way that will reach out unashamedly and support unselfishly the quality of life in your community.

I regard this encouragement to be in tune with and supportive of our Synod's

current emphasis on mission to our neighborhoods. Like trees, congregations draw much of their sustenance from the larger community in which they are planted. But trees give back. Trees slowly rise beyond self-nurturing to become assets to their community, serving the community-at-large with beauty, with shade, even with the unseen oxygen that is necessary to life! So will our churches naturally reach out beyond themselves with service that is visible and can be easily appreciated, as well as that service which can be seen only by the eye of faith.

Missionary Pieter Reid at a National Convention of the LWMS suggested something like this a couple of years ago. He and his wife Marlys, Indonesian missionaries, both mentioned that it could take them years of practicing everyday kindnesses before they could begin to encourage friends and neighbors directly in the faith of Jesus Christ. They had to create an atmosphere in which their friends and neighbors could trust them not to be seeking a personal satisfaction, such as the making of a conversion, but to be speaking out of the heart's well-proven desire to serve, to help, to be kind, to love.

Now let me inch more closely toward

the heart of my topic. In the context of our increasingly urban ministry in the United States voluntary community organizations are a channel to give us, as church workers, the opportunity to show ourselves as ministers seeking simply to serve. They allow us aggressive church workers, ever interested in improving our church's statistical standing, to learn the joy of serving selflessly without being able to hope for our service being rewarded in some way.

Over the years no Word of God has given me greater distress than the parable of the Good Samaritan. The priest and the Levite possessed no advantage over me in being able to assess risk over against advantage. That someone who was not a church worker should have responded to the need, rather than a church worker, heaped further coals of fire upon my proud church worker's head. Here was bold response to need without calculating the cost or the advantage! To my embarrassment—and repentance—I must admit that the parable has been rewritten for me many times in the ink of real life. But I have also learned to rejoice that God empowers some who have no connection with church work to model for us the Good Samaritan's ready response to need.

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31-46) may further encourage us. Who does not remember the King's words: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." O blessed Word! It brings the opportunity to serve our Lord intimately to our very doorstep. We learn that Jesus is not only the Good

Samaritan but the wounded man who was shown compassion. We are encouraged to recognize that responding to society's need is a God-pleasing effort whether done through the church or not.

Not all of a community's needs are best remedied by the church and church associations or by benevolent government services. The urbanization of America in the early 20th century cried out for new responses to community needs, responses that had been less necessary in rural life. Civic or service clubs emerged as middle-class men joined informal social organizations like Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions. These groups combined dining with friends and working together on community projects. Some of the membership came from the old ritualistic fraternal orders that had lost prominence in the late 19th century. These new voluntary associations provided men an outlet to serve the community similar to the work women had started a decade earlier through benevolent societies. Still today they offer diverse opportunities for service which Christians may find congenial to their interests and supportive of their community.

Proper confessional interests led us to avoid the old fraternal orders, like the Masons, but the voluntary associations which succeeded them need not carry the same stigma. The earnest—possibly sometimes more "in-your-face" than necessary—confessionalism of the last half of the 20th century may have taught some of us an unintended lesson: to avoid all associations with com-

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munity persons who were not WELS. We may have excluded ourselves from a part of the world in which we could have provided real ministry.

The church and church associations are an important organ for the service of society with its diverse needs. This ought to be well understood by us. But church workers who restrict their activities to the church and the explicitly stated activities of their call will not capitalize on the varied opportunities for service for which their special gifts and training qualify them. Nor will there be opportunity for the modeling of selfless behavior that our calling to live in a given community has afforded. To be active “in the world” is not at all necessarily to be “of the world.” Working together with people of other religious persuasions gives the church worker an opportunity to understand them better, and it gives our neighbors a better opportunity to understand and appreciate us. When a few of us church workers joined a local service club, one of the members said very simply, “All these years I had no idea what you people were about. I thought you were something like a monastery.” He had thought we were a stand-offish group, interested only in our small circle and without interest in our community. We who have joined the service club have also gained a better understanding of and respect for the commitment to worthwhile social service which some citizens outside our circle may possess—and we have learned a profound appreciation for the personal time some are willing to sacrifice.

In my judgment we have been, as WELS church workers, preeminently concerned about the message we have for the world. This is a most worthy concern. But the message is best coupled with ministry in order to be true to itself. Service is crucial to the church’s essence and to its outreach to the community—and its ability to uplift those who are reached. To use another image—a river image, when message and ministry are not intimately connected, the message seems to some to be mere froth, foaming upon the fast moving current of time but not intrinsic to it. It may not seem to be that which really propels the church across the ages. When message and ministry go together, the message will be better recognized as belonging to the essentials of meaningful living.

Before the great teaching event we know as the Sermon on the Mount, St. Matthew described Jesus ministry in this way: “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them” (Matthew 4:23, 24). After the Sermon on the Mount St. Luke described Jesus’ ministry like this: “Jesus cured many who had diseases, sickness, and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind” (Luke 7:21). In describing his ministry for the impris-

oned John the Baptist, Jesus reported, “The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me” (Luke 7:22, 23). Displaying all-encompassing love and mercy through word and through deed is no less crucial today.

The previous paragraphs were intended to encourage volunteerism through the voluntary societies which minister to health needs or the problems that come with poverty—and with sin. The names of these societies are almost legion. Other associations which allow us to serve our communities are numerous: from professional organizations to garden clubs, from historical societies to environmental groups, from athletic associations to humanitarian service societies, from civic-government connected agencies to hobby and craft clubs. All allow us to use our diverse talents and display our humble commitment in service to the community in which we live. The associations vary from community to community. The daily newspaper or the chamber of commerce website will help us discover the best fit for us in our uniqueness.

I take a good deal of pleasure from Romans 12. Enjoy with me at least its opening verses. “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of

your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Then St. Paul goes on to describe how God has given each of us different gifts, unique personalities, insights, and interests that we may extend our arms outward and upward to embrace and uplift. No two of us are alike; no two of us need to be alike in the way we serve. But it is important that we serve. It is our opportunity for an individualized worship of God. Once we become involved with the community we will discover that its needs are our God-given opportunities for serving selflessly and uniquely.

Like me, you may have inherited a disposition to fear involvement with any part of the community other than the church. In part this was a fear of other people’s differentness. I pray that the Gospel may overcome this fear in you. I pray that you will seek to make service connections outside the church within the limit of your abilities.

In part my fear of community involvement was due to my fear of personal inadequacy for my ministry, my fear of failure if I took some time to serve the community. I now think I would have become more adequate in my teaching, preaching, and personal counseling if I had become a more functioning member of the community.

I hesitate to confess this final personal disposition which kept me from enlarging my world. It was driven home to me at a *Cinco de Mayo* gathering at a local restaurant this year. The mariachi band sang a song near our table which began to haunt me. It was the song of a

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man whose personal empire was shrinking. He no longer had even a wife. He sang plaintively: “Sigo seyendo el rey—I’m still the king.” His empire was shrinking but he was still the king! Here was the self-affirmation of proud despair.

For many years in my ministry I had been content to keep my empire, my sphere of activity, small, strictly bounded by the church. There, with only minor difficulty—students are so kind—I could nurture within myself and harbor the feeling, “I’m still the king.” As false a sentiment in me as the deluded wail of the mariachi songster! But I was fearful of expanding my world, fearful of entering into an unknown world where I would be a novice, my ignorance exposed.

Finally, at the urging of a friend, I joined a community service organization, a non-profit. I became a nobody, an ordinary fish in a far different pond from that in which I had been living. Selfless—and some not so selfless—volunteer community servants of various faiths now surrounded me. For the most part they wanted their careers to be marked by something more than making a success of themselves in their chosen vocation or business. This in itself was a useful lesson.

From these new associates I also learned how complex the world of need is, how numerous the opportunities for service in a community are. They opened my eyes to the neighborhood and the neighbor in all their complexity.

These men sometimes spoke of pri-

vate acts of neighborliness in which they were involved but they also sought association with others who were minded to serve in groups. Private and personal acts of service and kindness are wonderful ways to serve Christ, but communities need also associations of people who consult together, establish service goals together, and assist each other in meeting those goals. Such associations help a community to exist, to work. I learned from experience that many of the services necessary to the well-being of the community and its individuals cannot be well supplied by the church, by the government, or by private altruism. They are best served by men and women of good will who support one another in responding to one or more aspects of a community’s need.

I hope my dear synod can learn some of the same lessons in these next years of its expressed commitment to local communities. I applaud the commitment and pray for it to bear fruit. The image of the fine Christian lady of “To Kill a Mockingbird” has been flitting through my mind for years. She was deeply interested in learning about and supporting the mission of her church to darkest Africa but she took no thought at all for the spiritual welfare of the black man who worked for her. It is easier to think about exporting a message to another world than it is to import a ministry of mercy into our message for our neighborhood. Again, we should not think of ministry as something external to our message and needing to be imported into our message. The two go together. Let ministry and message

be combined—in each of us.

I have written this as a plea for called workers to regard themselves as servant members of the larger community in which they reside. Getting involved takes some effort and some courage. But volunteering is a wonderful opportunity to become sturdy members of our community, outreaching and uplifting in our ministry, and as free in our choice of service as Christian liberty permits. As free, as unique, as outreaching,

as uplifting, and as sturdy as one of God's trees. Become a volunteer; become a voluntree.

Essays are made by fools like me
But only God can make a tree.
He also will empower you to be
A Christian community voluntree.

Darvin Raddatz is a retired professor from Martin Luther College and resides in New Ulm, Minnesota.

Care to Share?

Whenever one attends a teachers' convention, we look throughout the school to see what others are doing to present lessons to their children or make the classroom a more inviting learning environment. We take notes on what we see and get suggestions from the classroom teachers as to how she does things. We also seek out workshops that give us ideas that we can take back and use in our own classroom.

We are looking for ideas, concepts, techniques, resources that you might be willing to share with the readers of *The Lutheran Educator*.

Textbooks Needed

The MLC Curriculum Library is in need of sample textbooks. Publishers will not send samples of their textbooks to the college library. We therefore need your help in keeping our Curriculum Library up to date with recent textbook publications.

If your school is reviewing textbooks and you are not required to return samples to the publishers, please contact Mrs. Helen Krueger (507.354.8221 ext. 242) or Mrs. Janice Nass (507.354.8221 ext. 327). They will let you know if any of the series you are reviewing are needed in our Curriculum Library.

At the present time the greatest need is for language arts, music, and social studies texts although others will be considered.

Thank you for any help you can give in keeping our library current in this area.

Dear Lord I do not ask
That thou shouldst give me some high work of thine,
Some noble calling, or some wondrous task;
Give me a little hand to hold in mine;
Give me a little child to point the way
Over the strange, sweet path that leads to thee;
Give me a little voice to teach to pray;
Give me two shining eyes thy face to see.
The only crown I ask , dear Lord, to wear
Is this: That I may lead a little child.
I do not ask that I may ever stand
Among the wise, the worthy, or the great;
I only ask that softly, hand in hand,
A child and I may enter at the gate.

Anon