

# THE LUTHERAN --- EDUCATOR

Even on  
my  
servants,  
both men  
and  
women,  
I will  
pour out  
my  
SPIRIT  
in those  
days.

Acts 2:18



Number 4

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# THE LUTHERAN EDUCATOR

The education journal  
of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
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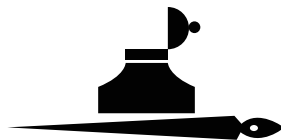
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## “So Long,” Not “Good-bye”

“Don’t say ‘Good-bye.’ It’s so harsh and sounds so final. Say ‘So long.’” That was the advice one elderly gentleman gave me on my first visit to his home. In accordance with his wishes, every visit thereafter ended with a hearty handshake and a “So long.” Even at his funeral some years later, those words ran through my mind. I knew his death did not mean “Good-bye.” It was “So long.” We would see each other again.

With this edition of *The Lutheran Educator* (TLE), your editorial staff is saying “So long.” With a speed that has surprised all of us—and perhaps you—the financial situation of TLE has taken a turn for the worse. Subscriptions for TLE dropped sharply in 2008—to the point that the publication is no longer self-supporting. Meetings, correspondence and conversations have all led to the sad conclusion that it is not feasible to continue publishing *The Lutheran Educator* in the present format and under the current system. So we say “So long.” But not “Good-bye.”

We are not saying “Good-bye” because it is our conviction that there remains a need for a professional publication for WELS educators, and we believe Martin Luther College (MLC) is the entity in our synod best suited to provide that publication. We share that sentiment because the college serves a unique purpose in our church body. The vision statement of MLC affirms that “Martin Luther College serves its students, staff, supporters, and the people of God’s world as the WELS College of Ministry by providing educational leadership with a global outlook.” Part of the educational leadership we believe we can provide is overseeing a professional publication that furnishes educators with opportunities to write and read articles that address current education and ministry issues.

What that professional publication—whether in print or digital form—might look like in the future is uncertain now. What is certain is that a publication for WELS educators is changing again. *The Lutheran Educator* is the successor to *The Lutheran School Bulletin*, which first began in November 1930 as a publication of the Minnesota District. In 1934 the synod assumed responsibility for the *Bulletin*. 1960 saw the discontinuation of the *Bulletin* and the emergence of its replacement: *The Lutheran Educator*. Initially funded by district teacher conference dues, TLE moved to self-supporting status through subscriptions in 1986.<sup>1</sup> That arrangement was feasible for 23 years. Now another change will take place.

The editorial staff wishes to thank you for your interest in *The Lutheran Educator*. We invite you to be part of the next phase of communication to WELS educators. Until then, we say “So Long.” Not “Good-bye.”

JFP

<sup>1</sup>“An Index to *The Lutheran Bulletin*, *The Lutheran Educator*, et al.,” John Isch



## “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands”

John Schultz

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. Corinthians 1:15-16*

*The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by His powerful word. Hebrews 1:3*

Various theories have recently been promoted about the consequences of humans putting too many small particles into the air. Vehicle exhaust, factory and residence emissions, even farm livestock waste are accused of dumping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Too much carbon dioxide, some say, traps the heat on the earth causing a “greenhouse effect.” This, they say, causes human-generated “global warming.” On the other hand, a theory popular in the 1970’s claims that carbon dioxide creates a “shield effect.” The particles in the air screen out sunlight causing a cooling effect, thus triggering an ice age.

Who’s right? What about this? Besides being a tool used to foster political agendas, ought we to fret and worry about a pending disaster? Will the growing season in the Midwest be drastically shortened by increased cooling causing food shortages? Or will large sections of the earth become deserts causing worldwide famine? Will the east coast of North America be pushed farther west by rising sea levels? Will the horrors in nature depicted by Hollywood movies come to pass? What are we to make of these things? I read of a little first-grader crawling under his bed at night for fear of being destroyed by something falling from the sky.

To be sure, we ought to be more careful about what we do to God’s earth. It is not ours to do as we please. The psalmist says, “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it, for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters,” Psalm 24:1-2. God is the Creator and owner, we are only the stewards.

Spirit-wrought faith and love motivates us to view God’s creation with awe

and do all we are able to care for it. Involving our students in positive environmental practices emphasizing the wonder and beauty of God's creation is fully in keeping with our stewardship of the earth.

The universe and the earth speak, silently declaring the glory of the Creator. Natural man has no excuse for, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands," Psalm 19:1. Ah, but wonder of wonders, God's word shows us that Jesus, the Son, is "the firstborn over all creation," Colossians 1:15. As such, he has the sovereignty, preeminence and priority over all creation. He was active in creation. Jesus is the "radiance of God's glory," Hebrews 1:3. As believers, we see Jesus in creation; we see the glory of God.

And yet, because of sin, the creation "groans as in the pains of childbirth," Romans 8:22. Tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes, etc, occur with increasing frequency. Sometimes creation seems to run amok. Despite human foolishness (the movies) and wickedness (sin and unbelief), Jesus "sustains all things by his powerful word," Hebrews 1:3. He is in control and makes the final determination of this created world. One day in May 1998, the sky turned dark and ominous as we neared the end of our school day. The sirens blew. The buses were held. The students were kept in shelter areas. I, together with faculty and almost 300 high school students, prayed. Our prayer was heard. We were protected and sustained. God is never far away from his children. "In God we

live and move and have our being," Acts 17:28. As I write this, I'm reminded of an old song. "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." Scripture teaches that God promises to sustain his children. Believe. How great is our Savior's love!

Read some more: Isaiah 49:13-18; Psalm 31:14-16

Prayer:

Your bountiful care what tongue can  
recite?

It breathes in the air, it shines in the light,  
It streams from the hills, it descends to  
the plain,  
And sweetly distills in the dew and the  
rain.

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,  
In you do we trust nor find you to fail.  
Your mercies, how tender, how firm to  
the end,  
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and  
Friend.

CW 243: v 4-5

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

# What Living Faith Looks Like (Part 4)

David Sellnow

**I**N THIS ISSUE, we conclude our look at the second chapter of James. Under discussion in this final installment: James 2:20-26.

You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

## **An empty fool**

James wondered if his message was getting through. “You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?” (James 2:20). James addressed the reader as a fool, literally someone empty, hollow, deficient. That’s the whole point here, isn’t it? The person who supposes himself a believer but indeed has no deeds is a façade, a phony, a fake. His alleged faith is empty of content, devoid of life, without value.

## **Case study: Abraham**

To the person whose life lacks concrete evidence of faith, James offered proof that such faith is nothing. He cited the example of Abraham, “the man of faith” (Galatians 3:9). “Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he

Editor’s note: Commentaries on James chapter two are being featured in this year’s volume of *The Lutheran Educator*. Called workers are invited to use these pages and accompanying discussion questions as part of faculty or other church staff meetings throughout the year.

did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,' and he was called God's friend" (James 2:21-23).

Note some key words in James' analysis: "working together ... made complete ... was fulfilled." Abraham's faith did not exist in a vacuum. It was not isolated into some detached corner of his soul. There was an intimate relationship between his faith and his works. Faith found fulfillment and completion in faith-based actions. The premier example of this was his offering up Isaac when God called on him to do so. God's promise sustained Abraham's faith and inspired Abraham's actions during that frightful, trying episode.

God had promised that through Isaac the Savior of the world would come (Genesis 17:19). Then God commanded that Isaac be slaughtered on an altar like a lamb of sacrifice. What a horrific ordeal! How could God require such a thing? It was against God's character. It went against God's promise. Clinging to God's promise enabled Abraham to carry out God's strange demand. "Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead" (Hebrews 11:19). If God insisted on Isaac's death, God would have to fulfill his promises by bringing Isaac back from death. Such was Abraham's heroic confidence of faith. And God commended his faith ... and his action. The two went hand in hand. Faith always acts in response to the word of God—no matter how startling or difficult the command may be.

Oh, there were also times when

Abraham's faith stumbled. Prior to Isaac's birth, Abraham slept with Sarah's servant girl; so desperately were he and his wife wanting to conceive a child (cf. Genesis 16). In that instance and in other stumbles, it was still the case that there was a connection between faith and action. When Abraham's faith faltered, his actions did too. When he lapsed into thinking according to the principles of this world, his actions became worldly and unprincipled, inconsistent with his faith.

Like Abraham, we believers aren't perfect in our performance, but need to be redirected time and again to return to God's word and live by his promises. God corrected Abraham, and returned him to vigorous, right-acting faith by reminding him of his promise (cf. Genesis 17:19-22). Such was James' intent toward us—to scold sin away from us, to renew in us a full reliance on the Lord and a full commitment to do whatever he asks of us. James aimed to jolt us out of our laziness, our worldliness, our tendency to love other things more than we love the Lord. Reinvigorated as believers, we, like Abraham, will be empowered to perform astonishing acts of faith. For us, God does not give orders to start a new nation or sacrifice a son. Rather, he commands us to "Go into all the world" (Mark 16:15) and "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). He directs us to "seek justice, encourage the oppressed, defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow" (Isaiah 1:17). He commissions us to "love one another deeply, from the

heart” (1 Peter 1:22), and to “do good to all people” (Galatians 6:10). Believing God, we will therefore act on our beliefs and carry out his commands, living lives of love in our families, our congregations, our communities and our world – “just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us” (Ephesians 5:2).

### **Case study: Rahab**

Using Abraham as an example of faith in action is not surprising. He is the patriarch of all people of faith (cf. Galatians 3:7). The next example James highlighted is strikingly different. She was an outsider, her background was sleazy, and her act of faith occurred in a situation of unclear ethics. But James unabashedly called attention to Rahab, a Canaanite sex seller, as someone who became a model of faith in action. “In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?” (James 2:25).

A lot of Christians might think to themselves, “I’m no Abraham.” His example of faith, especially in his willingness to sacrifice Isaac, may seem an example beyond our spiritual stamina. Rahab is less imposing. She was just a beginner as a believer. She was a woman caught up in the affairs of her own city, doing things with her life that were acceptable in her culture but deplorable to God. Then the Israelites arrived. The reputation of the God of Israel came with them, and Rahab’s life began to change. When two reconnais-

sance agents from Israel sought inconspicuous lodging at her brothel, she welcomed them. She confessed what the word about God had taught her: “I know that the LORD has given this land to you .... We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below” (Joshua 2:9-11). Rahab asked for protection for herself and her family members when Israel came to conquer her city, Jericho. She shielded the Israelite men from the city’s militia. She told the king’s soldiers, “I don’t know which way they went,” while the spies were hiding under stalks of flax that she had arranged for them on her rooftop (Joshua 2:5,6). Israel’s spies made it safely back to their camp. When the conquest came, the Israelites did spare Rahab’s household. And Rahab became an honest woman, marrying into an Israelite family. And she became the great-great grandmother of David, the later king of Israel (cf. Matthew 1:5,6). So Jesus’ human bloodline included an ancestress who had been a pagan prostitute. Think of God’s amazing grace!

Let’s talk a bit about Rahab’s act of faith, to which James has summoned our attention. Maybe you wouldn’t instinctively identify it as a faithful act. Maybe you’d question Rahab’s ethics



instead. Essentially, didn't she lie to government authorities that came to her door? Didn't she say, "I don't know which way they went," when she knew full well where she had hidden them? Why did James consider her actions exemplary? Some will draw a distinction between her good actions and her questionable ones, pointing out that James praised her for giving lodging to the spies and sending them off safely, not for lying to the king's men. That seems like splicing hairs. Rahab was already at odds with her city's rulers by harboring spies in her home, a traitorous act that, by itself, would incur censure under any government's laws. James didn't ask us to do rabbinical analysis of which aspects of God's law must be applied in which situations. It is Pharisee-style legalism to think of the righteousness of our works according to how well they measure up to some specified policies or codes. The believer simply strives to respond to God's love with godly actions, and oftentimes in this world that task gets quite complicated. We find ourselves in dilemmas—like Rahab's—where doing one thing seems unethical, and yet doing the opposite would be worse. Rahab sought to honor the God of Israel by lying to the authorities of Jericho. Are we more pure than she?

We must admit that none of our acts of faith are ever pure. Everything we do, even as we strive to do good in the Lord, needs to be cleaned by the blood of Christ, because our motives aren't faultless, our performance is marred by mistakes, our decisions lack superlative wis-

dom. Yet we do what we do, as meager efforts born of faith, and God says, "Well done, good and faithful servant" ... even though we weren't altogether good and we weren't nearly as faithful as God's own perfection requires us to be.

Picture this analogy of what God considers a good work. On a Saturday morning, a little girl wants to bring her mother breakfast in bed. The girl is full of excitement as she labors at her task. She cracks some eggs into a dish, because she knows Mommy likes eggs. She doesn't cook them, though, because Mommy has told her not to use the microwave or the stove. She is allowed to use the toaster, so she makes some toast. She pushes the control lever all the way over to make sure the toast gets plenty toasted. Then she butters the burnt bread with a full stick of butter to cover up the black crust. She begins putting her items on a tray, dribbling a bit of raw egg here and there. She pours juice in a glass, and it overflows all over the tray. She covers the spill with some napkins that take on a resulting shade of pink. She grabs the morning newspaper and the soggy pinkish tray and toddles to Mommy's bedroom. The mother sits up, smiles, and hugs her little girl. She offers to eat the toast first (scraping off a bit of the butter), and then will come downstairs to help cook the eggs. The daughter is delighted. And Mommy is thrilled—not because the breakfast is so well made, but because her daughter has shown such affectionate love.

So it is with our good works. They are

inevitably flawed. They could be so much better. We have so much learning to do in terms of being “able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2). But our faith expresses itself in works all the same, all the while that we are growing in faith, and God in his grace accepts them as signs of our love.

Maybe you question the specific ethics of what Rahab did. But James has us look at the faith behind Rahab’s actions, and to the fact that her faith went into action. That’s the essential point. James was not interested in a philosophical discussion of what a person should do in this or that situation of espionage and warfare. He simply wanted us to know that even the simplest believer—even the believer who doesn’t know a whole lot about the Lord yet—will evidence in her actions that Christ is at work in her heart. That was how it was with Rahab. That’s how it is to be with you and me.

### **Did he really say that?**

We’ve not yet addressed one particular verse in the chapter—the most challenging sentence in James’ entire letter. It made a theologian as formidable as Martin Luther uneasy. Here it is, blunt and straightforward: “You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone” (James 2:24).

Did James really say that? That’s not the way we learned Christianity! We cling to Jesus’ simple promise: “He who believes in me will live,” (John 11:25). Jesus did not attach conditions, no list

of deeds we must do. He said simply, “Whoever hears my word and believes ... has crossed over from death to life” (John 5:24). So also the apostle Paul has taught us, quite adamantly, that salvation is not earned by our efforts (cf. Ephesians 2:8,9). Since salvation is a gift from God, “then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace” (Romans 11:5). In the face of such scriptures, how could James possibly say that “a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone”?

Bring back to mind everything we have explored in this chapter. James had been emphasizing dramatically the reality that works flow from faith. He battled against those who claimed faith but were not living their faith. James’ aim was not to contradict Christ or Paul. Study the sayings of Jesus and Paul and you’ll see that they frequently spoke with equal insistence about the necessity of faith being followed by actions. “If you love me, you will obey what I command,” Jesus told his disciples (John 14:15). Paul called Christians slaves to righteousness (Romans 6:18). “Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness” (Romans 6:19).

In those instances where Paul and James said seemingly opposite things about grace and works, it is because they were addressing different audiences. When a certain group was demanding certain acts of law as a prerequisite for salvation, Paul responded vehemently, “If righteousness could be

gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!” (Galatians 2:21). But when others were becoming spiritually lazy and essentially loveless, James gave stern warning: “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says,” lest your religion become “worthless” (James 1:22,26).

A good way to come to terms with the apparent conflict between Paul’s statements on grace and James’ statements on works would be to look at faith as a living tree. Indeed, Scripture often uses this sort of picture. The believer is “like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither” (Psalm 1:3). We are branches growing from a vine, connected to Jesus. Connected to him, we “bear much fruit” (John 15:5).

Paul’s emphasis on faith looked at believers’ roots. We are only alive when God grafts us into Jesus as branches to the vine, when we are rooted in the living water of the word of God. If we are severed from the vine or uprooted from the ground of our faith, there is no life or salvation in us.

James’ emphasis on works looked at believers’ fruits. If we are alive, if we are connected to the vine that is Jesus Christ, we will bear fruit. If we remain rooted in God’s gospel promises, our leaves never wither. Our source of life is solely in Christ, but having life from Christ has an unmistakable impact on our lives. James insisted that our trees—our lives—be green and fruitful. In this sense one can judge whether we are right with God by what we do, and not by faith alone, because faith is never

alone. Living faith is constantly producing. Jesus himself spoke this way: “Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. ... The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart ... for out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks” (Luke 6:44,45). And Jesus saw no problem in picturing Judgment Day as a division between those who did good things “for the least of these brothers of mine,” and those who did not (Matthew 25:40). Those who do right things are those who are right with God, those in whose hearts Christ dwells through faith. Those who are apart from Christ “can do nothing” (John 15:5)—nothing they do counts for anything in the judgment of God.

“Faith without deeds is dead” (James 2:26). James’ summary verdict stands in full agreement with Jesus’ own warning: “If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned” (John 15:6).

### **See the whole picture**

This series of articles has been about one chapter of Scripture. Pulling out one piece of the Bible is always awkward. Scriptures do not want to drift unconnectedly like uprooted islands. God’s word to us is a unit, a complete message. We do well to keep all his words always in mind.

Particularly as we come to the end of James chapter two, let us be reminded of the context of the overall word in which it resides. God calls our hearts to

repentance with the law. The law attacks us, pierces us, kills us. It leaves us no room for excuses or escape. This is what James chapter two does. It confronts persons who are comfortable in shallow, superficial religion. It makes us admit that we fall woefully short of what God desires.

As God produces contrition in us, he also brings about confidence to trust his forgiveness and the promise of new life in Christ. All of the sins concerning which James has stabbed our consciences are absolved through the blood of James' brother, Jesus Christ. James himself assures us later in his letter, "The Lord is full of compassion and mercy" (James 5:11). "If [you] have sinned, [you] will be forgiven" (James 5:15). "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up" (James 4:10).

Being lifted up once more by the grace of God, may we recognize more fully the depth of his forgiveness for us and the extent of his will for us in the world. May James' call to repentance and his urging to good works have great effect on our lives, so that the warmth and love and energy of our faith will grow daily. Living faith will express itself in energetic kindness and liberal giving of ourselves for others. Thus God will be praised and the mercy of Christ will be displayed to all. When people see what living faith looks like, they will be directed to look at the One who gives such great faith. "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

### Talk about it

Use the following discussion starters within your school faculty or with other church staff.

- Take a moment and have each member of the group mention something memorable about Abraham, our father in faith. After you complete the list, examine it. What sorts of things did you list – internal qualities of Abraham's faith, or external acts which Abraham did? Do you begin to see how separating faith from deeds is an impossible division?
- Think of your own track record. When you have acted in a godly manner, what prompted those actions? When you have acted in an ungodly manner, what were you thinking? Discuss how the convictions of faith produce sanctified deeds, while thinking in unspiritual ways gives rise to improper behavior.
- Apply the thoughts of the previous question in reference to the lives of the people to whom you minister. Can children in the classroom act in godly ways without faith as the basis for their actions? If we desire parishioners in the congregation to become more sanctified in their living, where ought we focus our ministry to them? And what of the communities in which we live – can we expect wholesome, upright morality out of people who are not right with God in their hearts?
- React to this assertion: "None of our acts of faith are ever pure." In what

ways are even our best works tainted by sin? How can God accept our less-than-perfect works as pleasing to him?

- Rahab serves as an example of a new convert acting in faith as best as she could. Can you think of examples from your ministry of young believers or new converts whose faith boldly showed itself in urgent action?
- Is it okay to let believers who are new in faith act on their faith? For example, would new members or newly confirmed teens make good candidates for your church's outreach and witnessing teams? How could this be a very good thing? But what if they make mistakes or don't have all the answers?
- In the Athanasian Creed, the church confesses, "Those who have done good will enter eternal life, but those

who have done evil will go into eternal fire." Is this confession consistent with the Bible's testimony regarding how we are saved? (Look at John 5:21-29 as you talk about this question.)

- Having completed this series of studies in James chapter two, are there any new resolves or initiatives you wish to implement in your personal life? In your classroom or congregation? In your relationships with neighbors or your life in your community? Talk about opportunities to put faith into action in various ways, and pledge one another support in any new ventures planned. ✝

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### **May 15 Alumni Gathering (5:00) & Commencement Concert (7:30)**

Join alumni from MLC, DMLC, and NWC for dinner and fellowship prior to the annual commencement concert. This year, we'll be eating our meal cafeteria/buffet style and then joining in the old round table for a presentation on the Chapel of the Christ, a state of the college message from President Zarling, and an update on what's happening in the MLC Alumni Association. Meal and program cost is set at \$5/person. Please RSVP to ensure adequate seating arrangements for meals, presentations, and the concert.



### **May 16 Commencement (10:00 AM) and Call Services (2:30 PM)**

Welcome our newest alumni as the class of 2009 receives their degrees and worship the Lord of the church as he sends our teacher and staff ministry candidates out to serve.

## Readers respond

Two readers who have read Professor Sellnow's article have reflected and commented on what he said. We are happy when a good article prompts readers to do just that. Editor

John Isch

Professor Sellnow's thesis of showing our faith and the basis for that faith, as his first article demonstrated, is excellent. We do not need to fear James, as some do; in fact, his epistle is often a nice counterbalance to other emphases, sometimes over-emphases, we hear in the Lutheran church.

I cannot help pondering, however, on Professor Sellnow's use of examples and the instances he uses in the second article (December 2008) to illustrate his points: they are all related to life in the church. (I said "all"; perhaps some could be read otherwise; in the February issue, Professor Sellnow includes a greater diversity of examples.) The result is that the reader could conclude that showing our faith in acts of charity occurs only within the fellowship of believers. This emphasis began with the first article where "brother" is defined as a brother in faith and that brother becomes the object of our faith in action, and the implication may be that only that brother in the faith is worthy of our charity.

The examples Professor Sellnow uses to show our failures in this charity are all examples from a church setting—the

members or aspiring members who are rejected because of their position, their lack of wealth, their life style, their race, language, or whatever. The criticism of a church that is proposed in the slums is inappropriate because the *church* should not be bound by prejudice. Certainly, these are egregious examples of what should never occur within the body of believers. But again, the reader may assume that his or her actions or choices in a *church* are what James is talking about, and the rest of his or her life can be as he/she wishes, because the persons he/she dislikes are not "brothers."

Yes, I suspect the author's demurrer would be that James was writing his letter to believers who did not show their faith in their works in their treatment of people within their congregation, and thus the author is only following the context of the text. This is good homiletics. And yes, the specific calling of many of those who write for the *Educator* is to instruct future church workers that they should be alert to such lovelessness in themselves and in their future members in a church. But for a different audience—people who don't read *The Lutheran Educator* or people who aren't church workers—a very small part of their life relates to the

church. Most of their time, associations, and relationships are with people who don't go to church with them. Those persons reading this article might think: "Okay, I can't look down on the fellow from Goose Town who is sitting in front of me in the church, but I sure don't have to associate with that kind when I go to Turner Hall."

In the section in article two regarding showing favoritism to the rich, there is only one specific example: Believers are warned that they should not look especially to rich people for donors to the congregation. But there are certainly other examples in our personal lives, when we are not in the pew, when we need to be aware of such financial favoritism or prejudice toward the poor. Do we view people on welfare as too lazy to work?

Finally, the author's examples regarding prejudices against lawbreakers again seem to relate to our activities in a church but not to our lives apart from that fellowship of believers. There is a world of hurting people out there; the present economic mess will make them even more a silent majority. The greatest need they have is to know their Savior and the salvation he has won for them. And because Lutherans fear—more than heterodoxy and pietism—slipping down the path to the social gospel, we often stop at the period in the previous sentence. When we do that, we do not show our faith in our works.

Professor Sellnow could reply (as I have often done), "Ah, great, but that is another article for the *Educator* where

the author can explore such relationships outside the church." Alas, thus continues the great bifurcation of church and life.

In sum, it seems too easy to walk away from the first two articles in this series saying, "All these I have done; what do I further lack?" ❧

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*John Isch taught at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, MN. He is retired and lives in New Ulm, MN.*

Kenn Kremer

I wanted to take the time to thank Professor Sellnow for the thought-provoking series of articles concerning James chapter two. It has helped to sharpen my understanding of this text. I thank him for all of the time and effort he put into making this excellent contribution to our ongoing dialog in the WELS regarding the way we relate to one another and the unbelieving world around us.

I just wanted to take the opportunity to make a few observations with regard to the James text. While they may sound critical, these comments are not meant to disagree with anything the series author has said. On the contrary, my comments here stem from a project I have been pursuing—a project that grew out of a concern for the growing number of congregations in the WELS that were experiencing conflict of one kind or another (lawsuits arising from disputes among God's people, conflict at the domestic level as well as conflict in the workplace and in schools). The book of James makes a huge contribu-

tion to our overall understanding of how God sees conflict and how he wants us to deal with it. Through James we see how sinful hearts that are already inclined toward war try to justify unloving behaviors toward an enemy using a variety of biases as their (distorted) rationale.

The direction the author went in seems to have highlighted our biases based on socio-economic criteria. That discussion is certainly there in this text. It may well be the umbrella for a whole host of prejudicial behaviors that together could be termed “showing favoritism.” I’m just not so sure that such an emphasis addresses the problems of favoritism in the ways that God’s people in the WELS seem to need it most. In my personal experience, we seem more inclined to demonstrate an unwillingness to overcome the temptation to let our racial and ethnic biases show. In most of the congregations I have served, poverty was something of a given. Class distinctions were not at all a problem. The haves knew what it meant to be generous and welcoming of the have-nots. And the have-nots always seemed most appreciative of the generosity of those who had. Maybe my experiences were unique. But over the years I’ve seen way too much evidence to suggest that we do have a serious problem with racial, ethnic, or cultural prejudice. Worse, we seem to have a blind eye turned to looking in the mirror of self-criticism and recognizing the truth about our own particular brand of (WELS) favoritism.

In the 1970s I knew a WELS pastor

who insisted on teaching young confirmands that it was a sin to marry a person from another race. He did so proudly, and I might add, with impunity. None of his brothers in the ministry dared to confront the man on this matter, and it went on for years.

One would think that the passage of time in our nation would have altered our attitudes within the WELS. We may be making progress. But Parents CrossLink just commissioned an article written about this very topic. For the article we interviewed a former WELS pastor who, at least in part, left our synod’s ministry because he felt he could no longer subject his racially mixed family to the lovelessness they were experiencing in one of our churches. This pastor still cares deeply about his former synod and views us with compassion, not anger. But he sees a desperate need for some change in this area.

I’ve also witnessed first-hand the kind of ethnic bigotry of which we are capable while working with a group of Chinese Christians in one of our congregations. One member of the English congregation said she wasn’t in favor of continuing the mission work among the Chinese because she found their children to be undisciplined and naughty. Others seem to tolerate such a ministry in their home congregation, but if push came to shove, they would give up this precious opportunity to do real gospel ministry in a heartbeat in favor of serving “our own people” first.

In Wisconsin, the School Choice voucher system provides private and parochial education through vouchers



to poverty-level families. When Choice first emerged as an option, an objection frequently expressed privately and publicly in a number of congregations suggested that members didn't want "our kids" to be forced to attend a school where racial or ethnic minorities would be competing with their kids for the good grades, or the good parts in the school play, or the chance to start on the basketball team. Where these School Choice programs have flourished, they still find themselves on the outside of the WELS perimeter. In many ways they are isolated. And I dare say there are also signs that some of our schools are de facto making an effort to

remain – (I didn't think I would ever have to use this word again, but here I am saying it) – segregated. In my opinion, James included these concerns in the spirit of his admonition to Christians everywhere and in all ages when he warned against a show of favoritism. ☛

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*Kenneth Kremer is a Family Editor serving Northwestern Publishing House. His background includes twenty years of teaching and administrative experience in WELS elementary schools*

### **June 15-19 Alumni Tour to the Creation Museum**

Our inaugural alumni tour, co-hosted by the Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors, takes us to the new Creation Museum in Petersburg, KY. Our guides, Prof. Lyle Lange and Prof. Steve Thiesfeldt, will share insights into the debate over the earth's origin and ensure a safe, enjoyable trip for all. Additional highlights include an evening on Chicago's Magnificent Mile, an Ohio River dinner cruise, and a visit to Indiana's Amish country.



### **July 24-26 Alumni Reunion Weekend**

Graduates of MLC, DMLC, and NWC are encouraged to join friends and family for a weekend of fun and reminiscence on the MLC campus. Special invitations were sent to class members celebrating a five year incremental anniversary (2004, 1999, 1994...1934). Highlights include: opening worship, Alumni College mini-classes, Hidden Spaces of MLC campus tours, Prof. Em. Arnold Koelpin's renowned Three Hour Tour of our fair city, Saturday evening's banquet & entertainment, cheap childcare and supervised children's activities, and plenty of time to reconnect with classmates.

# Full-Day Kindergarten

Sue Heinitz

**F**ULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN has become more and more popular within the last decade. Children enrolled in full-day kindergarten attend school five days a week anywhere from four to six hours per day (Ackerman, Barnett, & Robin, 2005). Over sixty percent of kindergartners in the United States are enrolled in full-day programs (Ackerman et al., 2005; DeCesare, 2004; Kauerz, 2005). Nine states mandate that school districts offer full-day kindergarten programs, and two of those states mandate attendance by all age-eligible children (Education Commission of the States [ECS], 2004). Supporters of full-day kindergarten point to improved academic achievement (as measured by standardized tests), socialization, and convenience to families as benefits of full-day kindergarten. Most important, full-day kindergarten programs can help at-risk students narrow the academic gap with their peers. On the other hand, cost, space, lack of universal access, and the pushing of a tougher curriculum on young students are issues that also must be considered. Is full-day kindergarten a way to improve early education? Full-day kindergarten does have its benefits, but administrators, teachers, and parents must consider carefully if those benefits outweigh the

benefits of being at home. Full-day kindergarten is the right choice for some families, but certainly not for all.

Many researchers have studied whether full-day kindergarten programs help students improve academic achievement. Hough and Bryde (1996) tested kindergarten students in Springfield, Missouri schools. They found that full-day students outscored half-day students on every criterion measured by norm-referenced achievement tests. Walston and West (2004) conducted an extensive study of full-day kindergarten programs. They found greater gains in reading and math achievement scores from fall to spring for full-day kindergartners than half-day kindergartners. When compared with kindergartners in half-day programs, full-day kindergartners score higher on achievement tests in both reading and math (Ackerman et al., 2005; Clark, 2002; Hough & Bryde, 1996; Koopmans, 1991; Nielsen & Cooper-Martin, 2002; Plucker et al., 2004; Walston & West, 2004). Fusaro (1997) conducted a meta-analysis on the effect of full-day kindergarten on student achievement. He too found that full-day kindergarten “appears to facilitate the achievement of children” (Fusaro, 1997, p. 280). He did warn that a majority of studies in this

area were not true experimental studies. Children were not randomly assigned to full-day and half-day kindergartens, and the investigators did not have control over the independent variable.

Educators have long been interested in the long-term effects of full-day kindergarten. A longitudinal study, conducted by the Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation, followed the academic progress of kindergarten students from the 1978-1979 and 1979-1980 classes. Data was collected from standardized tests, report cards, school

*Full-day kindergarten  
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records, questionnaires, and interviews. Results showed that full-day students had better reading ability in first grade than their half-day peers. This continued in third grade (full-day students scored higher in ten of fourteen areas), and in fifth and seventh grades (Plucker et al., 2004). Again, the study may have been flawed in its design. Other studies have found mixed results. Koopmans (1991) found that the difference between all-day and half-day groups “loses statistical significance after the first year of elementary school (p. 35). Other researchers reported that results in achievement beyond kindergarten were mixed at best (Ackerman et al., 2005; Brewster & Railsback, 2002;

Karweit, 1992).

Full-day kindergarten is most effective at narrowing the gap for at-risk students. When the Montgomery County Public Schools placed their neediest students in full-day kindergarten, lowered class size, revised the curriculum, and provided professional development for their teachers, they found a significant narrowing of performance disparities between at-risk students and their peers (Alban, Nielsen, & Schatz, 2003; Larson, 2003). Certainly factors beyond the full-day program helped these at-risk students. Other researchers have found that full-day kindergarten does play a significant role in raising the academic achievement of at-risk students (Ackerman et al., 2005; Brewster & Railsback, 2002; DeCesare, 2004; Plucker et al., 2004; Walston & West, 2004).

Researchers have attempted to ascertain whether full-day kindergarten fosters positive social and behavioral effects. In general, the research shows that children may develop greater independence and a greater degree of active engagement (Clark, 2002; Hough & Bryde, 1996; Plucker et al., 2004). Hough and Bryde (1996) state, “while the number of social interactions is greater for students attending full-day, the ‘quality’ of these interactions was not ascertained, and criterion measures failed to produce significant differences” (p. 6-7). Young students do not seem to be harmed by the long day of school, and may possibly reap some social benefits.

“Lengthening the school day provides

more opportunities for learning, but the actual use of time is still the critical issue” (Karweit, 1992, p. 83). How schools use the extended day and adapt the curriculum is more important than adding hours to the school day. The Montgomery County Public Schools made sure they supplemented their full-day program with curriculum changes (Alban et al., 2003; Nielsen & Cooper-Martin, 2002). Experts in early childhood education point out that five-year-olds do not learn in the same manner as older children, and schools need to make sure a first grade curriculum does not get pushed down to kindergarten programs (Elkind, 2000; Karweit, 1992).

Parents and teachers generally are in favor of full-day kindergarten (Brewster & Railsback, 2002; Hough & Bryde, 1996; Plucker et al., 2004). Teachers gain time and flexibility. Parents feel a higher degree of confidence that their children are ready for first grade (Hough & Bryde, 1996). Parents also gain in lowered childcare and transportation costs. At the same time, Elkind (2000) warns that parents may be transferring many of their traditional functions to the school.

Cost and space are the biggest problems many districts face in providing full-day kindergarten programs (Kauerz, 2005; Brewster & Railsback, 2002). Schools have to weigh the benefits of the program, especially for their at-risk students. Once a full-day program is in place, schools may find that it isn’t as costly as expected when they eliminate half-day transportation costs and figure in less grade retention and remedial

efforts (Ackerman et al., 2005). School districts still face at least the initial costs of the extra teachers and space a full-day kindergarten program requires.

The school my daughter attends offers a half-day program (three-and-a-half hours per day). The afternoon program, which is basically childcare, is optional. I have been pleased with the program and have felt strong against full-day kindergarten programs. I do see the strong advantages a full-day program has for disadvantaged and at-risk

*How schools use the extended day and adapt the curriculum is more important than adding hours to the school day.*

students. For students such as these, full-day kindergarten is an important boost. While students in full-day kindergartens score higher on achievement tests, I still question the necessity of mandatory full-day kindergarten. The kindergarten teacher at St. Mark’s (Kate Dowling) and I were talking about this issue, and she brought up an excellent point. Does the fact that kindergartners score well on a test really tell you how they are doing? The results of standardized tests only tell so much about a student.

How time is used in a kindergarten

class is vital. A good teacher, who has a handle on the curriculum and plans time wisely, can accomplish much in a half day. Besides a carefully thought out schedule and curriculum, St. Mark's uses parent volunteers extensively in kindergarten. Children do get quite a bit of one-on-one and small group time just as children do in full-day kindergartens. They work and play in the morning and then are free to be with their parents or in childcare in the afternoon. While many families make use of the afternoon childcare option, there is flexibility for children also to be at home in the afternoon.

For me, in an ideal world, full-day kindergarten would be unnecessary. Schools can make appropriate use of curriculum planning, scheduling, and parent volunteers to offer excellent half-day kindergarten programs. This will never be an ideal world, and full-day programs may be part of the answer to improving kindergarten programs. Schools that serve many at-risk and disadvantaged students will find the benefits of full-day kindergarten crucial. Full-day kindergarten does have its benefits, but administrators, teachers, and parents need to weigh carefully the benefits of being at school and being at home. Full-day kindergarten is the right choice for some families, but not for all. ♣

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Sue Heinitz wrote this article for the class *EDU 5001 Issues in Education*.



# Profiles of Ministry: A Staff Minister in Home Missions

Brent Bitter

**A**FTER FIVE YEARS OF learning, I graduated from Martin Luther College in 1998 equipped with a degree in education and trained in parish ministry through the Staff Ministry Program. I awaited Call Day with great anticipation, eagerly looking forward to discovering what role God had for me in his church.

President Olsen announced my call from the podium: “Brent Bitter, staff minister, exploratory mission, Jacksonville, Florida.” I had lived almost my entire life in the heart of Wisconsin surrounded by long-established WELS congregations. What did it mean to be called to an “exploratory mission”? And what would my responsibilities be in such a setting?

Pastor Phil Hoyer, my new teammate in the ministry, briefly greeted me after the Call Service. He had accepted the call to lead the exploratory efforts in Jacksonville just weeks before Call Day at MLC. He had spent half of his 19-year ministry in the mission field and was excited to begin this new venture with a partner.

I hurried to receive my call package from the South Atlantic District President, Pastor John Guse. As I perused the call materials, I discovered that my assignment was to assist with “outreach to the unchurched, training lay members for service, teaching, visit-

ing the sick, administrative work and other ministerial duties as directed by the pastor and mission board.” I didn’t know what specific duties my call would entail, but I was thankful to serve under the direction of an experienced mission pastor and a District Mission Board experienced in starting new congregations.

Pastor Hoyer and I began working as a ministry team in August of 1998. The congregation was named Victory Lutheran Church with the mission of “Winning Souls for Christ and Coaching Christians for Life” Now all we needed was people!

In these early stages, being a staff minister at Victory Lutheran Church meant knocking on doors and making phone calls; developing brochures, tracts, newsletters, and invitations; and also managing a prospect database. We canvassed thousands of homes in our area as we searched for people who were not attending a Christian church. We’d invite them to participate in a Bible Information Class which Pastor Hoyer led at a nearby elementary school each week. Our first class had five participants. After six months of making contacts, we celebrated our first worship service on February 21st, 1999 in a conference room at the University of North Florida. We diligently worked to maintain relationships with the prospects we

discovered through mailings, phone calls and visits. We averaged around 40 people in attendance each Sunday during our first year of worship.

Victory has come a long way after nearly ten years of mission work. The congregation operates a beautiful 7,600 square foot facility located on six acres of prime real estate. We average just over 100 people in worship each weekend, and we have 145 souls in our membership records.

As the congregation has changed, the role of the staff minister has changed too. The duties of the staff minister have regularly been modified to suit the needs of the congregation. At some point in my ministry, being a staff minister at Victory has meant: knocking on doors, making telephone contacts, following up with worship visitors, coordinating mass mailings, publishing a monthly newsletter, presenting children's sermons, leading vacation Bible schools, creating a church website, leading adult Bible studies, teaching Bible Information Class, coordinating fellowship activities, leading the Sunday school ministry, teaching confirmation class, organizing small group ministries, leading our youth group, coordinating a Lutheran Pioneer program, assisting with weekly worship, visiting hospitalized members... and other privileges as directed by the pastor and District Mission Board.

Being a staff minister at Victory today is distinctively different from what it was ten years ago.

The congregation recently altered my call to focus on reaching out to the

community through the development of a preschool ministry. As the years pass by, the needs of the congregation will continue to change and the role of the staff minister will change with it.

This venture of a pastor-staff minister team to establish a home mission was a new approach by the District Mission Board and, after ten years, still remains a one-of-a-kind strategy. The team approach to mission work in Jacksonville has been an expensive endeavor, but it has enabled our congregation to touch more lives in more ways than just one called worker, the pastor, could have done alone. I'm thankful to have served in this mission congregation for nearly ten years. Lord willing, I'll serve Victory for years to come in whatever capacity is needed.✠

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*Mr. Brent Bitter serves as staff minister at Victory Lutheran Church in Jacksonville, Florida.*

This volume of *The Lutheran Educator* has introduced several staff ministers to you who have each described the varied work that they carry out in their individual ministry settings. For further information on how a staff minister might fit into your congregation's staffing approach, or what options you might have in pursuing certification as a staff minister, please contact:

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# Active and Healthy Schools

Daniel Gawrisch

*"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well (Ps. 139:14).*

## **Why should we be concerned?**

The truth hurts. Across America weight management problems have increased rapidly. This is a trend that is getting worse every year, with no end in sight. For example, on the basis of data from NHANES (National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey), the prevalence of overweight children between the ages of 6 and 11 years increased from 4.0 percent in 1971-1974 to 17.5 percent in 2001-2004. The prevalence of overweight in adolescents between the ages of 12 and 19 increased from 6.1 percent to 17.0 percent (American Heart Association). Children who are overweight are much more likely to be overweight as adults. Therefore, the number of overweight adults has increased as well. According to the Surgeon General, overweight adolescents have a 70% chance of becoming overweight or obese adults, and this increases to 80% if one or more parent is overweight or obese. The amplified amount of overweight children has assisted adult obesity rates to nearly

triple in the last three decades in adults ages 20 and older (American Heart Association). The fact is our society has become extremely sedentary with poor eating habits. Televisions, computers, video games, and fast foods contribute to children's inactive and unhealthy lifestyles. Consequently, children need to be encouraged to be active and exercise more, and good nutrition habits need to be developed at a young age.

## **Child nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004**

The staggering statistics of overweight and obesity forced the Federal Government to take action. President Bush passed the Child Nutrition and WIC (Special Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children) Reauthorization Act of 2004. This is an original bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 in order to give children increased access to food and nutrition assistance, to simplify program operations and improve program management, to reauthorize child nutrition programs, and for other purposes (National Conference of State Legislatures). The new law says that, at a

minimum, the local policies should include:

- Goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and nutrition guidelines selected by the local educational agency for all foods available on each school campus;
- Establish a plan for measuring implementation of the local wellness policy;
- And involve parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public in the development of the school wellness policy (United States Department of Agriculture).

In general, the goals of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act are to establish healthy school nutrition environments, reduce childhood obesity, and prevent diet-related chronic diseases. In order to accomplish these goals, schools must do more than to simply revise the physical education and hot lunch programs. Rather, schools must change the overall learning environment, reaching out to students, parents, and the community to promote active and healthy lifestyles.

### **Components of active and healthy schools**

Schools that have been successful at fostering an active and healthy environment are composed of numerous components, and seven of those components will be presented in this article. First, quality physical education, and not just in PE class, has been estab-

lished. Student involvement in physical activity must be increased. A school may need to establish a physical activity coordinator to encourage participation in physical education opportunities inside and outside of the school.

Second, teachers need to promote active learning in the classroom. Teachers should integrate movement into regular classroom instruction whenever possible. While this may be hindered by limited space in the classroom, teachers can look to expand learning outside of the classroom to locations that allow for more movement. For example, in addition to researching local types of plants and leaves through books and the internet, take the students outside and explore the surrounding area. Teachers that struggle to find ways to incorporate movement and active learning should first use the subjects that they excel in, and then expand their comfort zone to other subjects.

Third, before and after school programs are imperative to creating an active and healthy environment. These programs usually offer the greatest opportunity for activities that encourage healthy food choices and healthy behaviors. Although after school sports programs are an asset to an active school environment, schools can do more than that. Schools should also offer students opportunities to practice the healthy lifestyles that they are introduced to throughout the school day. For example, involvement in after school workout clubs, diet groups, or health clinics would be far more beneficial to a stu-

dent than simply going home to video games and snacks until mom gets home from work. Furthermore, less than 3% of adults over the age of 24 stay in shape through team sports (Ratey 17). Therefore, it is necessary to offer students more than just after school sports programs to create healthy habits. A school must find a way to overcome the cost and transportation issues that may be obstructing the after school program from taking off.

Fourth, activity breaks are another essential component that every school must have. At a minimum, schools should have two 15-minute breaks per day. Students should not be allowed to stay in for recess for any reason (except illness), as activity breaks can improve academic learning time by helping the students learn more efficiently and can reduce behavioral problems (Ratey 22). Organizing games and having the proper amount and quality of equipment can help promote student involvement at recess. Students should be encouraged to be active during the break and avoid standing on the sidelines.

Fifth, the school must cultivate a nutritious environment granting all students access to nutritious foods. Lunch ought to be given as close to noon as possible, and the meal should be nutrient dense. Avoid hot lunch programs that bring in fast foods or other fatty, worthless foods. Doing so will not only promote unhealthy choices, but it will hinder the students' performance during the second half of the day. In order to promote healthy choices, point-of-decision prompts that are designed to

encourage both nutritious choices and active movements should be posted throughout the school. These prompts could be put up on walls near vending machines, by the lunch lines, and on doors as they have been proven to influence one's decision. In the same way, cafeteria postings are obligated to complement nutrition education, offering students additional information on the foods being served. Finally, the practice of handing out sugary treats as rewards to students needs to stop. Instead offer prizes of great reward by giving additional activity time or nutritious snacks.

Sixth, teachers must buy in to promoting an active and healthy environment if the movement is going to be successful. By encouraging faculty to improve their own health, the school will be setting a great example for the students, parents, and community. While integrating health education into the regular curriculum is important, teachers are role models and actions speak louder than words. Perhaps introducing a friendly competition or fitness club among teachers is enough to get the ball rolling.

Seventh, the parents and community must be involved. The students need an opportunity to practice at home the healthy and active choices they learn about at school. Therefore, it is crucial for the school to educate parents as well. This can be done in a number of ways: activity nights, demonstrations and education at PTA or HSA meetings, family fun days, news letters, and volunteer opportunities are a few ideas. Parents can also participate in charity

Gawrisch

events that help raise money for the active and healthy school program. In addition to parental involvement, the community is an asset to the program as well. YMCAs, recreation centers, county health agencies, businesses, and youth sports programs can all help promote healthy and active choices.

### Getting started

A good start to foster a change at your school is to form an AHSP (Active and Healthy School Program) committee. The AHSP then needs to develop and implement a plan, then, after some time, reflect, evaluate, and progress that plan. It is also wise for the AHSP to meet with other schools within the community, not only to team up in fostering a change, but also to brainstorm and share new ideas that work.

A change in the school environment is not easy, especially when it includes a change in life style. However, it is a critical change that must take place. Active and healthy schools will help students avoid self-esteem issues and even depression, as well as many other deadly diseases. Developing an active and healthy school will require people, time, and effort. Therefore, it is essential to get started as soon as possible. After all, habits are formed early in life; later on, our habits form us. 🍌

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## Scorned by Scientists

Martin Sponholz

**T**HE GLAMOUR OF science became quite heady. There was wine, great banquets, and praise from all over the world for the promises my research efforts were providing the glaciological community. It was also a time to be attracted to new positions of employment and higher wages. Collin Bull of the Polar Institute with Ohio State University discovered Nancy had a degree in biology and offered us a tempting position for research as a married research team to glaciers in the Palmer Peninsula. We both declined his offer without giving the reason (Nancy was pregnant with Paul), which only made Collin pursue us all the more. . . .

I was stunned at the almost total lack of interest in religion of any kind by so many of these scientists who now were my friends by virtue of the camaraderie established through frost bite, risk, and survival. . . . Their lack of interest in religion of any kind reminded me of Robert Falcon Scott's first failing attempt to reach the South Pole, 1901-04 Great Britain National Antarctic Expedition. [Scott, Shackleton, and Wilson reached 82° 17' S and severe weather and lack of supplies forced them to return.]

It was a Sunday and Wilson, propped up in his sleeping bag, held a kind of church service, reading the psalms, epistle and gospel for that day. One of the

psalms happened to be number forty-six, God is our Hope and Strength. "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved," it ran, appropriately, "and though the mountains shake at the tempest." Afterward Scott insisted on a chapter of Darwin, which was his way of scoring off Wilson. Wilson was religious, Scott the reverse. Scott had brought the *Origin of Species*, in Shackleton's words, "to while away such days as these." It was the bible of the agnostic. To please Scott, or in deference to his rank, it was read aloud by Shackleton and Wilson in turn.

This was Shackleton's introduction to Darwin, reading aloud in a tent on the edge of the unknown. "As natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being," Shackleton read out, "all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection." That was reassuring doctrine to hear while the snow hissed on the canvas of the tent, and nature with her little finger stopped the march. (Roland Huntford, *Shackleton*. New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1985, page 92.)

One reoccurring problem kept emerging from discussions of paper after paper. The top layers of the icecap clearly show seasonal layers with differing density for summer and winter. Even pollen grains blown in from great distances clearly mark seasons of pollination that were occurring in more

Sponholz

northerly continents. Snow gave way to compressed ice at deeper layers and different densities of snow change into seasonal differences with air bubbles trapped in the ice. At approximately three thousand feet down all bubbles disappear. There still exists more than nine thousand feet of ice below this level in Antarctica. The level of disappearing bubbles occurs at the same level in Greenland. The very ice core from Greenland was preserved at CRREL for all of us to examine. What caused this mysterious disappearance?

I asked, "Could the layer underneath be frozen flood waters from the time of Noah?" Mad hysteria ensued! It was the joke of the convention. For days after, at every evening cocktail hour, I had scientists from all over the world slapping me on the back for breaking up the intense theoretical debates. The laughter was redirected when I privately confessed to several that I believed that there was a Noachic Flood. When a dust layer revealed itself deep within the Byrd ice core and under the regions of the bubbles, rumor of my beliefs spread throughout the convention and many scientists went out of their way to point out these ashes were probably from Noah burning trash and Sponholz would know.

These volcanic ashes embedded deep within the ice sheet are to me as much a puzzle as the lack of bubbles. But why this personal ridicule? Many years later the most acceptable scientific explanation for the lack of bubbles seems to be that at the extreme cold temperatures and high pressures so deep under the

snow, a gas is dissolved by the solid ice molecule by molecule and remains undetected until the ice is melted and analyzed chemically. I certainly don't have an exact and certain scientific proof of the Flood, but I don't have a scientific explanation for the true resurrection of Jesus at Easter either. I believe he rose from the dead as he will call me to rise on the Last Day.

The mountain top view of the pinnacles of scientific understanding of the world all around me were majestic. I learned to worship my Lord, the God of all, and serve him only. I returned with Nancy to our home in Harper's Ferry confused, with much of the glamour of science taken away. ❁

[The preceding is an excerpt from Chapter 14 of the book, *Among the Magi: Research Tracks in the Desert Snow* (© 1995), an online book by Marty Sponholz which recounts his journey to the Antarctic during the 1960s and what happened afterward.

Professor Sponholz's book, *Among the Magi* is available at the archive of the Antarctic Society [http://www.antarcticcan.org/antarcticcan\\_society/Pack%20Ice/memoirs\\_diaries.cfm](http://www.antarcticcan.org/antarcticcan_society/Pack%20Ice/memoirs_diaries.cfm)]

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# It's Time For Your Annual Play!!!

Marcia Wendt

**T**HE ANNUAL PLAY or drama production can take much time and planning by teachers and volunteer time from parents. As everyone's schedules are filled, how can this be accomplished? As our curriculum continues to fill with more material, how do you have time to enrich the students in their literary awareness? Also, how do you manage your time with various classrooms possibly using a month to six weeks of class time to work on a production?

Our school has been able to "catch the fire" with Prairie Fire Children's Theatre (PFCT). The PFCT is a professional touring theatre company based in Barret, Minnesota. They tour throughout the year bringing professional theatrical experiences to the students in one week.

PFCT tours a variety of musical adaptations of classical tales such as *The Wizard of Oz*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Peter Pan*, *Tom Sawyer*, and *Alice in Wonderland*.

This company come to your school and takes all the planning off your shoulders. They bring in two professional actor/directors. They bring the scripts, costumes, scenery, props, and music. They handle the rehearsals. Our staff supervises the areas where practices take place and the children who are not

rehearsing at a particular time. Our students have enjoyed working with the professional actors

PFCT is very flexible in their performances. They use auditoriums, gym floors, church basements, or whatever space you might have available for the production. The school does need to provide a CD sound system and spot lights, if available. Our public and area Lutheran high schools have been willing to lend us spot lights and cordless microphones.

To cover the cost of the PFCT, we have suggested a donation price for the tickets. Our School Club provides some funding for the play. Our local Thrivent branch has also received a grant through Thrivent Financial Services.

The PFTC is a very rewarding experience for students, parents, staff, congregational members and the community. The play has proven to be the highlight of our school year. 🎭

For more details and information about Prairie Fire Children's Theatre, you can contact them at Box 82, Barrett, MN 56311 Telephone: 320.528.2596

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*Marcia Wendt teaches at Trinity Lutheran School, Brillion, WI.*

### October 9-11 Homecoming Weekend

Come show your support and cheer on our Knights as they display their gifts in a weekend chock full of competitions. Friday night's talent show is always a crowd pleaser. Don't miss Saturday morning's Fall Festival featuring inflatables and fun for the whole family. Stop by the tailgate tent for some burgers and brats then make your way to "The Bowl" for the big game at 1PM. Stick around afterwards and attend the free alumni reception at the historic Gov. Lind mansion.



More information and registration materials on these activities can be obtained on the alumni page of the MLC website [www.mlc-wels.edu/home/alumni](http://www.mlc-wels.edu/home/alumni) or by contacting the alumni office by phone at 877-MLC-1995 x 387 or by email at [alumni@mlc-wels.edu](mailto:alumni@mlc-wels.edu)

