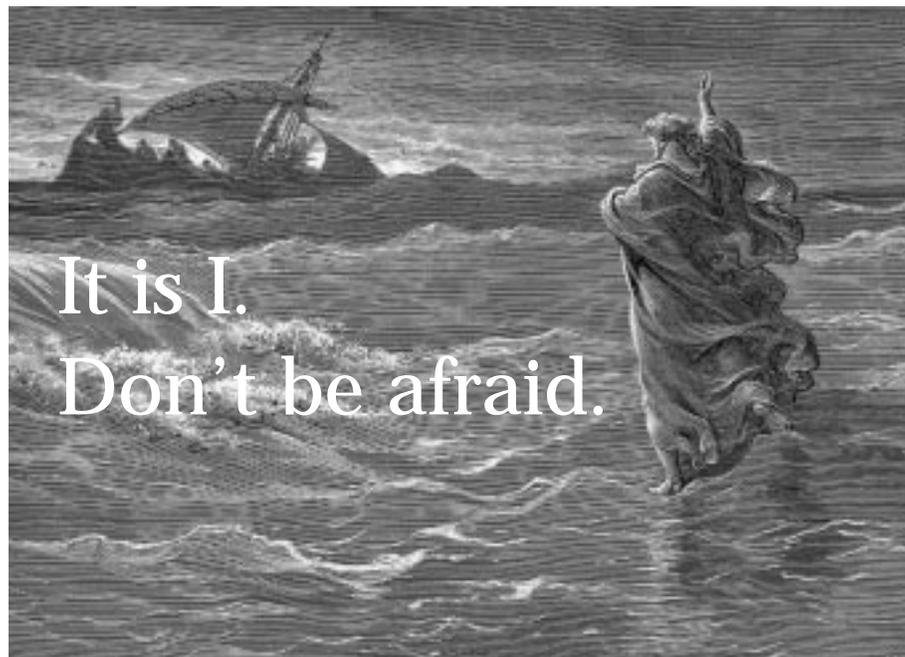


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NUMBER 3
FEBRUARY 1997

The Lutheran Educator



The WELS Education Journal



The Lutheran Educator

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

ARTICLES

**Our Lutheran Heritage of
Christian Education Is Also
the Evangelistic Solution
To One of the American
City's Biggest Problems** 68
E. Allen Sorum

TV—Friend or Foe? 80
Patricia M. Grabitske

Sisterly Love 84
Ramona Czer

**Different Ways of Looking
at the World: Projects in Early
Childhood Education** 87
Faith E. Krug

DEPARTMENTS

As We See It 67
Referred to by a friend

Reviews 90

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“Referred to by a friend”

Somewhere among the 3587 third graders in our WELS elementary schools is a child who is there because the child was “referred to (the school) by a friend.” We don’t know what the friend said or did, nor do we know whether the child and the friend have the same names as two friends of long ago: Nathaniel and Philip.

You need a little background. For four years the Commission on Parish Schools has been conducting a study of children who enter and leave our elementary schools. Each fall the principal of a school was asked to identify any child who entered or left between the second/third or sixth/seventh grades and give whatever reason he knew for the child’s leaving or entering. The four years are up; the data has formed a stack two feet high. This writer has had the opportunity over the past several weeks to rummage around the numbers. When the numbers began to blur, he turned to the 1200 surveys and read the 3000 reasons children came and went.

There were sad stories in the brief phrases the principals used to describe the goings. Families were disintegrating (“divorce, child taken out of school”). Children were being fought over (“custody settlement, child moved away”). Families faced economic decisions (“couldn’t afford tuition”). There were children in rebellion (“expelled”). There was also the single, unexplained, “withdrew,” with its own untold story.

There were also comings in those grades, enrollments which showed that the light of the Word still shines. Parents sought something for their child (“wanted Christian education”), or they wanted to get their child away from something (“difficulties in other school”), or the family or child was a “mission prospect” or “recruited by a member.” The most common reason, not surprising, was “transfer-in from a WELS church.” Some stories were complicated (“the child of a member’s ex-wife”). Some were even beyond the principal’s time and patience (“too hard to explain”).

There are three thousand stories in these numbers, stories of Marys and Marthas, stories of Andrews who “found the Messiah,” stories which reflect John’s commentary, “many turned back and no longer followed him.”

There, among all the others, was “referred to by a friend.” The child had a friend who knew Jesus. They now, God willing, share a friend—Jesus. We pray that the child is growing in faith and in a deeper friendship with the Savior.

Grow in faith and friendship with your Savior, dear child. Then, one day soon, go and find a friend who doesn’t know the Savior and “refer” him or her. One day he or she will find a friend, and so on to the end of time.

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Our Lutheran Heritage of Christian Education Is Also the Evangelistic Solution To One of the American City's Biggest Problems

E. Allen Sorum



Our associate pastor, Jon Hartmann, began his ministry among us by interviewing a cross section of our membership in order to get to know the folks and the issues at Garden Homes Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. After about two weeks of this, I asked him what he was learning from these interviews. His immediate response was, "We have to keep our school!"

Even a brief association with Garden Homes reveals the high regard we have for our school. Many of our children

will tell you, "I came to faith in Jesus through the Word that was taught in our school." Many of our adults will tell you, "I came to faith in Jesus through the instruction classes I was required to attend in order to enroll my children in our school." Anybody at Garden Homes will tell you, "We have to keep our school!"

Another thing just about anybody from Garden Homes will tell you is that we can no longer afford our school. Traditional methods no longer provide sufficient income to cover anticipated expenses. So, we are up to our ears in

an urgent re-evaluation of

- the importance of Lutheran elementary education in an urban, cross-cultural context,
- the role of a Lutheran elementary school as a Christian institution and its staff of professional educators in an urban, cross-cultural context, and
- paying for Lutheran schools in an urban, cross-cultural context.

Perhaps circumstances are forcing you to re-evaluate your school's importance, role, and cost. If so, the following thoughts may help you in your evaluation. More importantly, however, I hope to convince you that our schools are not only important but are also the evangelistic solution to one of the American city's biggest problems.

What is the importance of Lutheran elementary education in an urban, cross-cultural context?

Arguably the greatest concern facing families who live in America's cities today is the education of their children. When the media reports on public education in our major urban centers, words like "crisis" are often in the headlines. The bold headlines of the November 22, 1994, issue of the *Milwaukee Sentinel* proclaim, "Dropout rate down in MPS [Milwaukee Public Schools]." The article relates that the dropout rate fell from 17.4% in the 1992-93 school year to 15.4% in the 1993-94 school year. The dropout rate among minorities in Milwaukee has traditionally been twice that 1993-94 figure. Yet, how can a dropout rate of 15.4% be any consolation?

An inter-office communication to a Milwaukee County children's court judge given to me by a probation officer reported that "approximately 42% of the students in urban schools skip out during the day." The familiar litany of concerns facing the urban school system includes lack of discipline, personal danger to the students and teachers, drugs, weapons, busing, over-crowding, and run-down facilities. The greatest insult or irony is that public education is so very expensive. Nonetheless, public school systems are crying out for more money but cannot get it. A bad situation just grows worse.

This dismal situation represents a major problem for families, children, businesses, and basic quality of life issues in every major urban center in America. This situation at the same time represents for us a wonderful opportunity for evangelistic outreach in the city. Who better could capitalize on this fantastic evangelistic opportunity than a confessional church body like ours with a strong heritage in educational excellence! What American cities need most we do best! Our Christian schools, with policies that involve whole families in Christian education, represent the best hope for the city.

By bringing our Christian educational heritage into the city, we can with God's blessing reap a huge harvest for Christ's kingdom. The need is obvious. That we may use this societal need as a platform for proclaiming Christ through our Lutheran educational system is appropriate. That we have "with success" used this societal need as a platform for preaching Christ is

Sorum

proven. Our Lutheran schools are important because they are the best for us to carry out God's missionary commitment to these cities!

You might argue that this is a captive audience because of policies that require parents who enroll children in the school to enroll themselves in adult Christian instruction classes. Rather than argue with you, I will rather point you to our missionary-minded Savior who, in his commitment to reach all people, used all kinds of platforms—such as his miracles that helped people who were outcasts, ill, hungry, demon possessed, and dead—to preach the gospel. I would point also to the missionary-minded Apostle Paul who stated his willingness to use “all possible means” (1Co 9:22) in order to save some. I have had more than a few parents who were new to our school resist the adult class requirement at first. Yet, exposed to the Holy Spirit through the gospel that they were required to hear, they came to faith. I haven't heard them complain about our evangelistic methods since!

What is the role of a Lutheran elementary school as a Christian institution and its staff of professional educators in an urban, cross-cultural context?

Our Lutheran educational mission is to nurture the children of Lutheran families in the Word of God. Therefore, an intense study of God's Word is an integral aspect of our curriculum. What is more, every subject from social studies to science is taught from the perspective of that Word. Our students learn to

evaluate history and scientific theory from a divine perspective. This approach to education has protected

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Our Christian schools, with policies that involve whole families in Christian education, represent the best hope for the city.

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our children from the deceit of humanism while in school and provides a foundation to recognize humanism or other satanic philosophies that would test them in life or in future educational endeavors. Above all, our students are challenged and encouraged to do their very best in school in order to develop their God-given abilities so that they can give glory to God in whatever vocation or path they choose to pursue. Our heritage assumes that God is glorified with only our best efforts as educators and as students.

Our schools have always been excellent means to nurture the flock. Our schools can and must become excellent means to evangelize the lost. Lutheran educational institutions, because they

are Christian institutions, addressed and even governed by Christ's Great Commission, must strive to evangelize the lost. Arguably, social conditions in previous generations did not require an evangelistic emphasis from our educational philosophy. The opportunity was always there but social conditions did not force us to recognize the opportunity. Social conditions have changed. Our schools because they are Christian schools must respond to the new evangelistic opportunities that changing social conditions have provided.

Our Christian schools have a wonderful opportunity to solve both the eternal dilemma as well as some pressing current problems confronting urban families. What parents do not want excellence in education for their child? Our schools represent that excellence. So what if unchurched families come to our schools for excellence in education? They will soon discover that our real agenda is making disciples by teaching all that Christ taught. As one member of Garden Homes likes to say, "I came to Garden Homes for the wrong reason [for private education for my child] but I stayed for the right reason." Our schools allow us to become adept missionaries and Christian family builders in the city.

This means that the Christian school in the city must be designed from the floor up to be evangelistic. The goal of the school will be to reach the child. School teachers and administrators in an urban context dare not assume that the children who come to class are Christians or baptized or know anything at all about the Bible. The goal of

the school will be to reach also the parents of that child. Policies need to be in place that will enroll parents and guardians of children in Bible information classes when the child is enrolled in the school. In this adult instruction, parents will learn the basic truths of Scripture and how to use their new school to help them carry out Christ's Great Commission.

The Christian school also enjoys a natural opportunity to train the family in carrying out Christian discipline, family roles, home devotions, and personal evangelism. Christian schools in the city should become Christian family centers for educating, counseling, and equipping whole families for family life, evangelistic witness, and community involvement. With this commitment to evangelistic fervor as well as the commitment to nurture in the Word of God and excellence in academic preparation, we will provide a powerful response to the most urgent needs of our American cities.

The role of Christian teachers in an urban, cross-cultural context

At Garden Homes Lutheran School, the first connection that many students have with the gospel of Jesus Christ is the teacher in the classroom. At the beginning of each school year, our teachers visit the homes of all the students to assess the social and spiritual background of every student. In each classroom there is a review of basic Christian doctrines, not only because repetition is the mother of all learning, but also because there is inevitably one

Sorum

new student or more that has not heard this basic information. Every teacher in every urban Christian school classroom is an evangelist, must see himself or herself in this way, and must be trained to function in this way.

Every teacher in every urban Christian school classroom will also have many opportunities to provide ministry that we have not traditionally assigned to our classroom teachers. At Garden Homes the teachers are the first to recognize family dysfunction. They are usually the first to find out if mom or dad has a problem with substance abuse, if there is friction between parents, or if a child's parent has adopted an immoral lifestyle. There are also times when a parent will ask a Christian teacher for direction or support in times of trouble and temptation. Single mothers who have a good relationship with their child's female teacher may be more comfortable discussing personal concerns with their child's teacher than with the pastor. Traditional assumptions about the role of a teacher in an urban Christian classroom must be re-evaluated. Teachers must be equipped for and respond to front-line ministry opportunities and situations.

There is too much unbelief, hurt, and sin in our nation's urban centers, and in any other community, to relegate evangelism and counseling to the pastor alone. Moreover, there is absolutely nothing in the Bible that suggests that we should restrict evangelism and counseling to the pastor alone! Especially in the city, far

too many people will simply slip through the cracks for want of an appropriate Christian response at the appropriate opportunity if the pastor is the only evangelist and Christian counselor available.

In many cases the teacher will need to know how to direct a person to the pastor or to professional Christian counseling. In other cases, the teacher will be able to provide that counseling on the spot. The urban Christian school teacher's place is on the front-line of spiritual warfare in the city. They must, therefore, be equipped, prepared and trusted.

For all these reasons the pastor in this situation must be sure that he is ready to assist and encourage the Christian school teachers in this ministry. At Garden Homes we have learned that it is critically important for the pastor and all the teachers to meet together to discuss problems and to come up with strategies to deal with the problems that arise in the lives of our people. We discuss when it is appropriate for the teacher to handle the situation and when it is appropriate to pass the situation on to the pastor or to the Christian professional counseling centers in our area. These meetings also give us the chance to share our own struggles and triumphs. It is critical in this urban, cross-cultural context for the pastor(s) and teachers to support each other and to pray for each other on a regular basis. It gets very lonely for a teacher who after struggling with a situation all day gets second-guessed or ignored by the pastor.



How can we pay for Lutheran elementary education in an urban, cross-cultural context?

Our church body's tradition typically assumes that the parents of the Christian school children will cover all the school's expenses in concert with the other members of the local congregation through the regular Sunday morning envelopes. Since the school is

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Every teacher in every urban Christian school classroom is an evangelist.

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an integral part of the church's ministry, the school will be supported by the gifts that flow into that joint ministry. This model has succeeded in varying degrees when there is a sufficient number of members in the church to support a school, when these members are spiritually mature in their attitude toward giving, when they are employed, and when that employment provides income sufficient to support family needs. Once again we note that the social and economic situation, especially in the city, has changed so much that

this model would rarely be appropriate.

People who are attracted to and converted by the school's gospel ministry will need careful instruction in the teachings of biblical stewardship. They will need time to grow into that kind of biblical stewardship. Convincing new Christians to worship regularly is challenge enough. Leading them to give regularly and proportionately will be a time-consuming and difficult task. Also in the city, there is a high incidence of unemployment and underemployment and households headed by struggling single moms. In situations where there is an existing church and school ministry, we often find a membership that is declining and struggling financially. The big question is, therefore, how do old urban congregations, surrounded by new neighbors, pay for Christian education? How can we plant a new church and school ministry in a field where people don't have the spiritual or financial resources to maintain them?

First, we know that existing church and school ministries have for the most part had to come up with the financial resources on their own. We currently receive no federal, state, or local tax support. We think that our Lutheran school is expensive but it is quite inexpensive compared to what public education costs. But if our members lack the financial resources or, at this point in their spiritual development, lack the motivation to provide the necessary financial resources, inexpensive might still be too much.

We know, second, that our system is worth every penny that it costs because

Sorum

our children enjoy daily studies in God's Word and study every subject in the light of God's Word. Also, they receive an excellent education, their classrooms are safe, discipline in the classroom is maintained, almost all graduate from high school, and most go on to college or tech school. In addition to the nurture our school provides for the members of our children, our preschool and elementary school account for at least 50% of the new members our church receives every year through adult confirmations. Our church's ten-year statistics show that we are assimilating and hanging on to an average of 55% of these precious souls who join our church as adult confirmands through the school. Year after year, we see our school providing the opportunity for many to come to faith in Jesus.

Third, we believe at this time that we cannot afford the cost of our current program even though we all agree that it is worth it. We have lost many members who gave large annual gifts. Our current membership's earning power has declined dramatically. Shall we close our school or should we consider alternative means to pay for our school? This is also a profoundly theological question. The question is not whether we should close our school. The question is, do we value our Lutheran heritage enough and do we see how well our Lutheran educational heritage can be used to reach urban families for Christ so that we will do the hard work of figuring out how to pay for it?



God's missionary commitment is a world-wide commitment. The cities in our nation and in North America are certainly the focus—by virtue of numbers alone—of this world which God wants evangelized. Our schools provide a unique and relevant strategy to accomplish this evangelism. The question, I believe, is how much do we value these souls in the city and what are we willing to do in order to reach these souls in the city? If we are committed to reach these souls, and if we are committed to our Lutheran school heritage and see it as an excellent evangelistic tool, then we will accept the challenge to find new ways to pay for our Lutheran schools that we maintain or begin in the city.

So, how do we pay for it? The suggestions that follow are offered more as questions than suggestions. I understand that after doing the work of reading something like this, the least the reader expects is a few straight-forward answers to hard questions. The answers to the difficult question before us, I believe, should not come from an individual. To protect our unity, fellowship, and mutual respect, answers to the question before us must be obtained corporately. Let's assess old assumptions and evaluate new ideas together. What can we do together? I would propose that we discuss together the following list of suggestions at circuit and conference levels.

Subsidized school tuition Let's ask our principals and school administrators to figure out in each situation just how much it will cost per student to operate

their school. Then let's determine how close the families who are enrolling children in these schools can get to paying this tuition. Finally, let us ask the congregation to come up with the dif-

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People must accept the responsibility to run the school to the degree that they can legitimately provide the funds to make it function.

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ference or to subsidize their congregation's school's tuition. This is an approach that follows the example of the early church, allowing those who have more to assist those who have less. Though the congregation will subsidize the family who can't afford the full cost, the family will still pay tuition. By charging families tuition, especially those families that are new to the Christian faith, we give ourselves time to teach the principles of Christian stewardship to people who are new to the faith and, often, new to the principles of any kind of money management and credit responsibility. This is the

chief reason why we must charge tuition on the basis of services provided and subsidize on the basis of the family's ability to pay. We need time to teach the principles of Christian stewardship. People need time to grow. The school needs funds to function. People must accept the responsibility to run the school to the degree that they can legitimately provide the funds to make it function.

The group of people who most urgently need to learn the principles of Christian stewardship of time, talent, and treasure are people with limited financial resources. We will teach stewardship, however, not primarily to provide our schools with sufficient cash flow but so our families may enjoy the blessings of being faithful stewards. God does not call us to operate a school; God calls us to be faithful stewards. One blessing of this faithful stewardship will be churches and schools that can maintain their ministries.

Ask for special gifts from individuals in our fellowship There will likely remain, even if we charge tuition, a lack of sufficient resources to operate a Lutheran educational system in an urban, cross-cultural context. This is true for reasons already cited: unemployment, underemployment, single female head of households, smaller church memberships, spiritual immaturity, and the like. We are back to the question, how do we pay for Christian education in the city? In my years at Garden Homes Lutheran Church, I have met many successful businessmen from within our fellowship who care deeply about what is happening to people in the city in

Sorum

general and particularly to their brothers and sisters in Christ who live in the city. Our church has on occasion received unsolicited special gifts from people like this. Could we maintain our current educational program at Garden Homes if we solicited these gifts? I know many successful Christian businessmen from our fellowship who have an active social conscience and a great concern for city Christians and city Christian schools. I have no doubt that they would be willing to help one or more urban school. What would a group of such successful, blessed, and aggressive business people accomplish if asked to provide start-up resources to establish a church and school ministry in the heart of one of our nation's cities? What might happen? I believe that we would receive whatever funds—and more—we might set out to raise. I believe that we have men and women who are looking for such causes. This should not cause concern for other Christian agencies who are also trying to raise funds in this manner. Our experience suggests that giving people more special projects to support does not merely redirect limited resources but actually results in new resources.

This kind of fund raising activity raises a new set of concerns. Who should ask these business leaders for these funds? Might we ask our synod's special gift counselors to ask the people they serve if they would like to support urban schools through their wills? Should one congregation deal directly

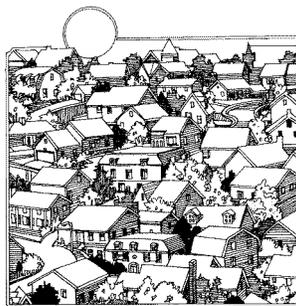


with another congregation or with the businessmen from that congregation? What impact might a request from another congregation have on the congregation to which these business leaders belong? What kind of communication does the asking congregation need to have with the congregation to which the business leader belongs? Is it demeaning for Christians who “do not have” to ask Christians “who have” for support to operate their school? Does Paul's request of the Christians in Corinth on behalf of the struggling Christians in Ceasarea apply here? What's different? What's the same? Do we need to challenge our members whom God has blessed with financial resources or do we need simply to inform them of the challenges that already exist? Would it be better if leaders of urban cross-cultural churches with struggling schools made requests of individual business leaders or of a special fund that was supported by concerned individuals? The questions are fairly simple. What we need to do is agree on the answers, assuming that we are agreed on the importance and on the role of our schools in urban, cross-cultural contexts.

Ask for special gifts from area businesses Urban churches with schools will probably have a history that goes back one hundred years or more. As the city moved in upon our churches, their traditional membership base declined. As a result these churches, churches like Garden Homes, struggle to maintain and increase membership levels. Many

believe that our church would not have survived the changes around us without our school. All around Garden Homes are businesses that have also struggled to survive the changes in the neighborhood and continue to serve and support the neighborhood just as our church does. Might there not be some kind of partnership in the making between us?

An obvious concern is that partnerships with local businesses and factories might lead to a compromise of our theological positions and our Lutheran educational heritage. Could we not introduce local businesses to what our school means to and does for the community and invite them into a partnership stating up front that what we teach and how we teach is not negotiable? If a company should try to impose some kind of curriculum or policy that we could not abide, then we would obviously have to do without their support. In my discussions with such individuals, however, the last thing on their mind is to influence what or how we teach! I believe most business leaders would find our concerns almost amusing. They desperately want educators to do the job of educating so that business leaders can find and hire employees that can read, communicate, and do basic math. When we show them our "product," they would announce enthusiastically, "This is what we have been looking for!" I believe they would support what we are already doing rather than attempt



to undermine what we are doing. A Christian employee with Christian values and a Christian work ethic is the best possible employee for a business that wants to succeed under current economic conditions.

I have also found that the businesses in our area care deeply about the quality of life offered in our area. This is where their employees work, park their cars, and take walks over the lunch hour. Clients and customers must come into our neighborhood in order to do business with the businesses in our area. One cannot imagine the impact on our neighborhood if our church and school should have to close down due to lack of resources. Our area businesses benefit greatly from our commitment to our common neighborhood. We could help each other in many ways that would only advance our respective agendas. Churches and schools can establish partnership policies that would guarantee that our Great Commission agenda would not be compromised. But hard questions need to be asked and discussed openly and broadly. Is this suggestion a compromise of our theology? Is this suggestion adiaphora? If this is adiaphora, is it beneficial? Would it be wise? Certainly the

idea of going to businesses and industry that share our neighborhood space to ask them to participate in educating our children and their future employees is a little uncomfortable. But is it wrong? What are the benefits to a partnership like this?

Sorum

Thrift stores Another idea that we might experiment with to raise funds for a Lutheran elementary school in the city is not a new idea at all. In fact, our church body has already implemented this idea with great success. The Milwaukee Federation of Churches has two resale stores in Milwaukee that gross over \$135,000 a year. An individual congregation or a federation of inner city congregations in a city could draw upon the experience and expertise of the Federation, establish a resale shop, and provide valuable support for their schools.

The buildings that house the resale shops could provide opportunities for more than fund raising. If school parents cannot afford the tuition charged by our schools, the resale shops could give them a place to “work off” some portion of their tuition. These resale shops could be used also for a place to teach English-as-a-Second-Language courses. Area businessmen could help set up and even teach remedial courses or pre-employment courses for area residents who wish to apply for jobs in the neighborhood. Networks could be set up and communicated in the resale shop to help bring potential employees together with area businesses. Many successful models for this kind of community involvement exist already within and without our circles.

Ask our church body to aggressively subsidize urban, cross-cultural schools Should the synod re-evaluate its current policies regarding support of inner city schools? Our older and existing ministries already have a team in place and familiarity with the home court. Is it

time to give such teams more financial support?

Should the synod send a team of pastor/missionary and professional educators into an urban, cross-cultural context as a mission strategy for new starts? The team concept is for the benefit of

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We need a church body which would not second guess a methodology for the city.

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the field and for the benefit of the missionary workers and their families. Both our world and home mission boards promote the team concept of establishing cross-cultural missions. Let’s assume that God would give us a team of teachers and pastors who would work together in establishing a church and school in American cities. Teachers on this team would be trained to do ethnographic research, cross-cultural evangelism, leadership training, and family counseling. All the teachers would understand that their objective is not only to start a school to reach children but also to start a church and school ministry to reach families.

The members of the team would have to determine how much tuition the parents of the children could afford. They would have to figure out what kind of school, facilities, faculty, and curriculum could best work in that community. These team members would be trained in using people from that community to help them determine direction, emphasis, and methods so that the school and church would look “at home” in this community. As with other home missions, a plan for synodical support and when to discontinue synodical support would be necessary. All our home and world missions are expensive projects. An urban mission project using a Christian school to get it up and running could be legitimately expected to produce the kinds of results that we do not often see in our home mission field. The failure of urban secular education in America is arguably our synod’s best chance to succeed in the city. Yes, it is expensive. Yes, it is a gamble. Yes, we would have to rethink the way we run schools and start missions. Yes, we would discover, I believe, that where the risks are greatest, so are the rewards.

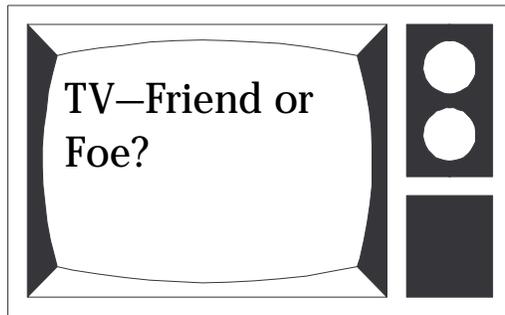
Ultimately our discussion must involve more than money. We also have to talk about the workers who would serve when we find ways to raise the money. Perhaps this will be the really exciting discussion. We need workers who are willing to engage the debate and implement the results! God will provide the workers that we need for his harvest of souls. What we also need, however, is a church body who would stand behind these workers until they

figure out how to start and maintain a mission in the city. We need a church body which would not second guess a methodology for the city even when that methodology seems unusual to colleagues who serve in a different social, cultural, economic, or geographic context.

The city is a challenge. The city is where the largest numbers of souls are and certainly where the highest percentage of lost souls are. Now is the time to develop and implement a bold plan that focuses on evangelizing the city using our schools—the family training, family ministry, and family outreach centers that also teach kids to read and write—as the primary strategy. Now is the time.

God calls us into the whole wide world. Cities are the centers of this whole wide world. We must go there with our teams and with our witness and with our schools and, above all, with our Lord. Until we can go there more comfortably and confidently, we must at the very least go there with each others’ unconditional support. Your participation and interest in this discussion would be a much appreciated sign of support for the solution to one of the American city’s biggest problems.

E. Allen Sorum is pastor of Garden Homes Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



Patricia M. Grabitske

For years educators have been moaning and groaning about the influence of TV on young minds and lives. The first time I encountered the syndrome was when I enrolled my eldest son in a public school kindergarten. The teacher expressed a degree of optimism over his abilities since he knew his colors, letters, and a few other basics. My reply was astonishment that there even existed a child who did not know those things after five years of Sesame Street. The very title of that program sent the teacher into a tirade on how television had ruined children's attitudes and expectations for school.

The opinion of that educator notwithstanding, we all recognize that children watch a lot of TV and are indeed influenced by the content of the programs. We know that time spent in reading for pleasure is decreasing if not disappearing in the majority of our homes. This is the reality. Our challenge is in dealing with that reality.

Let's be realistic. There is no way that we will be able to eliminate TV viewing from the lives of our students, and perhaps that should not be our ultimate

goal. At its best, TV offers many vicarious experiences to the viewer from which he or she may draw background knowledge. How can a teacher adequately explain mountain to a preschooler? The TV can show it and act as an equalizer for those children whose families cannot afford to travel. Selective TV viewing may actually help the child understand the printed word by providing experiences he would not have without it.

Why are children drawn to the television screen? Are there ways educators can use the TV or learn from it? Without doing an exhaustive study funded by a generous government grant, several possibilities come to mind.

Children watch TV in a comfortable atmosphere.

Often TV watching is done in the most comfortable room in the house, lounging on a piece of cushioned furniture, accompanied by a bowl of popcorn or other culinary delight. No one cares if they shift positions or momentarily let their attention stray from the screen. In the wintertime they may be curled up in a cozy afghan, and so associate warmth, comfort, and pleasure with the activity of watching television.

Where do we have the children read? Most school time reading is done in the

confines of a desk which may or may not be comfortable and certainly is not cushioned. Interaction with peers in the classroom during reading times is rarely encouraged and eating is somewhat inconvenient if not inadvisable. At home many children are sent to their rooms to read so they will not be disturbed by the activities of other family members. This isolation gives no support to the young reader nor is it conducive to concentration when the happy sounds of family activities reach those young ears. Hats off to those families who make reading a family endeavor where every member sits with a book or magazine and enjoys the printed word as well as the fellowship of the group. Such group settings also facilitate the sharing of the printed word. A passage may be read aloud or a new idea shared. Perhaps a discussion will ensue. Maybe the reaction will be a little laughter, but what could be better than that? Happiness, togetherness, comfort, and security are now associated with reading.

TV watching is non-threatening.

No one tells a child to watch a TV program carefully because they will be given a twenty-question test at the end. Children are not tested on their TV viewing ability; they are not compared to their peers and given a TV-watching grade; no record is made of their TV watching achievement in their permanent files which will follow them around for the rest of their TV-viewing days.

Quite obviously we cannot eliminate

all evaluation of a child's reading achievement. To do so would render us incapable of aiding his progress.

However, some reading just for the fun of reading needs to be incorporated into each day. Many teachers are already doing this through Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) time. As educators we need to watch for opportunities to increase the time for independent individual choice reading and to strongly encourage parents to do the same at home. Too often our youngsters are receiving the silent message that reading is something you do at school and never elsewhere. Home visits and parent conferences provide opportune moments to urge the adults in our students' lives to set the example. Nor can we fail to model this in our own lives at school and at home. SSR time for the children should also be SSR time for the teacher. No paper correcting allowed; pick up a book and let the children see you reading, smiling, interacting with the printed word. Be sure to share with them a book you are reading at home, too. Let the children see their care givers reading a book or the newspaper, rather than staring at a flickering screen. We cannot ask of our children what we are not willing to do ourselves. If parents and teachers want children to grow up to be readers, then those same parents and teachers must model the behavior.

TV viewing is a matter of personal choice.

As a general rule, children are not assigned programs to watch. If after a

Grabitske

few minutes the selected program does not interest them, they feel free to push a button to switch channels and try another. Channel surfing is a skill akin to scanning the pages of a book to test interest level.

As adults, the majority of our reading is personal choice. We may choose to read a professional book or article, a newspaper or magazine, a work of fiction, or a volume on a topic of interest to us. Assigned reading is an integral part of any curriculum, but children need to be able to make some choices in the materials they read. The challenge for educators is incorporating means for the child to choose some reading materials on his or her own to fulfill course requirements. Some of this might be accomplished through reports or projects on topics related to a social studies or science unit. A wider range of choice is usually provided through material read for pleasure. Many teachers are now requiring children to read material of their choice for a specified amount of time every day. Certain parameters may be set (for instance, no comic books), but the children still exercise a great deal of control over the selection.

No matter what the old adage advises, most of us do judge a book by its cover, or at least select some reading materials by eye appeal. Children need to be taught that at times the initial attraction does not hold up. If after reading a chapter or two the book no longer holds your interest, there is no shame in returning it to the shelf and selecting another as long as this does not become the habitual treatment for

every item sampled. Scanning chapter titles, reading jacket flaps and back covers are strategies for testing the waters and insuring suitable choices.

TV watching is socially interactive.

Sometimes we watch TV alone, but many times we enjoy the company of family or friends. We laugh together over some joke; marvel at some accomplishment, or turn to someone else and say, "Did you see that?" or "Do you believe that?" Watching TV together allows interaction.

Children also need to interact with others about their reading. SSR time allows free choice of materials, but we need a sharing time to allow for the marvel and wonder that accompanies a new idea. Partner reading, forms of group reading, and literature circles are vehicles used in classrooms to facilitate interaction. Involved readers cannot just read something and then put it away. To get excited about what you are reading also means sharing it with someone. How well this would work in the intimate group we call family! Parents need to understand the importance of reading to and with their children at all ages. Most parents are extremely faithful about reading to their children and listening to their children read while the child is young. We need to encourage the extension of this activity well past the primary grades. None of us is ever too old to be read to. Reading with someone you love is pleasurable and profitable from the standpoint of building a generation of lifelong readers.

TV watching is stimulating.

Watching a TV program involves sight and hearing. The colors and graphics presented are fast-moving, stimulating, alluring, and entertaining.

Publishers recognize that reading goes beyond black symbols on a white page. The colorful pictures now enhancing the printed page are not just decorations but actually extend the meaning and add to the message. The pages themselves are frequently a color other than white. Picture books are no longer strictly for emergent readers. Illustrators faithfully and thoroughly research the topic or time period before plying their craft so that what is learned through the pictures is accurate and true. The vibrant colors attract the readers' attention as well as stimulate the formation of mental images.

Many books are available on audio tape. Actually hearing the words as you look at them on the page is another tool for developing fluency and expression. Besides, it's enjoyable! Another of the senses has been involved in the reading process and pleasure is again associated with the act of reading.

Videos based on works of children's literature abound. The quality and accuracy in portraying the original intent of the author vary greatly. Movie versions could be used as a "hook" to lead children into the book, or as a means of comparing their own mental images to those of the screen play director.

Unfortunately commercial TV rarely offers the opportunity to view literature-related plots. Public TV does a bet-

ter job with its after-school-hours programming, providing dramatizations of short sections of various books and striving to interest the children in reading the entire work. Educators need to take the time to become familiar with these programs and their time slots so they are able to encourage the children to watch quality programming.

Cable TV also offers movie versions of some books, though the same movies are repeated innumerable times. Cable also depends upon accessibility. Not all families subscribe and it may not be available in all areas.

Parents and educators all over the globe recognize the importance of reading. It is a skill necessary for every individual to master and to enjoy. As Christian educators we must recognize the compelling importance of reading because God has chosen to speak to his people through the written word. Our children must learn to read so they can read God's Word, and they must learn to read by choice so that they will choose to read the Bible throughout their lives here on earth.

Our challenge then is to use whatever tools available to us to draw the children into reading, to help them associate pleasure with reading, and to make reading an attraction rather than an assignment. If we must learn from the opposition, the much berated TV, then let us not be stubborn. It is, after all, the educational welfare of our students that is the top priority.

Pat Grabitske teaches at Trinity Lutheran School, Belle Plaine, Minnesota.



Sisterly Love

Ramona Czer

Dear Teachers,

It's that time of year when cabin fever attacks my children. I feel like throwing them all in a snowbank, locking the door, and saying, "When you can talk decently to each other, maybe I'll let you back in." After one long day of playing referee for their bickering and needling, I happened to read I Corinthian 13. Grabbing a pen, I dashed off yet another paraphrase of it.

"If you go to a Christian day school and attend church regularly, but have not love towards your sisters and brothers, you are only an out-of-tune instrument in Raider band. If you have the gift of memorizing Bible verses and hymns and can wow your pastor in confirmation classes, but have not love, you are nothing. If you give away all your pizza slices and hoagies at lunchtime and say nothing when you sit on the bench for basketball and rarely play, but have not love, you gain nothing.

Love is patient when a sibling borrows your dress pants and then leaves them in the bottom of her locker, love is kind when a younger sibling can't cut

his meat up or she asks for help in making a high ponytail. It does not envy when a sibling is the only one to get cards or gifts or when piano playing or sports comes easier to one or the other, it does not boast when making a three-pointer or winning a blue ribbon at a forensics meet. It is not rude, making the L sign with a thumb and forefinger or saying, "Cry me a river," to those who have a problem; it is not self-seeking by tattling to parents to make oneself look good; it is not easily angered even when your pilfered Nike socks are dirty on game day; it keeps no record of how many more times one sibling asks the other to please sub for your paper route so you can go to a slumber party. Love does not delight in clever putdowns or in shouting out on the bus what boy a sibling likes, but rejoices over the sweetness and talents of the others. It always protects siblings against the hostile pranks of bullies, always trusts siblings when they say, "I didn't mean to," always hopes your friendships will endure into adulthood, and always perseveres at making those friendships stronger today word by word and action by action.... And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But in families the greatest of these is love."

And you thought they were perfect angels at home, didn't you? After writing this passage, my first thought was,

“Okay, now I’ll make four copies to leave on their dressers or slip into their backpacks.

Maybe that will get through to them.” All my shocked looks, hand wringing, shouting, and punishments hadn’t had much effect, and I was getting desperate for some household peace. Then my eyes fell on the original passage again, and I suddenly realized I’d changed something vital.

Paul’s letter to the Corinthians was written very differently. Where I had in a typically nagging mother way slipped into the “if you do this” way of speaking, Paul through inspiration used “if I do this.” I sat back in wonder at my own blindness. The most excellent way Paul wants us to understand as believers is one of personal contrition first and foremost. Before we can look at the other person’s mote, we need to first confront our own planks. If I can’t admit my own childish, selfish ways in this call to everyday love, perhaps it’s no wonder my children’s eyes are blind to their own failings as well. Pen in hand, I tried again.

“If I read my Bible and pray daily and have family devotions, but have not love towards my husband and children even after a twelve hour workday or when I’m sick with a cold, I am only a blender whirring on and on with nothing in it. If I have the gift of whipping up roast beef dinners and can fathom most homework problems, and if I have a faith that can make sure we attend all church services no matter how tired we



are or how cold out it is, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give up my piece of chocolate cake and hand over my last pair of un-run nylons, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient when a daughter cries while having her hair combed through, love is kind when a son tells the same knock-knock joke over and over. It does not envy when my daughter looks better in my clothes than I do, it does

not boast over winning at Scrabble, it is not proud of anything I’ve done when a child accomplishes something wonderful. It is not rude but says “please” when asking for a favor and knocks on bedroom doors before entering; it is not self-seeking of my time and solitude; it is not easily angered when interrupted at the computer by a child who hasn’t seen me all day; it keeps no record of all the times rooms have been a disaster or I’ve had to run to school for forgotten lunches, homework assignments, or band instruments. Love does not delight in discovering a child’s mistakes, but rejoices at spontaneous kindnesses. It always protects children from what is harmful, always trusts them to God’s care, always hopes in their growing up in the Lord, and always perseveres in modeling a close relationship to God through the Word, the Sacraments, and prayer.... And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But in Christian parents the greatest of these is love.”

Czer

When our family gets busy with teaching, committee work, going to games and concerts, working at McDonalds or babysitting, I think, "If the kids would just be nice to each other, things would be simpler, more peaceful." But that's not why we should love each other, so life will be more harmonious. It's no wonder such a pale, uninteresting reason doesn't work with my energetic children—what do they care about simplicity or peace? The powerfully motivating reason for Christians to love each other is because Jesus told us to and because he loved us "while we were yet sinners." Instead of talking about this wonderful life-changing fact on a daily basis, I nag. Instead of sharing with my children my own struggles to live for Jesus, I nag. Instead of telling them that when I'm loving and sacrificial towards them or others, it's the Holy Spirit working in me, that I'm not naturally kind or sharing at all, no matter how much I may make them feel like I am by my shocked and scolding behavior, I fail them.

This is a harder way to parent, however. It's a lot easier to blow up and make them go to their rooms, do crisis management rather than mold their attitudes slowly and patiently. In your case, too, isn't it much easier to make the whole room stay in for recess or run extra laps in phy ed, than to talk calmly and humbly about your own struggles with sin and how step by step you learned to love others?

This approach seems more honest

than my typical: "I can't believe a Christian young lady would talk that way to her sisters." Sometimes punishment will still be the right answer for impenitence, but if I wonder if we parents and teachers would admit more willingly that we too are



struggling with how to love our fellow workers, our spouses, and them, perhaps these young persons wouldn't be so afraid to say, "I'm sorry" and mean it.

Perhaps they'll even see us not just as mothers, fathers, and teachers, but as sisters and brothers still growing in Christ right alongside of them.

So I guess I should unlock the door and let the troops back in. Then I can show them this brand new paraphrase I wrote: "If I eat ravenously the stupendous meal my mother made for me, but do not clear my plate or load the dishwasher...." Ah, some habits die hard.

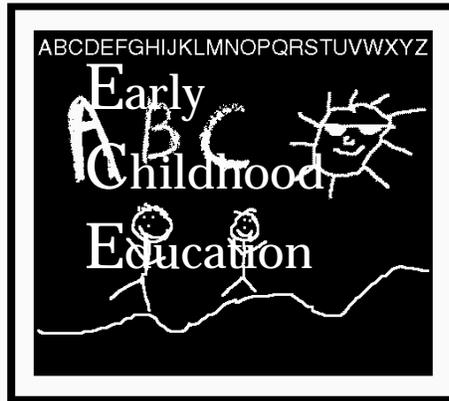
Your loving sister also in Christ

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Different Ways of Looking at the World: Projects in Early Childhood Education

Faith E. Krug



A small child standing at a parent's knees looks up. Way up the long legs she sees a talking head. The child draws a picture for Daddy saying, "This is you Daddy." There are the long legs with a head on top. The child's view of the world differs widely from that of adults. She sees what is significant to her.

Accordingly, children express what is most familiar to them. One of the aims of early childhood education is to increase children's awareness and understanding of the world around them. The Reggio Emilia schools of Italy have a very successful and frequently-studied approach in accomplishing this. They use the integrated art or project approach, what their schools call "the hundred languages of children."

A project is defined as "an in-depth study of a particular topic that one or

more children undertake." This involves planning, various activities, and interaction with the people, objects, and environment of the children's familiar world (Katz and Chard 1989, 2-3).

An essay by G. Rabitti defines art as having "more languages and more languages means different ways of looking at the world" (Katz and Cesarone 1994, 71). The "hundred languages" include media from paint, clay, and drawings to constructions of wire, paper, or wood; from pictures, photos, and collections to music, drama, and dance. Words are used in discussions, reports, and journals. "Children learn more deeply when they represent the same concept in different media" (Katz and Cesarone 1994, 41).

So how does a teacher start developing this learning process, this use of many languages to express different ways of looking at the world? Katz and

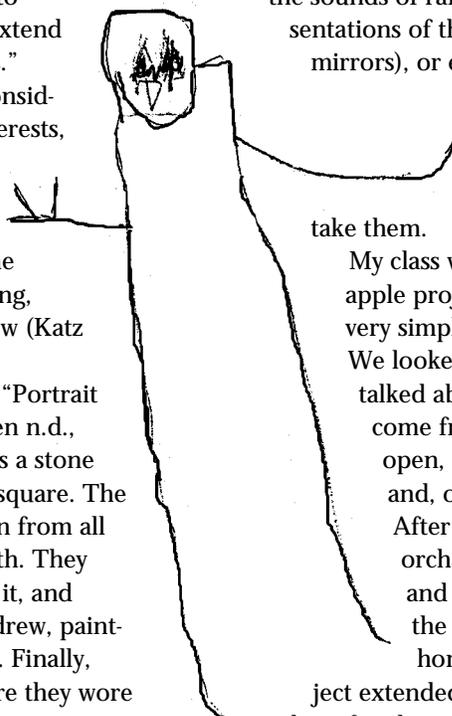
Krug

Chard (1989, 85) caution to “start in a small way and extend as you develop techniques.”

They advise teachers to consider the children’s skills, interests, and availability of resources. Objects, pictures, stories, experiences, and discussion come first. Dramatic play, drawing, painting, and writing follow (Katz and Chard 1989, 93, 101).

In the project example, “Portrait of a lion”, (Reggio Children n.d., 47), the familiar object was a stone lion standing in the town square. The children examined the lion from all sides, including underneath. They photographed it, touched it, and climbed on it. Then they drew, painted, and modeled it in clay. Finally, they did shadow play where they wore a lion’s mane.

Another example, “Rain and the city,” (Reggio Children n.d., 100-115) showed the children looking at the rainy world from various viewpoints. They discussed the storm clouds, thunder, and lightning. They noticed different noises, smells, and changes of color, and how people out in the rain change their behavior. With umbrellas and boots, they went out to experience the rain (something often forbidden). The joys of a puddle were explored with hands and feet, sticks and stones, and dramatic play. The upside-down world mirrored in the puddle was discussed. Once again they took photographs, drew pictures, and dictated comments to be written down. This activity could branch into measuring rainfall, drawing



the sounds of rain, creating representations of the puddle (foil, mirrors), or exploring colors of rainbows, depending on where the children’s interests

take them.

My class worked on an apple project, something very simple and familiar. We looked at an apple and talked about where apples come from. We cut it open, counted the seeds, and, of course, tasted it. After painting an orchard, we visited one and picked apples for the children to take home. Here the project extended into the home where families participated in everything from eating the apples to cooking or baking with them. We made the children’s pictures and comments into a class booklet.

Another day we worked together at cutting and cooking apples for apple sauce. We also tried to find out what happened when we dried or froze apple slices. Again the children tasted all the different forms of apples. Still another day ended with dramatic play. The children rolled out playdough, made pies, “baked” them, and served them. Throughout the project, children experienced apples with various senses and expressed their experiences with discussion, drawing, painting, written comments, and play.

It has been widely held that the high

level of parental involvement makes the Reggio Emilia schools so successful. But Katz speculates, "Sometimes I wonder if Reggio Emilia's outstanding success with parental involvement is due to the extraordinary quality of the children's experiences, rather than the reverse" (Katz and Cesarone 1994, 8). Whatever the case, the project approach allows children, parents, and teachers together to explore deeply various aspects of God's marvelous created world and the community he has given them. It gives another alternative to free play and work sheets, and "engages children's minds" in learning. Projects help develop and build on a small child's natural eagerness to work and learn, and help develop competence in working co-operatively. Children also have a chance to make choices and follow an area of interest (Katz and Chard 1989, 133).

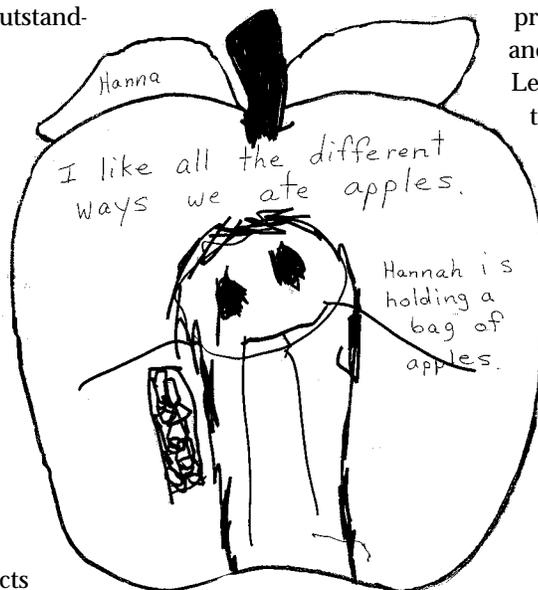
Topics can be as varied as the world around us—the wind, sky, or weather; a bird, a tree, or an animal. They can explore shopping, building, hospitals, or ambulances. They can be as near as the home, family, and food we eat, or as far away as the desert and jungle.

God has given us all our senses, abilities, and interests, but children fre-

quently have a fresh and unique way of expressing these. Often they are caught up in the excitement of the

process, the doing and learning.

Learning to do things right and striving toward adult standards are good in their place, but there is also a place where we as adults could learn to appreciate a child's different way of looking at the world, like



her view of the upside-down world in the puddle, or of a small head on top of long legs.

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REVIEWS

REVIEWERS

Elkind, David. *Ties That Stress*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard, 1994.

The author of this book, David Elkind, is a child psychologist deeply concerned about the stresses placed on today's children. Elkind shows how the shift of stress has gone from parents to children in the last several decades. His conclusions move Elkind to offer a prescription for a new family, which he calls the "vital family."

In order to support his ideas, Elkind takes the reader through an investigation of the metamorphosis of the American family from the nuclear (modern) family of the 1950s to the permeable (postmodern) family of the 1990s. He shows the reader that the nuclear family of the 50s was centered on the children and the permeable family of the 90s is centered on the adults in the family. While this shift in emphasis has had been liberating for many adults, especially women, it has had a negative effect on today's children.

Elkind also investigates the mass media and the influence of TV and rock music on youth. He looks at the school system and sees a shift from child-centered education to curriculum-centered education. The author contends that postmodern psychology sees children, especially teenagers, as young, self-reliant adults in the postmodern era.

These changes in psychology, the

mass media, the educational system, and the family have caused kids to look to drugs for help, to be less physically fit, and to score lower on SATs. He also notes the rise in teen pregnancy, teen suicide rates, and teen crime. Elkind says, "postmodern psychological and social pressures... not physical disease, account for most of the deaths and illness among children and youth" (202).

The author uses these conclusions to advocate his new family, the "vital family." He says that communities need to become involved in the raising of our youth. The community should be an extended family. It should help parents with day care and provide guidance and vocations for teens. Parents should be committed to each other and to making the family work. Pressure from inside and outside the home does not mean that parents should give up on being parents. Parents in the vital family will be more creative, yet still authoritative in their parenting styles. Elkind also advocates that the education system be run for children, not for national education standards. He says that by reducing the stress placed on children, America will raise a generation that will be able to handle the pressures of adulthood.

Elkind's research is basically historical. He is content to use the research of others. This reliance on "experts" can sometimes lead to invalid arguments. The author, however, does not rely on

the opinion of just one person. Elkind makes great use of quotations from many different sources in this book. By quoting both modern and postmodern writers he tries to get at the ideas of both eras.

This reviewer believes Elkind does fairly present the information and that he has done a proper job in his analysis. He does not say that either the modern or postmodern ideas are totally better or totally worse, but he seems to investigate the positives and the negatives that can come out of each system. The author appears to be committed to what is best for children. He sees them as the future and as people who need a future.

Much of the book seemed to be "common knowledge," or things that make sense from the reader's own experiences. From that standpoint it is pretty typical social science research. The author does, however, open one's eyes to what has happened to families during the last several decades. This book will probably have an impact in psychological circles and perhaps in the philosophies of educators. Perhaps over time we will see the vital family emerge as the dominant family structure, but it will take quite some time for these changes to be evident.

Even though the book is not written from a Christian viewpoint, it has value. The WELS is not immune to the problems of this world, so all of the post-modern problems of the permeable family are evidenced in WELS families. It is good for teachers to know the stresses that some of their students may be experiencing. They have to be a

guiding yet authoritative force both for students from stable family situations and those students who are from unstable families. Teachers can reduce some of the stress faced by children today by relieving unnecessary pressures of the classroom.

From a Christian standpoint, many of the statistics and quotations were quite depressing. Christian values apparently do not play a vital part in family life for many American families. Unfortunately, Elkind fails to see sin as the main cause in the poor family structure of America. He also fails to see where God's Word could help in the running of households and the raising of children. Fortunately, we as Christians can use this human knowledge and God's knowledge in guiding families and nurturing children.

EBL



Caruso, Joseph J. and M. Temple Fawcett. *Supervision In Early Childhood Education: A Developmental Perspective*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1986.

Caruso and Fawcett have written a book that complements a basic "how-to" administrative manual such as *Nurture*, published by the WELS Commission on Parish Schools in 1993. It is intended for all who work in a supervisory capacity in programs for young children, from directors to head teachers as well as principals, pastors,

Reviews

and others who serve in an administrative or supervisory position.

The book approaches working with adults from a strong developmental perspective. The authors explain that the personal and professional development of adults is basic to formulating supervisory strategies. "Through supervision, staff members can receive continuing support in their development as professionals and paraprofessionals, and thus become better providers for children" (preface, ix). The importance of the supervisor's own on-going development and learning is also stressed.

The content of this book is both descriptive and practical. The book is divided into four major parts. Part I dispels a variety of supervisory myths. Part II looks at the development of supervisors and supervisees and the implications for planning supervisory approaches. Part III gives basic information on and strategies for observing, holding conferences, and evaluating staff within the context of the clinical supervision model. Issues that affect staff morale and effectiveness are examined in Part IV. The book concludes by suggesting various designs for staff development and training, and provides some specific tools for putting those plans into practice.

This book would be a valuable addition to a professional library for all those who seek to minister to young children and their families. It can be especially helpful for those who are new to supervisory positions or new to supervisory positions specific to the early childhood setting. While this volume is a decade old, it is the only

resource of its kind in that it goes beyond the "business" aspects of supervision to consider supervision as a developmental "art."

That approach, as well as the clear processes suggested for translating principles into practice, makes this work a standard in the field of early childhood education.

MEO



Backhouse, Robert. *The Student Guide to Bible People*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1996; Dowley, Tim. *The Student Bible Guide*. 1996; Dowley, Tim. *The Student Bible Atlas*. Nashville: Nelson, 1989.

Augsburg and Nelson have published a set of Bible guide books which would be an excellent addition to any church or school library. Written by Robert Backhouse and Tim Dowley, these reference tools contain key elements for learning, including digestible information and helpful and attractive illustrations.

The authors group the events, ideas, and information in a plausible manner, creating a useful mental timeline for the reader. The text uses a easy-to-understand vocabulary which makes the books ones that can be readily used by a child. Dowley and Backhouse sort through the material, accenting the main points of biblical history, geography, concepts, and culture.

The illustrations and photographs are especially useful in depicting the

information in a clear and precise manner. Colorful pictures serve to back up the text and numerous maps in the atlas are drawn and explained in a simple manner. None of the illustrations overshadow the writing but rather they add to its overall value.

The books provide wonderful background information for the teacher's daily religion lessons. For students of any age the books are a good reference and review—an interesting way to learn on one's own.

MAL



Lucado, Max. *God Came Near*. Portland, Oregon: Multnomah, 1987.

How clearly do you see Jesus? Has it been a while since you have seen him? If your prayers seem stale, they probably are. Perhaps your vision of him is blurred. Take time and face him on a personal level as you read this book *God Came Near*.

Take time and sit on the cold, hard floor of the stable where he was born. Take time smell the sawdust of the carpentry shop as he closed the door for the last time. Take time to hear his sandals slap the hard trails of Galilee. Take time to see him heal the sores of the leper. Take time to cringe as you hear the hiss of hell's Satan.

God Came Near will focus that blurred vision and restore your sight. You will once again see Jesus in all his majesty and glory. You will once again see Jesus as your dearest friend. When you truly

see him, you will never be the same.

A study guide is a special feature of this book. There are many thought-provoking questions with answers only you can find in your heart.

DCS



Bruno, Bonnie and Carol Reinsma. *The Young Reader's Bible*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard, 1994.

Take just one look inside this Bible, and you will find what you have been looking for in your primary grade classroom. From Genesis through Revelation, all 70 action-packed stories are short enough for young readers to finish in one sitting. Children five to eight who are reading on their own will find enjoyment knowing they are reading God's Word.

The stories are true to the text of the NIV but they have been made easy for the younger student in God's Word. However, the teacher will have to provide an explanation that the sneaky snake in the Garden of Eden was Satan in disguise.

Some of the special features for young readers are simple Bible land maps, an easy-to-read Bible time line, a glossary of unfamiliar Bible words, and a description how the Bible came to us.

The illustrations by Jenifer Schneider are sensitive and appealing to children and adults alike. You find no cartoon characters or black and white drawings.

Reviews

I was disappointed that the sword that the angels used to keep Adam and Eve from going back into the Garden of Eden had no fiery point.

The *Young Reader's Bible* is a book that children will come back to time after time. It is a perfect way to begin a child's lifetime adventure of personal Bible reading.

DCS



Lucado, Max. *Just In Case You Ever Wonder*. Dallas, Texas: Word, 1992.

Here in this elementary picture book is everything you would like to say to your children. It is centered around a

parent telling his child how much she is loved and how special she is. But most of all, how she is loved and is special to God.

Just In Case You Ever Wonder wraps the child in its warm message of love, comfort, and protection. It shows the children that they grow and change but some things are always the same, the love of their parents and God.

The illustrations by Toni Goffe are remarkably simple yet offer an eloquent style that brings special meaning to the story.

Max Lucado offers hope and encouragement to parents and children alike as they look to heaven to be with God forever.

DCS

Reviewers: Erik Landwehr, Mary Olson, Michaela Lemke, Donna Scherzberg

New from Northwestern Publishing House Audiovisual Aids

Matthew

This series of four videos uses live actors to present Matthew's Gospel. The narrative is a verse-by-verse reading of the book of Matthew. Sometimes the camera focuses on Matthew himself, sometimes on the incident he is describing. The actor who represents Jesus does a good job of showing that Jesus was "fully human," something

usually lack in other Bible videos.

Rental: \$7.50

Matthew 1:1-9:1 (Code 8320)

1996 58 minutes color IJSCA

Matthew 9:2-14:36 (Code 8321)

1996 58 minutes color IJSCA

Matthew 15:1-23:39 (Code 8322)

1996 70 minutes color IJSCA

Matthew 24:1-28:20 (Code 8323)

1996 64 minutes color IJSCA



Life on the Edge

Focus on the Family has produced a series especially for teenagers and young adults, in which Dr. Dobson discusses some of life's most important issues. As usual, the presenter should be careful to point out suggestions of decision theology in the videos. Rental \$7.50

Pornography: Addictive, Progressive and Deathly (Code 8305)

1996 53 minutes color SCA

The Myth of Safe Sex (Code 8300)

1996 53 minutes color SCA

Keys to a Lifelong Love (Code 8302)

1996 53 minutes color SCA

When God Doesn't Make Sense (Code 8304)

1996 53 minutes color SCA

Emotions: Can You Trust Them (Code 8303)

1996 53 minutes color SCA

Love Must be Tough (Code 8301)

1996 53 minutes color SCA



Bible Stories for Children

These videos for children have taken some liberties with the biblical record, but essentially the facts of the story are accurate. Rental \$7.50

Discovering the Baby King—The Story of Christmas (Code 8314)

1996 25 minutes color PIJ

Joseph's Reunion (Code 8267)

1996 25 minutes color PIJ

Solomon (Code 8266)

1996 25 minutes color PIJ



How to Build on a Solid Foundation (Code 8294)

1996 25 minutes color CA Rental
\$7.50

This video uses real-life situations to demonstrate the scriptural principles for a life-long marriage.



Jesus and His Times

This series of videos tells the story of Jesus' life without interpretation or application. It would be good for use as Bible background material. Rental \$7.50

Jesus, the Story Begins (Code 8306)

1996 57 minutes color JSCA

Jesus Among the People (Code 8307)

1996 57 minutes color JSCA

Jesus, the Final Days (Code 8308)

1996 57 minutes color JSCA



Zambia: Lutheran Church in Central Africa (Code 5185)

1996 35 minutes color All Rental
\$7.50

The Lutheran Church in Zambia continues to grow in size and spiritual maturity. This video demonstrates the ministry there in 1996.

Reviews



*Confessional Evangelical Lutheran
Conference* (Code 5184)

1996 35 minutes color CA Rental
\$7.50

In April 1996 Lutherans from all over the world met in Puerto Rico to strengthen the bonds of love and doctrinal unity that exist between the WELS and its sister churches. This video gives a glimpse of what went on there.



Let's Make a Dream Come True (Code 5183)

1996 17 minutes color SCA Rental
\$7.50

The WELS churches of Florida are working to establish a Lutheran high school in that part of the country. This video encourages us to make the dream of a Southern Lutheran Academy come true.

Pastor Rolfe Westendorf, chairman
WELS AudioVisual Aids Committee