Lutheran Education

In This Issue

Departments

Here I Sit … Waiting for a Satellite Connection

by O. John Zillman

My wife comes up with some pretty creative gifts for my birthday or Christmas. Last August, she gave me an authentic PT-109 tie clip that she'd found on eBay of the type that John and Robert Kennedy handed out as campaign souvenirs when each ran for president in the 1960s. I rarely wear a tie anymore let alone a tie clip, but I'm a collector of Kennedy campaign memorabilia.

For Christmas, she surprised me with a GPS unit for use in the car or on the motorcycle.

Now I'm pretty much a "NSEW person," not a "right-turn/left-turn" person. I'm not sure where that ability came from, maybe from finding addresses on my paper route when I was a kid or from driving newspaper company vans or city public works trucks all over my hometown through high school and college as part of my summer jobs. Finding my way through the urban areas of Chicago, cross-country or through cities foreign or domestic, isn't that big of a deal. Just give me a map and I'll find it. If I've been there more than once, I won't need the map again. (Well, most of the time.) Or maybe there's something genetic about it. My ancestors were seafaring people from Ostfriesland on the North Sea and as further evidence, I was amazed by our youngest daughter's ability to lead us through the city back streets of Hong Kong to find a building where she had an internship interview when we visited her last year during her study abroad semester. We followed her on what was close to a forced march through some pretty dicey areas with some really interesting people, smells and sounds, along the way. While some fathers will burst with pride about grades or sports, for me, if my children can find their way around it just does my heart good.

So, did I NEED a GPS? Not exactly.

On the other hand, this little gadget is pretty slick. Load in an address—in either North America

or Europe, mind you—start out from your driveway and it'll lead you there, a mildly assertive electronic female voice telling you when a turn is coming up, where to exit the interstate and, finally, when you get there, "she" announces, "Arriving. Destination is on the right." If you choose to change your route because you actually know where you're going, the voice announces—without sharing its opinion—that it's "Recalculating" and just takes it from wherever you are. The first time I tried this, the voice was just silent for a while, leading me to think that I'd somehow offended it and that the next message would be "Okay, pal, you're on your own" and that the screen would just go blank.

At any rate, it's just one more feature to add to an activity that I already enjoy. Driving a car is generally therapeutic for me and I don't mind long trips at all. I think that arises out of one of my favorite memories of childhood when, on a slow Sunday afternoon, my dad would say, "Let's go for a ride." so all five of us kids and Mom would pile into the station wagon and go. My youngest brother would have to sit up front between Mom and Dad; my then-adolescent older sister was queen of the middle seat, leaving the "way back" to my other sister, brother and myself. In warm weather, Dad would roll down the back window and light up a cigar. We'd talk about important kid stuff and just enjoy the ride. And, to this day, I think a freshly lit cigar is still one of the best smells in the world. There was no timetable and no destination except an occasional surprise stop at the A&W for root beer floats. There was no, "Are we there yet?"

Going to see Grandma was another story altogether. It was about 300 miles from our home in the western suburbs of Chicago to the home she shared with my aunt in Collinsville, IL. I could see St. Louis from my aunt's house. I wasn't old enough to know anything about any kicks to be found on Route 66 and to a kid my age, the way there seemed to be a monotonous, often snow-swept landscape punctuated by grain-elevator towns out in the middle of fields, like Dwight, Pontiac, Lincoln, and Litchfield

Pre-Interstate, pre-seat belts and pre-air conditioning kind of went together and, in summer, it could be stifling. You could actually burn your hand on the unpadded steel dashboard of the car. Conversely, one legendary return trip from Christmas at Grandma's took us eight or nine hours as we crept along icy,

snow-packed roads at about 25 miles an hour. In my memory, it was really a pretty miserable trip in any weather. "Are we there yet?" was foremost in everyone's mind.

Maybe the difference now is that I'm in the driver's seat most of the time because I like it. The run from the Chicago area where we live to upstate New York where Youngest Daughter is attending Syracuse University is about a 700 mile trip each way. Bringing her and all of her earthly possessions home each spring has fallen to Dad as the end of our semesters has coincided and I really don't mind, now that we can all afford to buy gasoline again—at least for now.

I needed the map the first two times we drove this, but after that, it became a long but straight shot except for Cleveland, the halfway mark where, once off the Ohio Turnpike just about at Elyria, it's three Big Cleveland Turns: one into the downtown area; a second just past Jacobs Field; and the third on the eastern outskirts. So the "empty" run out there is a solo journey. For twelve hours, it's me, my thoughts and I and I've found that I can keep myself fairly good company, something I've thought that people need to learn to do instead of having to be entertained most of the time. But I'm still happy to arrive at the usual budget motel, call her to let her know I'm there and reward myself with a nice meal at a favorite local restaurant and watering hole. I work fairly cheap, that way. To be honest, though, I'll actually miss doing the trip after she graduates this spring.

Long journeys—either literal or figurative—seem to be part of the Christian life. In the Epiphany season during which I'm writing—and if the Journal production schedule holds up, you're reading this—we recall the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus, bearing witness and paying royal tribute. Since we know they came from "the East", that had to have been one long haul— on camels, yet. One wonders, sometimes, how these people managed to keep their focus and their goal in mind as they traveled a great distance to find this Child.

According to historian Paul Maier (1997) while their point of origin could have been Arabia, Media or Persia, it was most likely the latter as there was still a significant Jewish colony there and the prophecies about the Messiah were known to them. They weren't actually kings; it is more likely that they were specialists in astronomy, astrology, medicine and religion,

the well-educated members of a priestly caste. There may have been three or as many as twelve which would have made for a real entourage. The significance of their visit, having started out on the journey following an astronomical guide is that their presence lent a non-Jewish, international and cross-cultural significance to the Nativity, consistent with what Isaiah had prophesied, that "Nations shall come to your light" meaning, of course, the Gentiles (Maier, pp. 45, 48-50).

(Incidentally, Dr. Maier makes no mention of "rubber cigars," part of the legend known to and still sung by fourth grade boys everywhere until their teacher hears them.)

It certainly wasn't a sightseeing excursion with no real purpose like a Sunday afternoon drive, neither does it seem that it was a burdensome task that they just had to grind out in a sort of a "We just came to say we must be going" kind of way.

In fact, "Are we there yet?" ended abruptly at the door of the house where they found Mary and the Child. They fulfilled their piece of prophecy and honored Jesus like the King that he was then went on their way, back to a country located somewhere between history and legend.

That they were "wise" is open to discussion, I suppose, as their wisdom wasn't in knowing all the answers. In fact, they didn't know exactly who they were looking for nor exactly where to go and so, unlike most modern males—even guys with a GPS—they actually stopped and asked for directions.

It doesn't seem as though their wisdom was in their knowledge of the power politics in Israel either—they had no way of knowing that Herod's track record wasn't exactly child-centered in a good way. So God clued them in via dreams not to go back to Jerusalem.

The wisdom, the purpose of the journey seemed to be not in knowing many answers at all, but to know the important question that is, whom to seek. They trusted that God alone would be the guide, that they would recognize the King when they saw him, and then—one more detail—it would be important to leave by a different route to avoid trouble.

God, in majestic irony, paradox, if you will, chose these ordinary folks—earthly, earthy and not quite whom one might expect—from an over-the-hill priest and his senior citizen wife, to a completely flabbergasted young girl and her probably rather

bewildered fiancé, to illiterate shepherds, and finally to these long-haul philosophers to be his instruments in announcing the official beginning of his master plan for all time and all people to come. The journey and the destination were wrapped up in one; wrapped up in prophecy throughout all of Scripture; wrapped up in swaddling; wrapped up in celestial wonder and scenery to end all scenery—angels and heavenly hosts—a mysterious steady star—gifts fit for a King.

Christians look for new beginnings on a regular basis. From baptism itself to "daily dying and rising", the rhythms of the church year, marriages, anniversaries and, yes, the passing from this world to eternal life are all opportunity to chart a new course, even beyond what we can humanly imagine. Confession, absolution and the Lord's Supper are a process of both remembering and renewing, of leaving unnecessary baggage behind which is a blessing for those who tend to over-pack guilt, sadness or destructive habits of the heart. The load is always lighter afterward.

While I don't know a teacher who isn't happy or at least somewhat relieved when a school year ends, the promise of a new term starts to take hold, oh, around the middle of July (or at least that's how I experience it). New faces, new approaches, a chance to start over and tweak what's already good about curriculum or programs is refreshing. And good teachers emphasize to their students that they, too, have the same chances to start over whether at the beginning of the next day after the one before had been less than a stellar experience or to begin a new topic in social studies, a new semester where the grades can move in a better direction or even a new athletic season in which—always in a spirit of friendly competition, right?—"We'll finally beat (fill in your choice of archrival here) in basketball". Education is about renewal, about new journeys in to unknown territory for a very good reason. Christian education is about a deeper spiritual renewal that we know is already ours. When we send a class of graduates out, as we will again in just a few months, the talk is seldom about having arrived: it's always about continuing the journey.

We're on the move—pilgrims—through this life and world, not as those who are just passing through but as those making a purposeful journey. In spite of what we think though, we need

direction, correction and God's nudges when we're off course. Likewise, we're engaged in the business of directing others in ways that set the course and telling them what to watch for as we know the final destination.

And so we've arrived. And we haven't arrived. We're here, but not quite there yet. Like the journey of the Magi, we return from our visit to the Savior once again each year by a different route, not to avoid Herodian henchmen but to deal with or avoid the things of these present days that still try to convince us that our faith journey is a waste of time. And God is always sure to point out to us the most important scenery on the trip: the way in which he is faithful to his promise of Salvation, and how his Word-made-flesh brought order out of chaos at the beginning of all things and how it still brings order to the chaos of this age.

With this last in mind then, getting there should be half the fun. *LEJ*

Reference:

Maier, P. (1997). *In the fullness of time: A historian looks at Christmas, Easter and the early church*. Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI.

John Zillman, *editor may be contacted at john.zillman@cuchicago.edu.*

Teaching Literature with a Foot in Two Kingdoms

by Jonathan M. Barz

Religion is preoccupied with urgent, agonizing questions, and, as some have said, literature has an inherently religious element or dimension, absorbed as it is in its related array of ultimate questions…[A]uthors and texts impel us to reckon with who we are, individually and collectively, and who we wish to become. One is reminded here of the questions in the title of a Tahitian painting by the French post-impressionist Paul Gaugin: Doù venons-nous? Ques sommesnous? Où allons-nous? *(Where did we come from? What are we? Where are we going?)* (Cain, 2004, p. 5)

As the above quotation suggests, there are good reasons for any literature teacher, secular or Christian, to think about the connections between the literature she teaches and the fundamental questions addressed by religious belief. How much more will the Lutheran teacher want to ask in what ways her faith might shape the nature of her literature instruction? Does it place limits on the kinds of texts she might teach? Should she be using this literature to consciously mold the character of her students? And if so, how can she do so in a way that does justice to the subject matter she is charged with teaching? Can she be faithful to both the demands of faith and the demands of learning?

Within the context of Lutheran education such questions lead inevitably to Luther's concept of the two kingdoms. Luther spoke of two distinct dimensions of God's rule: the kingdom of the right hand (or the kingdom of grace) which God rules through the Gospel, and the kingdom of the left hand (or the kingdom of civil order), which operates by the law and by God's gift of human reason. In articulating this doctrine, Luther sought to help Christians avoid two distinct pitfalls. First, a clear understanding of these two kingdoms helps Christians avoid the trap of imposing the dominance of law and reason

on the kingdom of grace, creating a kind of legalism which assumes that the work they do in this world will earn them life in the next. Second, Christians are enjoined to remember that the earthly kingdom rightly operates through law and reason, and we should resist the urge to create a kind of triumphalist theocracy which proceeds on the belief that the church can somehow impose the reign of the Gospel in this world to create a heaven on earth.[1]

At its best, the two kingdoms doctrine is practiced through a kind of dynamic tension, the two spheres never sealed off from each other, but each sphere having its own value and each operating in relation to the other. As Eric Moeller (2002) has written, "Christian life and thought are not to be bifurcated into two exclusive spheres but…life in Christ leads us to creative engagement with the world" (p. 255). Recognizing the value and dignity of the civic order, Christians are freed to bring to bear on it their God-given reason as they seek to practice their faith in love toward their fellow man. This recognition also helps us avoid the temptation to retreat into narrow

...what does this always tricky balance look like in practice?

sectarianism, asceticism, or fundamentalism. We will not practice a "Christ against culture" world view which will prompt us to retreat from the world as, for example, the Old Order Amish have done nor will we turn our colleges and universities into high priced Sunday Schools or narrowly focused Bible colleges. At the same time, remembering that we are redeemed citizens of the kingdom of grace, we will avoid what I believe is an even greater temptation for Christian academics, the temptation so thoroughly to accommodate or adapt ourselves or our schools to secular society that our thought and behavior become indistinguishable from that of secular institutions.

It is precisely this understanding of the two kingdoms doctrine as a license for secularization that Mark U. Edwards,

---

1   For a thorough treatment of the Two Kingdoms Doctrine and concerns it raises for Lutheran education, see Eric Moeller's Secularization and the Two Kingdoms Doctrine: Maintaining a Lutheran Balance in *Lutheran Education*, Vol. 137, Summer 2002: 246-260.

former president of St. Olaf College (a college of the ELCA), suggested when he declared, "situated within this realm (the earthly kingdom of God's law), we in higher education are called to pursue truth with all the intellectual rigor at our command. In this respect a college of the church should differ in no significant respect from a secular college or university"(qtd. in Benne, 2001, p. 132). While Edwards is certainly correct in asserting that Christian teachers are free to pursue truth with intellectual rigor, his insistence that we don't need to worry about looking like every other college suggests that for Edwards the dynamic tension between the two kingdoms has been lost and the kingdom of grace has ceased to exert any pull on the kingdom of civil order. His position is what Gilbert Mielaender (1999) has called "a misbegotten two kingdoms notion" which is more likely to accommodate the culture than to shape anything distinctively Christian and which will produce "educational institutions situated in the kingdom of the left hand, after all which look like all other such institutions and have nothing distinctively Christian about them" (p. 153).

Lutheran Christian education which is truly Christian and truly Lutheran must maintain the dynamic tension inherent in Luther's two kingdom doctrine, neither devolving into secularity by neglecting the pull of the kingdom of grace on the kingdom of reason nor lapsing into a narrow and anti-intellectual fundamentalism by granting only the kingdom of grace any validity. But what does this always tricky balance look like in practice? Specifically, how can we maintain this dynamic tension in considering the relationship between the study of literature and the formation of Christian character in our students? My thoughts on this subject are shaped by 24 years in Lutheran schools as elementary student, high school teacher, and college professor and by numerous visits to Lutheran high school and junior high English classrooms during the 10 years I spent supervising student teachers. Most recently, my perspective is influenced by the five years I have spent as a department chair at a Christian college outside of the Lutheran tradition, a Presbyterian college which has been trying to make its way back from almost total secularity to become again a distinctively Christian college.

Here, as in so many matters of faith and life, it is possible to fall off the horse on either side. Historically, Christians have

sometimes assumed what might be called a "Christ against literature" posture, effectively banning all literature that is not explicitly Christian or which contains any un-Christian world views or unbiblical ideas. The result of this approach will be something that may be easily recognized as "Christian" but which can hardly be called "education." On the other hand, we can make an equal mistake by unnaturally separating faith and literature, by arguing for "art-for-art's-sake." In this view, literature is an entity somehow separate from issues of faith and life, and we don't need to consider its connection or responsibility to other areas of human experience. In what follows, I hope I can show why both of these views of the study of literature are inadequate in creating formative Christian education and what a better way of looking at the relationship between literature and faith might be.

Literature as a Threat to Character

The "Christ against literature" position, seeing literature as a potential threat to character and a corrupting influence on the young and impressionable, has deep roots in Western culture. One can trace this view back at least to Plato's famous decision to banish the poets from his ideal society in *The Republic* because their "imitations" of reality threaten to bewitch readers and offer mere entertainment without educational benefit. In early America, the fear of literature was expressed in two contrasting forms, both of which can find their way into contemporary Christian schools. As might be expected, one fear expressed was that imaginative literature would expose readers to morally corrupting influences. Early American warnings against reading novels focused on three fears of its effects on character: don't read novels because they will corrupt your morals; don't read novels because you should be reading something more beneficial; or don't read novels because they will diminish your ability to reason well. Thomas Jefferson's letter to his nephew Nathaniel Burwell in 1818 illustrates the latter two fears: "When this poison [novel reading] infects the mind, it destroys its tone and revolts it against wholesome reading. Reason and fact, plain and unadorned, are rejected…The result is a bloated imagination, sickly judgment, and disgust towards all the real business of life." As one can see, Jefferson's comments express more than fear of the *moral*

effects of imaginative literature on character; he is concerned that indulging in "fancy" and "imagination" may destroy one's intellectual character, thus rendering one unsuitable for success in the work-a-day world of American life. Viewing literature as a threat to character—whether expressed in the moral terms we associate with the Puritans or fundamentalists—produces three logical outcomes: a utilitarian view of English study, an excessively narrow view of what literature is appropriate for study in a Christian school, and the desire to use literature for direct moral instruction.

Jefferson's pragmatic view of imaginative literature and his concerns about its softening effect on intellect has been surprisingly resilient, pushing schools toward a vocationalized view of the English classroom, one in which the emphasis is on "practical skills" rather than the humanizing power of literature. Our students are only too ready to buy into this view. "How," they ask, "will reading a poem help me to get the kind of job I want and establish the kind of comfortable life I'm after?" Here I'm reminded of a student I taught back in my high school teaching days at Lutheran High School of Mayer, Minnesota. Through an odd chain of circumstances, I ended up being Mark's English teacher for all four years of his high school education. On the last day of his high school career, he stopped by my desk to thank me for what I had taught him. Before I had time to warm to the compliment, he was quick to add, "Not Shakespeare and poetry and all that stuff. But you taught me how to write, and I know I'll need that skill to succeed in college." He thought I had succeeded as his teacher solely because I taught him a "practical skill," but if I take him at his word I can only conclude that I failed by leaving him with *only* a set of academic skills or vocational tools.

Ernest Simmons (1998) suggests a reason why Lutherans especially should look beyond the vocational value of English studies: "If the Bible is the 'cradle of Christ,' as Luther referred to it, then surely liberal-arts education, especially language study, is one of the hands that rocks the cradle, through which the Bible is touched, understood, and moved." Luther observes:

> I am persuaded that without knowledge of literature pure theology cannot at all endure, just as heretofore, when letters have declined and lain prostrate, theology, too,

has wretchedly fallen and lain prostrate; nay, I see that there has never been a great revelation of the Word of God unless he has first prepared the way by the rise and prosperity of languages and letters. (p. 13)

Of course, English courses should give students the reading and writing skills necessary for further academic success—and I certainly hope I helped Mark attain these skills. But if we are serious about formative Christian education, we need to avoid seeing English in such narrowly utilitarian terms.

Concern over the moral effects of literature can lead a school to a culture of over zealous censorship (beyond what is prudent and necessary in selecting appropriate reading materials). Clearly there are books whose content makes them inappropriate for a Lutheran school's curriculum or library, and the borderlines between censorship and judicious selection of appropriate books are not always obvious. At least for middle school students and older, however, we should avoid the temptation to exclude immediately reading materials that contain unscriptural ideas or unbiblical world views, for to do so is both to distort literary history and to pass up an opportunity for a deeper, more reflective kind of moral instruction.

Some years ago I visited a Lutheran high school which had adopted an American literature book from a conservative Christian publisher, which in its desire to present a thoroughly "Christianized" version of American literature created a reading list so narrow that it utterly falsified our cultural past. Not only does this text completely ignore writers such as Nobel laureate John Steinbeck, whom the editors dismissed with a comment on his objectionable politics (like many writers he flirted with Communism during the Great Depression), but the table of contents of this literature text lists only seven women in almost 400 years of literary history and only two persons of color. One Christian bookseller's catalog description of the Modernist Period (1914-1939) suggests the deep spiritual issues the literature of this time: "The social upheavals caused by two world wars, one Great Depression, and a growing void in American spiritual life created a disillusioned society. Novelists like F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, John Steinbeck gave readers broken stories full of broken people" (http://www.exodusbooks.com/category.aspx?id=5728). Sadly, rather than using the work of Fitzgerald, Faulkner, and

Steinbeck as a lens through which to consider the problem of human broken-ness, and thus opening up a discussion of God's solution to our broken condition, this Christian publisher omits these writers entirely. As I responded once to a parent who expressed dismay that her daughter would be exposed to authors with un-Christian viewpoints in a Lutheran school, "A Lutheran school is a *great* place to encounter these ideas, because here they can be examined in the light of Christian belief."

Literature Study as Direct Moral Instruction

If censorship is one side of the coin regarding fear of literature's moral effects on students, the use of literature for direct moral instruction is the other. By direct moral instruction, I am referring to the practice of choosing literature which holds up for emulation the moral

> …this view…of literature… produces both poor art and ineffective character formation.

behavior we want our students to adopt and unambiguously shows that such behavior as reward or which displays immoral behavior which is clearly followed by some form of punishment. The logic here seems sound at first glance: if literature shapes character, why shouldn't we seek out that literature which most directly teaches the finest moral lessons? This is precisely what happened for much of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century in this country. This approach created literature curricula filled with simplistic moral tales and heavy handedly didactic literature (the high school equivalent of the Berenstain Bears!). It also encouraged schools to discriminate against complex works of literature because one couldn't be sure that the "moral" of such texts would clearly shine through. It became the work of the teacher then, not to lead students into deeper understanding of great works of literature, but to decide which works of art provided the safest, clearest, and most suitable moral or ethical models for readers. The problem with this view of the purpose of literature, however, is that it produces both poor art and ineffective character formation.

Literary historian William Charvat (1959) explains both the appeal and the limitations of using literature for direct moral

instruction: "the great prerequisite of teaching in public poetry is that truths be lifted out of the complexity in which they generate and reduced to explicit and separable statements" (p. 139). The cost of lifting truths "out of the complexity in which they generate," however, is almost inevitably a flattening and falsification of human experience. What literature does best, I would suggest, is invite us *into* an experience. A view of literature which transforms literary texts into a form of preaching—however much those of us in Christian education may want to seize any opportunity to preach to our captive audiences—betrays this purpose.

The novelist Henry James (1884) identified another problem with trying to use literature as direct moral instruction: The result, he complains, is to "say that…good [literature] means representing virtuous and aspiring characters, placed in prominent positions; another would say that it depends for a 'happy ending' on a distribution at the last of prizes, pensions, husbands, wives, babies, millions, appended paragraphs and cheerful remarks"(p. 438). Over 2000 years earlier, Plato had complained that the problem with poets was that "they say that many unjust men are happy and many just men wretched" (p. 62). Now we all know it is true that sometimes the evil prosper and the virtuous don't. King David complained about this fact repeatedly, and Jeremiah lamented, "Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease?" (Jer. 12:1). Of course, Plato doesn't say that the wicked never prosper. He simply insists that admitting this reality in life sends a bad message to our youth. But the insistence that literature illustrate the rewards of virtue and the punishment on vice dictates another falsification of human experience, because authors have to make sure that the good are rewarded and the evil are punished, regardless of whether our fallen world actually operates like this. I hope we can agree that the best kind of formative Christian education will deal with the world as it actually is rather than as we wish it were. In more theological terms, insisting that the literature we teach demonstrates virtue rewarded and evil punished transforms right behavior from an act of thankful obedience to God in response to His work of redemption into a recipe for material success.

Our mothers taught us all long ago to be careful of the company we keep, that virtuous company improves our character while depraved company diminishes it. As literary

critic Wayne Booth pointed in the title of his book on literature and ethics, literature can be "the company we keep." This notion of literature as the company we keep goes far beyond whether we meet moral characters in the books we read or encounter biblically correct world views. Just as important, simplistic and simple-minded company encourages us to settle for simplistic and simple-minded views of the world, while profound and insightful company challenges us to see the world in its full complexity, to acknowledge the full humanness of others, and to develop the full humanness of our selves. The great Chicago writer Saul Bellow once said, "Naturally you're aware that bad art can finally cripple a man"(in Booth, 1988). Bad art of the kind that the desire for direct moral instruction invites—shallow, simplistic, or just plan false—can indeed cripple our moral and ethical sense.

The Arts for Art's Sake

The almost inevitable backlash against this attempt to reduce literature to character formation—which in Christian education typically takes the form of losing the distinction between the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of civil order—occurred at the end of the nineteenth century when artists began to assert the absolute autonomy of art from any moral instruction or concern, in effect insisting that the two kingdoms have nothing to do with each other. The rallying cry became "Art for art's sake!" The argument held that literature's concerns are simply to create beauty and to hold a mirror up to life; therefore, there can be no moral or immoral works of literature, only those that are done well or done poorly. In his 1890 preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde insisted, "There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all."

Within the context of literary studies in Lutheran education the corollary of this insistence on art for art's sake is the view that there is no imperative to integrate a faith perspective. As I have argued above, resistance to integrating faith and learning often comes from a mistaken understanding of the two kingdoms, "a misbegotten 'two kingdoms' notion" which views the two spheres as hermetically sealed from each other. The fears about the effects of literature I've noted or the desire to transform

literary studies into direct moral instruction reflect a failure to maintain the proper balance between the two kingdoms, but so too does an unwillingness to examine the areas in which the study of literature intersects with faith concerns. At the same time that we recognize the validity of studying the secular world, we should recognize that teaching and learning within Lutheran schools and colleges *should* look different from that found within secular academic institutions. As George Marsden has argued in *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, bringing God into the picture when we study an academic discipline won't change everything, but it will change some things in ways that should be noticeable and recognizably Christian. As Marsden commonsensically points out, "Keeping within our intellectual horizons a being who is great enough to create us and the universe, after all, ought to change our perspectives on quite a number of things" (4).

It's worth noting that the root meaning of "revise" is "to see again."

Having shown why the two extreme views of the relationship between the arts and character are false and reveal an improper understanding of the relationship between the two kingdoms, let me now suggest three ways in which in teaching literature we can positively shape the moral character of our students.

The Habit of Moral Reflection

Literature invites us to develop the habit of moral reflection. Henry David Thoreau once wrote, "How many a man has dated a new era in his life from the reading of a book." Great literature has the ability to stimulate moral reflection in ways that stretch our minds—and our hearts—so that they are never the same again. I'd suggest that literature does this in essentially two ways: by inviting us into experiences that would otherwise be foreign to us and by making experiences that are otherwise familiar to us suddenly seem strange and new. In the first case, by taking us out of our own narrowly contained worlds and inviting us into the experiences of others in ways that engage not only our analytical capacity but our whole beings, literature gives us the opportunity to reflect on these experiences in a

way that would otherwise be impossible. History, psychology, sociology, and a whole range of other disciplines can give us one kind of information about the vast world of human experience, but literature allows us to enter into those experiences and understand them at the deepest level.

In the second case, literature enables us to see in new ways what is otherwise so close to us or so ordinary that we have long since lost the ability to reflect upon it. One effect of the habit of moral reflection is to prompt "re-vision" of our moral or ethical understanding. It's worth noting that the root meaning of "revise" is "to see again," something the arts enable us to do. Novelist E. M. Forster said it perfectly: "If human nature does alter, it will be because individuals manage to look at themselves in a new way" (qtd. by Booth, p. 496). In the Christian school literature classroom, this "new way" of looking at ourselves that literature offers will also offer the chance to see ourselves in the light of Scripture.

World View Critique

Students should be encouraged to identify, understand, and critique the worldview presented by the works of literature they read. In our post-modern world in which all world views are commonly seen as holding equal claims on truth—since the post-modern world recognizes no transcendent Truth—it is increasingly important for students to recognize the implications of the various world views they encounter, and the study of literature is uniquely suited to enable them to do this. Any writer's worldview includes answers, whether implicit or explicit, to four basic questions: Where am I? Who am I? What's wrong? And what's the remedy? (Walsh and Middleton, 2004). In a writer's response to the last two of these questions especially, one can recognize the degree to which his world view is compatible with a Christian understanding of Law and Gospel. As Dan Thurber (1999) has suggested, perhaps the most crucial aspect of the world views our students will encounter involves the authors' views of the essential nature of human beings: do they acknowledge the essential fallen-ness of humans due to the effects of sin, or do they imagine humans as generally doing just fine and thus able to engineer their own salvation? Thurber wrote in *Lutheran Education* almost 10 years ago, "Either the depiction

of the human condition suggests that we can rescue ourselves and that we live in a world capable of moral improvement, or the depiction of the human condition suggests that we live in a fallen world, are born into sin, and cannot save ourselves" (p. 186).

On the one hand, the Christian teacher who leads her students to pay close attention to the world views presented in works of literature may find herself most drawn to those writers such as Flannery O'Connor, who says of her fiction, "I see from the standpoint of Christian orthodoxy. This means that for me the meaning of life is centered in our redemption by Christ and what I see in the world I see in its relation to that." Because of her Christian world view, O'Connor says, "I have found that my subject is the action of grace in territory largely held by the devil…an evil intelligence determined on its own supremacy" (p. 804-805). Her sometimes grotesque short stories such as "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," "Revelation," and "Good Country People" repeatedly illustrate the folly of those human beings who believe they are self-sufficient. In "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," for example, a self-righteous grandmother faces a serial killer known as the Misfit and tells him that if he would only pray, "Jesus would help you." His response, "I don't want no help…I'm doing all right by myself," clearly articulates the fatal error of all who would look inside themselves for their salvation. Teaching O'Connor opens up the opportunity to address this most crucial understanding: that we are all blinded and without a leg to stand on (as O'Connor's "Good Country People" makes clear); without this understanding the message of the Gospel is neither coherent nor necessary.[2]

Unfortunately, in the classic literature of the past 200 years, whether British or American, one will find few writers who so clearly express the fallen-ness of humankind and our need for a redeemer.[3] Nevertheless, by encouraging world view analysis, it

---

2   See also Dan Thurber's 1999 article in *Lutheran Education*, The Power of Story: Literature as a Springboard to the Faith Journey We Take with our Students, which includes an extended discussion of how Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* offers the opportunity to examine theological issues of human sin and redemption.

3   The question of why so little explicitly Christian fiction achieves greatness is beyond the scope of this essay, but for an intriguing discussion which

is possible for the Christian teacher to use writers of all kinds to help students sharpen their awareness of how the world views of others either reflect or contradict the Scripture's depiction of the human condition. In this regard, the work of writers whose world view is distinctly unbiblical can serve a vital purpose in forming our students' ability to think "Christianly," helping them to see in concrete ways the difference it makes to view the world through the lens of the Gospel.

Let me offer two important cautions here:

1. Understanding must precede critique.

The purpose of world view critique is not merely to identify where writers are unbiblical so that we can quickly dispense with them. Christian teachers or students may be tempted to pursue their understanding of a given author or text just long enough to find where it differs from orthodox Christian doctrine. At that point, one may be tempted to write off the author as having nothing to say to a Christian audience and better to be avoided entirely. I recall, for example, a pre-seminary student I taught

> ...even those who reject God have the ability to utter truths about His world...

some years ago in my American literature course. Though a bright and diligent student, Paul quickly determined that the great American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson demanded no more of his attention as soon as he discovered Emerson's pantheism. (Emerson, it's worth noting, left the Unitarian church because he found its teaching too restrictive.) I did my best to convince Paul he needed to confront Emerson more thoroughly before passing judgment on him. It's true that Emerson was wrong about many things, beginning with his optimistic view of human nature. Emerson's response to key world view questions *What's wrong? And what's the remedy?* encourages the individual to identify the source of evil outside himself and look for the God within. In his "Divinity School Address" (1838), Emerson wrote, "That is always best which gives me to myself. The sublime is excited in me by the great stoical doctrine, Obey thyself. That which shows God

---

links the failures of evangelical fiction writers to sacramental theology, see Peter Leithart's (2007) Why Evangelicals Can't Write.

in me, fortifies me. That which shows God out of me, makes me a wart and a wen." Talk about the wrong prescription for the problem! But the best response to Emerson's world view from Christian teachers and students is to seek to understand it as thoroughly as possible, for this is the view that informs so much of what we call New Age philosophy and which much of our world accepts. Understanding Emerson helps to equip us to live in and to witness to a world that is blind to its own fallen-ness and turns inward rather than to God for its salvation. In the end, even though Paul still found much in Emerson that a biblical world view forced him to reject, he could also see how Emerson has powerfully articulated a world view which Christians must understand and reject, and truths which Christians can embrace such as the dangers of conformity and the lure of materialism.

2. "All truth is God's truth."

One of the insights about education stressed by Christians in the Reformed tradition is that God, the sovereign creator of the universe, has not abandoned the creation but is still actively at work in it. Reformed thinkers insist that "there is…not only God's redemptive grace but God's common grace" (Wolterstorff, 1999, p. 133), which exists within our fallen world, even among those who are far from God. Thus, even those who reject God have the ability to utter truths about His world, and when they do, we are free to accept their insights as "God's truth." John Calvin stressed this point in his *Institutes*: "If we regard the Spirit of God as the sole fountain of truth, we shall neither reject the truth itself, nor despise it *wherever it shall appear*, unless we wish to dishonor the Spirit of God"(qtd. in Wolterstorff, p. 133). Although as Lutherans we will understand that our reason is fallen and will be wary of places where reason may seem to stand in conflict with Scripture, Calvin rightly reminds us that we need not reject the insights that may be found within literature of all kinds, even those insights offered by authors who themselves do not accept the truth of Scripture.

3. The Study of Literature Encourages Empathy

Literature offers us the opportunity to develop the crucial character trait of empathy, the ability to "feel with" others, without which it is impossible to carry out Jesus' injunction to love our neighbors as ourselves. In Rom 12:15 we are reminded

of the nature of Christian empathy: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." Similarly, 2 Cor. 11:29 illustrates the quality of empathy: 'Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?" But empathy requires more than a tender heart; it has a cognitive component, demanding not just sympathy for others but genuine understanding of who they are and what they are experiencing. As Les Parrott (2003) explains:

> Empathy combines two important capacities: to analyze and to sympathize, to use our heads and to use our hearts. Our analytical capacities involve collecting facts and observing conditions. We look at a problem, we break it down into its causes, and we propose solutions. That's analyzing. Sympathizing is feeling for another person. It is feeling the pain of someone who is suffering or feeling the anger of a person in rage. Analyzing and sympathizing are the twin engines of empathy. One without the other is fine, but their true power is found in combination. We need to love with both our head and our heart to empathize…

Literature, by its very nature, engages both head and heart, enabling both analysis and sympathy.

The great difficulty of practicing empathy is to get outside of our own experience, to climb inside another person's skin and walk around in it (to paraphrase Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*). It's incredibly hard—perhaps impossible—to escape the perspective of the racial, economic, and cultural milieu which one inhabits. In my own case, for example, by the time I was 15, I had lived in five different communities, but each of them was entirely white and middle class. As a middle schooler, my idea of a minority was someone whose ancestry could not be traced back to Germany and who did not attend St. Peter Lutheran Church on Church Road. I knew about poverty and racism, but only in the most abstract way; I had no immediate experience of them. But when I read *Nigger*[4], the memoir of African American stand-up comic turned activist Dick Gregory, I gained an entirely new level of empathy for those who experienced—and continue to experience—the injustices

---

4 Gregory's dedication of the book explains his shocking choice of title: "Dear Momma: Wherever you are, if ever you hear the word 'nigger' again, remember they are advertising my book."

of racism in this country. I know that I can trace to my reading of this book, and to my reading of John Griffith's *Black Like Me*, my concern about race and racism in America, a concern that infuses my teaching of literature.

A 2006 *New York Times* article titled "At Some Medical Schools, Humanities Join the Curriculum" offers a nice concrete example of the value of the arts in promoting empathy. Apparently a growing number of medical education programs, including places like Yale and Stanford, are requiring medical students to take courses in the humanities. Medical educators have discovered that the arts offer a necessary antidote to the fact that, in listening and poring over charts, doctors sometimes had little time actually to look at their patients, especially under the pressures of today's managed medical care. The instructor for one such course at Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York City explains the rationale: "I can't think of many places outside art where you can be in a moment, and just look, for as long as you can take it. Think about what it would be like if you were with a patient and could freeze the moment to really pay attention to everything that patient was trying to tell you." The journal entries of students who have taken her art appreciation class suggest that "the students—who take the course during their geriatric rotation, making home visits to elderly patients—seem to pay closer, and more empathetic, attention to their patients."

If we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, we must first know something about our neighbors and the particularities of the lives they lead. Through the study of literature we can help our students to develop both the head knowledge and the habits of heart to enable them to lead lives of Christian empathy.

Ultimately, perhaps what I am calling for is a kind of courage among Christian teachers of literature that is too often lacking. On the one hand, some are excessively nervous that their students might encounter texts which reveal unbiblical world views. Conversely, others may be fearful that efforts to integrate faith into the study of literature will diminish the intellectual rigor of this enterprise and force a retreat into narrow parochialism. But the ultimate questions with which literature confronts us—who are we and who do we wish to become?—invite us to a kind of literary study that at its best will be wide-ranging *and* thoroughly Christian, intellectually rigorous *and* spiritually engaged. Only

through this kind of literary study can we fulfill Luther's vision of the power of literature to enable theological understanding: "Certainly it is my desire that there shall be as many poets and rhetoricians as possible, because I see that by these studies, as by no other means, people are wonderfully fitted for the grasping of sacred truth and for handling it skillfully and happily...Therefore I beg of you that at my request (if that has any weight) you will urge your young people to be diligent in the study of poetry and rhetoric" (p. 177). *LEJ*

References

Benne, R. (2001). *Quality with soul: How six premier colleges and universities keep faith with their religious traditions.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Booth, W. C. (1988). *The company we keep: An ethics of fiction.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Cain, William, ed. (2004). *American Literature, Volume 1*. New York: Penguin Academics.

Charvat, W. (1959). *Literary publishing in America, 1790-1850.* Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.

Gregory, D. (1964). *Nigger*. New York: E. P. Dutton.

James, H. (1998). The art of fiction. In D. Richter (Ed.), *The critical tradition* (2nd ed., pp. 436-447). Boston: Bedford Books.

Kennedy, R. (2006, April 17). At some medical schools, humanities join the curriculum. *New York Times, April 17, 2006*. Retrieved September 27, 2008, from http://www.nytimes.com

Leithart, P. (2007). Why Evangelicals can't write. *Liturgia*, *18*(2). Retrieved September 27, 2008, from http://www.credenda.org/issues/18-2liturgia.php

Mielaender, G. (1999). Forming heart and mind: Lutheran thoughts on higher education. *Lutheran Education, 134*, 152-165.

Moeller, E. (2002). Secularization and the two kingdoms doctrine: Maintaining a Lutheran balance. *Lutheran Education*, *137,* 246-260.

O'Connor, F. (1988). *Flannery O'Connor: Collected Works*. New York: Library of America.

Parrott, L. (2003). The important role of empathy in communication. *Christian Singles Today*. Retrieved September 27, 2008,

from http://www.christianitytoday.com/singles/eharmony/03apr-2.html

Plato. (1974). *Plato's republic* (G. M. A. Grube, Trans.). Indianapolis: Hackett.

Simmons, E. L. (1998). *Lutheran higher education: An introduction for faculty*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.

Thurber, D. (1999). The power of story: Literature as a springboard to the faith journey we take with our students. *Lutheran Education*, *134*, 184-191.

Walsh, B. J., & Middleton, R. (1984). *Transforming vision: Shaping a Christian world view*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press.

Jonathan M. Barz, Ph.D. *chairs the English Department at the University of Dubuque in Dubuque, Iowa. Prior to his move to Dubuque, he taught at Concordia University Chicago for 10 years (also serving as editor of the* **Lutheran Education Journal***) and at Lutheran High School in Mayer, Minnesota for 6 years. He holds an MA in English from Western Washington University and a PhD in American Literature from the University of Minnesota.*

Social Intelligence: Implications for the Education of School Leaders

by Anthony Przeklasa

Imagine, a group of teachers at the end of the school day relaxing in the teachers' lounge and discussing how things are going at school. It has been a long week with an evening of parent/teacher conferences. The conversation moves from a discussion of the positive feeling of support from parents, to issue of getting their lesson plans prepared for the next week, to the burden of committee work aligning the curriculum to academic standards, to the uncertainty of how students will perform on achievement tests, to the challenges of the new reading series, to a discussion of teacher morale. They talk about the new principal, Ms. Swanson, who is in her second year at the school. She replaces a principal, Mrs. Geissler, who had become a fixture at the school. Mrs. Geissler had been principal for twenty years before her scheduled retirement. She seemed to understand each teacher, she knew every parent, and she was keenly aware of everything that went on in the building. The teachers knew change was inevitable with Mrs. Geissler's retirement. The teachers made a concerted effort to work with the new principal and they convinced themselves that change would be good for them and the school. They knew that the new principal would have a different leadership style and they looked forward with a degree of excitement to having a new principal.

Ms. Swanson has a master's degree and has been accepted for doctoral study; she is well versed in curriculum, instruction, reading, and school improvement. Ms. Swanson guided the school in developing its first school improvement plan that evaluated test scores, suggested curriculum changes, and lead to the adoption of a new reading series. It was a good school improvement plan and the teachers were pleased with their product.

What was is it with the new principal that is unsettling to the

teachers? Ms. Swanson is pleasant and respectful in her interactions with teachers, parents and students. She presents herself well. She is well organized and accomplishes the routine tasks of a principal. Yet, she just does not have the pulse of the school. She does not seem to know what is going on in the building. As one teacher states, "I think she is clueless. Mrs. Geissler would pick up on everything and she would miss nothing. She would walk through the building and take everything in."

How do we develop school leaders? We seem to focus on national standards such as the ELCC standards for school leaders. We teach leaders how to develop school improvement plans. We focus on defining leadership styles; we instruct on curriculum; we provide strategies on securing resources. Yet, do we do a very good job in preparing our principals to pick up on what is going on in their school and what the students, teachers, and parents in the school are really feeling? Do we prepare are leaders to have a real "feel" for their schools?

Does Daniel Goleman's (2006) *Social Intelligence* provide insight on being effective and perceptive leaders? Does he provide us insight on who we are? I will comment on the former question and leave the latter question to others.

Goleman credits Edward Thorndike with the earliest conceptualization of social intelligence in 1920 as "the ability to understand and manage men and women." Goleman refines this as "being intelligent not just about our relationships but also in them." In Harpers Monthly Thorndike stated, "the best mechanic in a factory may fail as a foreman for lack of social intelligence." (Goleman, 2006, p.11 & 83).

Does social intelligence provide a foundation for understanding the situation with my school principal?

Social Neuroscience: the Brain and Social Behavior

Goleman bases *Social Intelligence* on what he views as the emerging field of social neuroscience attempting to connect neuroscience to social interactions. Social neuroscience is not unlike the neuro-economic studying of the brain connecting brain response to economic decision-making. This approach looks at social interactions through the medium of functional magnetic resonance imaging (FMRI) determining what parts of the brain activate and to what degree during social interaction.

Brain research using brain imaging and biochemical responses began in 1980. From 1900 to 1980 brain research was often based upon studying brain injuries and autopsies.

Neuroscience has created an extensive mapping of the human brain. Goleman describes various areas of the brain that play an important part in social interaction. The amygdala found in the midbrain can trigger a fight or flight response and serves as an early warning system allowing us to read emotions. The prefrontal cortex of the brain plays a part in the executive functioning of the brain and intentionality. The orbitofrontal area of the prefrontal cortex brings the emotional brain, the thinking brain, and autonomic response together "making sense of the social world around us…performing an instant social calculus" (p. 64).

Two types of neurons add to the complexity of this system, mirror neurons and spindle cells. Mirror neurons "reflect back an action we observe in someone else making us mimic the action or have the impulse to do so" (p.41). "The human brain harbors multiple mirror neuron systems, not just for mimicking action but also for reading intentions, for extracting social implications from what someone does, and for reading emotions "(p.41). The mirror neurons allow us to understand or sense what someone is thinking or feeling, not by our own thinking but by our feeling.

> Do we prepare are leaders to have a real "feel" for their schools?

Mirror neurons operate in the premotor cortex governing speaking and movement and their relationship with motor neurons is a basis for mentally rehearsing. "Simulating an act is, in the brain, the same as performing it, except that the actual execution is somehow blocked" (p .42).

Spindle cells are "the secret of the speed of social intuition. They put the snap in snap judgment" (p.65). Shaped like a spindle they are about 1000 times more abundant in humans than other primates. They are particularly thick in the anterior cingulate cortex, part of the prefrontal cortex, which "directs our attention, coordinates our thoughts, our emotions, and the body's response to our feelings, rich in receptors for serotonin,

dopamine and vasopressin. These cells work at fast speed even before we have a word for what we are perceiving, we already know whether we like it…such in-an-eye blink judgments may matter most when it comes to people." (p. 66-67).

Goleman conceptualizes the thoughtful and somewhat slower process of social judgment as high road and the emotional and rapid process as low road.

The Social Brain

Human neurology including the prefrontal cortex, anterior cingulate cortex, orbitofrontal area, brain stem, amygdala, mirror cells, spindle cells, serotonin, dopamine, vasopressin, the high road and low road, and so much more work together as a system and create what Goleman terms the social brain. "The social brain represents the only biological system in our bodies that continually attunes us to, and in turn becomes influenced by, the internal state of people we are with"(p.10). The social connection is so strong that Goleman states "we are wired to connect…our brain's very design makes it sociable, inexorably drawn into an intimate brain-to-brain linkup whenever we engage with another person. That neural bridge lets us affect the brain—and so the body—of everyone we interact with" (p. 10).

There is no single site in the brain controlling social interactions. Neuroscientists have created complex maps of the areas of the brain involved in moral judgment, empathy, rapport, emotions, perception of emotions of others, and simple conversation. We affect others and others affect us. "The exquisite social responsiveness of the brain demands that we realize that not just our own emotions but our very biology is being driven and molded, for better or worse, by others and in turn, that we take responsibility for how we affect people in our lives" (p.314).

Components of Social Intelligence and Leadership

A difficult part of conceptualizing social intelligence, viewing its relationship to leadership, and assisting students to maximize their potential as effective leaders is the nonverbal, noncognitive, automatic, rapid reading, gut level, and low road, aspects of social intelligence. Goleman's discussion of rapport, self-absorption, and empathy will bring us to his conceptualization of social intelligence. An effective social connection is often based upon

nonverbal connections consisting of mutual attention, shared positive feelings, and nonverbal interplay. In a conversation there is rationality, words, and meaning. Yet, there is "free form vitality that runs beneath the words, holding the interaction together through an immediately felt connection. The sense of connection hinges less on what's said than on the more direct and intimate, unspoken emotional link" (p.33). "Empathy entails some degree of emotional sharing—a prerequisite to truly understand anyone else's inner world… empathy is "knowing another person's feelings, feeling what the person feels, and responding compassionately to another's distress" (p.57-58). "Self-absorption in all its forms kills empathy, let alone compassion. When we focus on ourselves, our world contracts as our problems and preoccupations loom large. But when we focus on others, our world expands. Our problems drift to the periphery of the mind and so seem smaller, and we increase our capacity for connection" (p.54).

The following is Goleman's conceptualization of social intelligence:

Social Awareness

Primal empathy: Feeling with others; sensing nonverbal emotional signals.

Attunement: Listening with full receptivity; attuning to a person.

Empathic accuracy: Understanding another person's thoughts, feelings, and intentions.

Social cognition: Knowing how the social world works.

Social Facility

Synchrony: Interacting smoothly at the nonverbal level.

Self-presentation: Presenting ourselves effectively.

Influence: Shaping the outcome of social interactions.

Concern: Caring about others' needs and acting accordingly (Goleman, p.84).

Goleman thoroughly describes his two dimensions and eight elements of social intelligence. This provides a useful focus for understanding school leaders and it gives us much to consider as we develop school leaders.

Looking at the school principal through Goleman's conceptualization of social intelligence Ms. Swanson seems

to have differing strengths across Goleman's two dimensions and eight ingredients of social intelligence. The first dimension of social intelligence is social awareness—which is a sensing, understanding and knowing of the feelings thoughts of the other person or of the social situation. Ms. Swanson seems unable to rapidly read nonverbal cues; she seems to lack a gut level empathy that Goleman calls primal empathy. Ms. Swanson is an active listener. She works hard at giving her complete attention to someone speaking to her. However, individuals often do not feel a genuine connection or attunement beyond the verbal level. Individuals often feel she does not have a depth of understanding of what others really feel or think beyond the verbal cues, Goleman's empathic accuracy. Ms. Swanson is able to accept and internalize the political priorities as verbalized by the group but she seems to miss those priorities underlying the group that are not explicitly verbalized, Goleman's social cognition.

Goleman's second dimension of social intelligence is social facility—which takes the social awareness part to build smooth and effective social interactions. Synchrony relates to smooth nonverbal interaction. Ms. Swanson is not odd in manner; her gestures, posture, eye contact, and tone of voice are appropriate; she exhibits social competence. Her self-presentation is effective. Her difficulty in picking up nonverbal cues may have an impact on her influence on others. Regarding Goleman's eighth ingredient, concern, Ms. Swanson's genuine caring for children and others allows her to feel responsibility and act on this responsibility appropriately.

Systematically teaching social awareness and social facility to our students may be problematic. However, like our school principal Ms. Swanson, a leader not achieving one's potential in these two areas may find it difficult to be successful. Goleman states, "leadership boils down to a series of social exchanges in which the leader can drive the other person's emotions into a better or worse state. In high-quality exchanges, the subordinate feels the leader's attention and empathy, support, and positivity. In low-quality interactions, he feels isolated and threatened" (p.276). Our school principal, Ms. Swanson may have the best school improvement plan; yet she might not be the best leader for that group of teachers. *LEJ*

Reference:

Goleman, D. (2006), *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships.* New York: Bantam Dell.

Anthony Przeklasa, Ph.D. *serves as Associate Professor in the Department of Leadership at Concordia University Chicago. His interests are in the areas of school and not-for-profit organization governance and leadership in health care, educational finance and law.*

Know My Voice: Emerging Worldviews and the mission of Lutheran Christian Higher Education

by Kevin J. Brandon

To say that we live at a time in history of emerging worldviews is to suggest that there are new worldviews being shaped and generated. New perceptions about the world are developing giving expression to new definitions or explanations of the human experience. It is to suggest that changing conditions foster new explanations of life experiences because established worldviews no longer provide satisfactory explanations for the human experience and lack the capacity to serve individuals with explanations of the world about them. This phenomenon of emerging worldviews is not a new experience to humankind. Western cultural systems have long held the notion that humankind is generating new learning, ever attaining knowledge and wisdom, conquering nature, and generally progressing towards a destiny of mastering the universe. Such a cultural attribute would continue to generate emerging worldviews as long as emerging theory continually informs mankind about the universe.

As we begin to explore this topic, we first become acquainted with what constitutes the concept of worldview. We need to ask what are the elements that form and contribute to a personal human understanding of the world and how is this view constructed? The choice of the word "view" in worldview is in itself very instructive; for view is the perception one has of his or her surroundings. To understand the concept of worldview we ought to begin by agreeing that an established personal view of the world is a holistic personal explanation of the human experience constructed on previous knowledge and understanding and informed by our daily life. Knowledge and understanding is created from interaction with the world. The philosopher Stephen Pepper (1942) describes this process of learning as contextualism and explains this as a way of creating knowledge and understanding as a result or outcome of events,

actions, incidents, triumphs, tragedies, and other interconnected experiences as referents of causality. He articulated this process as one where we assemble understanding and belief about the world from our ability to interconnect experiences from multiple settings or in a context of actions and reactions, events and responses, and the human's capacity to share meaning from common experiences. People experience life as connected episodes, not as separate and isolated events occurring out of context. Human beings consider life events in context as they engage senses and reason to assemble experiences into a plausible worldview. For our purposes, then, a worldview is an understanding of the world constructed by the individual through information obtained through his or her interaction with the environment, other people, social interaction, and personal experience. This definition of worldview serves to connect clusters of related experiences in an orderly explanation of the world which can be maintained as long as it functions effectively in one's personal response to the world.

A worldview consists of categories developed to provide reference for experiences and events, reactions to incidents, and causes to effects that people observe in everyday life. These are referenced by the dichotomy of the human drama where conflict is the reality expressed as good or evil in life and death, truth and lies, justice and injustice, sacred and profane, cruelty and mercy, love and hate, poverty and wealth, greed and generosity, and so forth. In an attempt to control evil, social institutions have evolved to establish rules, values, and norms as a common expression shared by a group of people. Such institutions establish a shared worldview that can grow into a cultural phenomena, shared and codified, made sacred and infallible, and socially affective. Such worldviews are fundamentally grounded and expressed by the individual within his or her social context. Such worldviews further serve us by providing a unique, personal understanding shared by individuals who, together, define and inform the individual regarding who they are in relationship to everything they encounter on all levels of existence. It provides a person with a developed perspective on the nature of reality, knowledge and knowing, values, norms, ethics, beauty, evil, justice, and so on. These commonly shared qualities are what build identity and group people. Worldview, as such, defines

both personal and shared sets of beliefs and understandings of the world that establishes identity.

Identity is attached to self concept or image and is important because we operate through self-referential tests. Here we must pause to gain some idea about self. It is necessary to describe the concept "myself" before we can explore the relationship of the concepts of worldview and identity. "My" as opposed to "your" is probably one of the first dualities the individual encounters when we first realize that there are many "selves" that populate the world. The idea of self is a shared common understanding that every human being knows intimately. We experience the development of our self, the teaching or learning of our self, and the expression of our self, so much so, that each of us has a self identity that is generated over a lifetime of learning and experiences. Individual experiences are the normal outcome of interaction with the world. To each of us they are unique and defining. As interaction occurs and experience begins to inform self, a consciousness of the way the world operates around us leaves impressions on "myself" that informs worldview.

> Institutions...transfer a mission from one generation to the next.

As an individual's "self" interacts with the world, he or she learns that there are many selves that exist separately from "myself." Questions arise such as, "how do I know myself amongst these other selves? How am I an individual?" The individual becomes a unique and distinct person built and shaped over time through interactions with the world. The self remembers, it categorizes and organizes the attributes, characteristics, and experiences it develops within the world and makes sense of it through references to others, their beliefs, accepted norms, social values, and emotions. The universal result of this interaction within the context of the world is the development of "me," who in turn has a unique identity that informs and provides meaning to self. This God inspired gift to us provides people with the ability to develop self-image or identity to make an otherwise unintelligible world meaningful, livable and, to a degree, understandable (Miller, 1956).

So far this exploration of worldview has rightfully centered

on a systematic approach that is philosophical in nature. The exploration has centered on the individual's attempt to create a logical system to build meaning and understanding in his or her life we call a worldview. Humankind naturally seeks a philosophical system that rationalizes experiences to provide comprehensive and consistent answers to life's fundamental questions. The problem is all philosophical systems provide incomplete answers because they are based in self realization constructed by fallible people.

The counter system to emerging worldviews is theological. Theological systems provide a constructed worldview that informs through revelation. Among these theological systems is the Christian theological system. Christian theology provides the individual person with a worldview where his or her understanding of the world they inhabit is given and received through revelation from God through divinely inspired words that generate faith, trust, understanding, and an explanation of the condition of humanity. This is a competing worldview, not based in reason or rationalism, not based in existential thought, not based in human philosophy or secular humanism generated by fallible people, but established by the very word of the one true God. A God who in spirit and truth calls us to "know My voice." This voice calls us to mission in Lutheran Christian Higher Education.

When we speak of mission in relation to the church, we affirm the idea of God's people sent into the world to witness to the truth, life in Christ and his plan for all nations. In the narrower sense, today the word mission is often used in a more limited secular sense. Mission in this context is used to capsulate an institution's or organization's statement of legitimacy or purpose providing meaning to their activity or task. To be considered a true mission, Lutheran Christian Higher Education would need to present a developed perspective on how the educational institution witnesses to the Christian truth in the context of the purpose of an educational institution of higher learning. This context would include such areas as the nature of reality, knowledge and knowing, values and norms, and requirements of correct and valid ideas. In his book *Introduction to the foundations of Lutheran education*, William Rietschel (2000) posits that, to date, "it…appears that no systematic theoretical

study of Lutheran education has been published either from a theological or philosophical point of view," (p. 45). The status of our collective expression in this area makes this an important topic for us to consider and to give a place of priority on the research agenda of our institutions.

This (article) hopes to spark the beginning of a deeper discussion of the Lutheran Christian mission in higher education. I begin my work on this topic by examining the institutional design of Christian higher education in our current age using theory from institutional studies. Institutional theory is a good beginning for this discussion as it helps to organize higher education into categories that can provide a particular conceptual framework in which to organize the institutional functions of higher education.

The founders of Lutheran colleges and universities in North America were committed to faith and learning, theology and secular studies. Their worldview of higher education was that of a necessary and natural extension of the faithful Christian leader able to read, study, and teach the scriptures in truth and purity. So it followed that education became one of the most influential social expressions of the Lutheran Christian (Simmons, 1998). These founders constructed an institutional framework to maintain a "Lutheran Christian" social structure with all the tenets of a social institution for the purpose to govern the behavior, tasks, and formation of the Lutheran Christian learning community. DiMaggio (1988), in his discussion of the role of power and operation in institutions, argues, "Institutional work is undertaken by actors with material or ideal interests in the persistence of the institution's mission and…(where) such interests are not present and influential, deinstitutionalization occurs" (p. 13). Institutions are created solely to protect and provide a means to transfer a mission from one generation to the next. Giddens (1984) theorized that institutions are repositories or carriers designed to create a reciprocal relationship between structure and social response measured by desirable social behaviors. His theory describes how the cultural formation of institutions represents the persistent or institutionalized aspect of social behavior. The theory is important for us to examine since it speaks to how institutional structures are intentionally designed in specific contexts to perpetuate rather than alter social

behaviors; that is to say, preserve and witness to a mission.

Scott's (1995) theories of institutions are useful as they describe and explain how the designs of institutions work as tools that incorporate cultural symbolic systems. He describes three elements or pillars present in every institution as the main elements that formalize institutional tasks. He labels these categories *regulative, normative,* and *cognitive.* Metaphorically, these pillars support the functions that serve as the repositories and conduits that perpetuate social or cultural tenets. These structures provide stability through legitimacy rather than radical change, transfer cultural meaning rather than loss of identity, and convey commonly held norms and values to members of the community. To these three pillars, I would add one more pillar; let us call it the *affective pillar.* Religious institutions, such as those established to perpetuate a Christian mission, are also concerned with the transference of a spiritual conscience within the social group for the perpetuation and transfer of faith and the sacred. This is the task of spiritual formation that recognizes the holy and imbues the person with symbols of reverence, respect, love, and sacred as well as the antithetical response to these emotions such as hate, vulgarity, irreverence, blasphemy, heresy and so forth.

Closer examination of these four pillars will provide insight into the formal structure of Lutheran Christian higher education. In higher education the *regulative pillar* supports the institutionalization of rules and rule enforcement. Social scientists focusing on regulative processes of institutions interpret the university as rule maker, enforcer, and referee (Scott, 1995). In Lutheran Christian higher education the regulative pillar is set upon a foundation of Biblical truth, the Bible is the source of wisdom. The regulative pillar is cast from sacred and secular law and informs us of governance, authority structures, rules, laws, protocols, procedures, policies, bylaws, constitutions, and requirements for behavior and correct thinking that is consistent with scriptural teachings.

Social scientists who emphasize the *normative pillar* of institutions assert that this view focuses on "normative rules that introduce prescriptive, evaluative, and obligatory dimensions to social life" (Scott, 1995, p. 37). Norms are principles that are commonly held by members of a group who guide and stipulate

what is proper or acceptable. Scott stresses how normative frameworks structure individual choices within the group by stating that "actors conform not because it serves their interests, narrowly defined, but because it is expected of them; so they are obliged to do so" (Scott, 1995, p.39). In Lutheran Christian higher education the normative pillar supports social control of members by coercive aspects of values, norms, and conformity to group defined behavior, character, aesthetics, moral codes of the group, manners, and so forth. This pillar too is cast from law.

The third pillar is the cognitive pillar. The *cognitive pillar* stresses the importance of symbols and the cultural meaning that is embedded in them. Meaning gives purpose to individuals that enable them to construct identity. The cognitive element of institutions deals with the importance of constructing social identities. It provides a framework in which the individual constructs conceptions of who he or she is and how he or she interacts with his or her environment. From these understandings, the participants have guidelines for "sense making and choosing
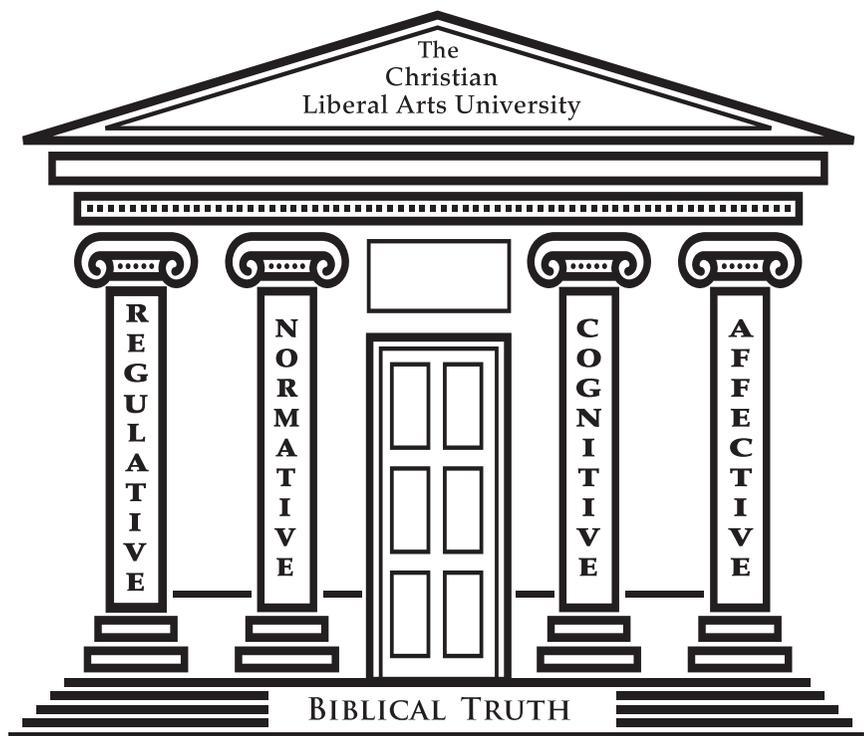

Figure 1: The Four Institutional Pillars Supporting Institutional Legitimacy.

meaningful actions" (Scott, 1995, p. 44). In Lutheran higher education this is the epistemology for knowledge construction, the process of a way of thinking and learning about God's world. This category examines and teaches how we discover truth, sources of knowledge, validity of knowledge, how we know, ethics, nature of reality, and so on. Much of what is distinctly Lutheran in education is to be carved on this pillar. Here is where the transmission of revealed knowledge of God, authority in matters of faith, examination of the reliable and infallible source of knowledge, the destiny of man, and the formation of faith belongs.

The forth pillar I suggest is present in Lutheran Christian higher education to formulate and sensitize a social conscience to transfer the saving work of Christ through *affective* means. D'Andrade (1984) stressed that meaning systems, such as theologies, have an evocative as well as cognitive aspect. These systems evoke feelings, emotions, and desires, but transfer them imbedded within the cultural symbols and their meanings. This fourth pillar, I suggest, is constructed from cathectic or spiritual elements that enter into the institutional foundations of a cultural group through spiritual and emotion-laden elements transferred through practices that provide logic of action. Through time these could form a sort of habits of the heart and soul. Lively and Heise (2004) demonstrated that emotions are often reflected in the spiritual elements of social institutions and can span multiple sociological realities. Their study indicated that emotions are transferable and can be used by social groups

Regulative	Normative	Cognitive	Affective
Authority or control given by rules, laws, governance systems, protocols, procedures, policies, bylaws, constitutions, and so forth. The law codified and made explicit.	*Authority or control by coercive aspects of values, norms, conformity to group defined behavior, moral codes of the group, manners, and so forth. Expressions of the law.*	*Action rooted in Christian socially embedded categories, causal connections, social routines, cultural categories of learning, cultural identities, truth seeking, Christian isomorphism, and so forth.*	*Action motivated by the Gospel as expresses by emotion or significance attached to Christian symbols and evident in ministry, love, sacred practices, recognition of holy, worship, and so on.*

Table 1: **Elements of the Institutional Pillars.**

to motivate behavior of individual participants. Here reside our worship and devotional practices as response to God for the gift of the Gospel. Here is where the Gospel resides in the realm of higher education to identify us as Christian, and in particular our Lutheran Christian mission of sharing the truth of Jesus Christ's saving work for all nations.

If persistence of mission is a preferred state or quality for our institutions engaged in Lutheran Christian higher education, then monitoring and assessing how mission is regulated through our organization's institutional environment should be important. Perhaps a beginning point for us is to examine how the regulative, normative, cognitive, and affective social and cultural systems of our institutions support what is Lutheran Christian in our colleges and universities and to what extent do they support persistence in the mission of Lutheran Higher Education. Perhaps it is here we begin to discern if our students can hear and know the voice of God in the midst of competing emerging worldviews. Do we faithfully present the Lutheran Christian worldview as we carry out the mission?

The mission of Lutheran Christian Higher Education is still to witness the truth to emerging worldviews. If at the heart of mission we mean the declaration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, then the mission of the Lutheran Christian University remains the true understanding for seekers of a worldview that cannot be shaken, that is unchangeable, that is eternal, and that exceeds the understanding of mankind. It is a worldview that expresses the peace of God, real truth, and life eternal to all who know his voice. *LEJ*

References

DiMaggio, P. (1988). Interest and agency in institutional theory. In L. Zuker (Ed.) *Institutional patterns and organizations: Cultural and environment* (pp. 3-21), Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Lively, K. & Heise, D. (2004). Sociological realms of emotional experience. *American Journal of Sociology.* 109: 1109-1136.

Miller, A. (1956). Philosophic basis of a Lutheran philosophy of education. In *Thirteenth Yearbook of the Lutheran Education Association*. Ed. By Bickel, L. and Surburg. River Forest, IL: Lutheran Education Association.

Pepper, S. (1942). *World hypothesis: A study in evidence.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Rietschel, W. (2000). *Introduction to the foundations of Lutheran education.* St. Louis, MO: Concordia Academic Press.

Scott, R. (1995). *Institutions and organizations.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kevin J. Brandon, Ed.D. *serves as Associate Professor of Education at Concordia University, Ann Arbor, Michigan. His research interests include Christian Higher Education, specifically in the areas of organizational and institutional theory and the use of action research models in educational research to improve K-12 schools. He has also written new curriculum for the MS in Educational Leadership program at Concordia, Ann Arbor.*

Book Review: Explore Evolution. The Arguments For and Against Neo-Darwinism

by Paul A. Zimmerman

Explore Evolution. The Arguments For and Against Neo-Darwinism. *By Stephen Meyer, Scott Minnich, Jonathan Moneymaker, Paul Nelson, and Ralph Seelke. Hill House Publishers, Melbourne and London, 2007, 160 pages, Paperback, $39.95. (Available from Discovery Institute, www.discovery.org)*

The year 2009 will mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his influential book *On the Origin of Species*. The years have not been kind to evolutionary theory. Modern advances in microbiology and biochemistry in recent years have demonstrated the theory's inability to account for the origin of life and of all living organisms. The scientific evidence points to what has been termed *Intelligent Design*, the mark of a Creator.

However, defenders of the philosophy of materialism and neo-Darwinism are waging a strong defense of evolutionary theory. In particular they have strongly opposed scientific evidence against the theory being introduced into textbooks and the classrooms of public schools. Their argument is that to speak of "intelligent design" is to introduce religion into the classroom. They ignore the fact that materialism is also a religion.

The authors of the new volume *Explore Evolution* have produced a book which should allow both sides of the argument to be introduced into the public schools. It also supplies a valuable resource for private and church related high schools and colleges. This book is one of the first textbooks ever to use in inquiry-based approach to study evolutionary theory. It does so by presenting the current evidence and arguments for and against the key ideas of modern Darwinian theory. The student is left to draw his own conclusions, based on the scientific evidence.

Key elements of the theory are presented in separate

chapters. The arguments supporting neo-Darwinism are given first. This is called "The Case For." Then follows a section presenting the scientific evidence that has led many scientists to challenge the theory. This is called "The Reply." Then follows a section evaluating the status. This is called "Further Debate."

Stephen C. Meyer is the lead author. He holds a doctorate in the Philosophy of Science and also degrees in Physics and Geology. He is currently the Director and Senior Fellow of the Center for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle. The other authors are biology professors or philosophers of science. All have specialized in studying evolution and have reservations about various aspects of current evolutionary theory.

Darwin's theory of the origin of species became known as the Theory of Universal Common Descent. He believed that every living organism on earth ultimately had descended from a single common ancestor sometime in the distant past. He taught that the "Tree of Life" began as a single one-celled organism that gradually developed and changed over many generations into ever new and more complex organisms. The mechanism he proposed for this process he called "Natural Selection." He observed that organisms varied in their traits. These random changes gave some organisms a slight advantage. These more fit living forms survived as the "fittest." These inherited adaptations eventually caused populations to change and develop new living forms.

Darwin did not know about mutations. These were discovered in the twentieth century. Mutations are randomly arising changes in genetic material. Modern evolutionary theory, called neo-Darwinism, reaffirms the concept of Universal Common Descent and the creative power of Natural Selection. It incorporates into the argument the new information about mutations and their effect on heredity.

On the face of it, Darwinism requires more faith than does the doctrine of creation. It first assumes that a living cell arose on its own from nonliving material. To this day scientists working in the laboratory have been unable to create a living cell from non-living materials. To postulate then that inert materials in some primordial soup produced life forms requires a great leap of faith. Darwin was willing to give the Creator credit for this

first step. Modern atheistic evolutionists are not. But even if one grants the origin of the first simple living cell, the odds of that developing all of the present complicated life forms are beyond calculation.

In reviewing *Explore Evolution* we will briefly describe the challenges to modern Neo-Darwinism that this new text presents.

We turn first to the debate regarding the fossil record. Fossils are the remains or impressions in the rocks of animal and plant life forms from a former geological age. It is generally agreed that the fossil record shows change over time. Also, more recent animal forms are generally, although not always, more complex than the forms found deeper in the fossil record. However, the fossil record contradicts the neo-Darwinian picture of the evolution of life forms throughout the ages. In reviewing the picture we will use the generally accepted ages of rock strata. It should be noted, however, that the whole concept of great ages is also subject to challenge.

The first problem for evolutionists is that about half of the major animal groups (called phyla) appear suddenly in the geologic record. This took place in the Cambrian age, about 350 million years ago. Darwin's theory predicted that new forms, with many intermediates, would appear gradually over a vast span of time. Instead they appear suddenly and without a host of intermediate forms linking them with earlier forms of life. *Exploring Evolution* quotes paleontologist David Raup of the University of Chicago. Raup writes, "What geologists of Darwin's time, and geologists of the present day actually find is a highly uneven or jerky record; that is, species appear in the sequence very suddenly, show little or no change during their existence, then abruptly go out of the record" (p. 26).

Another paleontologist Niles Eldridge wrote "We paleontologists have said that the history of life supports that interpretation, of gradual adaptive change; all the while knowing that it does not" (p. 32).

To solve the problem evolutionists in more recent times have advocated a new theory called "punctuated equilibrium." According to this concept changes took place in larger, sudden, jumps. This, they claimed, accounts for the absence of intermediate forms in the fossil record. However, the theory

suffers from a fatal flaw. It does not explain how such major changes could have taken place in such a short time. There is no known mechanism for the organismal features required.

Where does this leave us? The fossil evidence does not support Darwin's concept of life forms arising from a single seed and branching into a huge single tree. Rather the picture is more like that of an orchard of separate trees.

In another chapter *Explore Evolution* deals with the difference between what is called "micro-evolution" and "macro-evolution." Darwinists frequently say that evolution is a proven fact. Is this statement true or false? The answer is both "yes" and "no."

Darwin noticed that all organisms vary. No two organisms are exactly alike. Some sheep are woollier than others. There are many varieties of dogs, although all are within the same species. Darwin observed these variations and believed that they provided the raw material for further development into entirely new and different life forms. The argument is that the small scale changes we see in species today can be extended over long periods of time to explain large scale changes. The changes within the limits of a species are referred to as "micro-evolution." No one questions the reality of "micro-evolution." The question is can such variation produce large changes producing new species, genera, families, orders, classes, and phyla?

The authors state, "The question is not whether sheep can become woollier sheep; the question is whether sheep can eventually become sheep dogs…or horses…or camels? In other words can natural selection transform one form of life to a fundamentally different form of life?" (p. 90). This is termed macro-evolution. Critics say that the experimental evidence reveals definite, discoverable limits on what natural selection can do. Producing basic new life forms demands the production of new body forms, new organs. This calls for new information, new genes. There is no evidence that small-scale evolutionary change can be extrapolated to explain large-scale macro evolutionary innovation. Thus evolution is essentially unproven.

It is important to note that microevolution is compatible with the Genesis account of creation. The first chapter of Genesis says that God created living things "according to their various kinds." The Hebrew word for "kind" is "min." In Leviticus 11:13-19 "min" is used to refer to super-families that contain many species.

Variation within the boundaries of the created "kind" is not in conflict with the Biblical teaching of creation. Macroevolution is in conflict with the revealed Word of Scriptures.

The authors next turn to the subject of genetic mutations. These are a source of genetic novelty which can produce changes in the organism. A mutation is a change in the deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) of a cell. DNA is a large, complex molecule that has a long twisted ladder form. The two strands of the helix are linked by four organic bases. Their position on the ladder varies like letters of the alphabet. DNA provides coded assembly instruction for the building of proteins. The section of a DNA molecule that contains such instructions is termed a "gene". Mutations produce a change in the instructions. They can occur when genes are exposed to heat, chemicals or radiation.

It is well know that some bacterial become resistant to antibiotics through mutation. Mutations ultimately affect an organism's shape or structure. By inducing mutations through genetic manipulation, scientists can produce a second set of wings on fruitflies. These wings are useless, however, because no muscles to move the wings are formed. Evolutionists believe that mutations can supply enough genetic information to produce a fundamentally new organism.

...microevolution is compatible with the Genesis account of creation.

Critics of neo-Darwinism point out that mutations are a mixed blessing. Many hamper the molecular machine's ability to function properly. Additional mutants are likely to destroy essential functions and thus prove to be fatal. Moreover, proteins are necessary to produce major biological change. *Explore Evolution* quotes British bacteriologist Alan Linton as writing, "Throughout 150 years of the science of bacteriology, there is no evidence that one species of bacteria has changed into another" (p. 105).

The authors conclude that the kind of mutation that natural selection requires to produce new life forms, namely, large-scale, beneficial mutation does not occur. It is clear that mutations have not turned out to be the information-rich super-variations that neo-Darwinians had hoped for.

The authors also report that while the genes in DNA do carry assembly instruction for building proteins, they do not carry instructions for building body parts out of proteins. Some, as yet unknown, factor controls the final development. This new information renders it even more difficult to believe that higher forms of life developed from simpler lower forms.

Perhaps the most powerful argument that can be presented against evolutionary theory is described by the authors in a chapter titled, "Molecular Machines." The new development is described by Bruce Alberts, former president of the National Academy of Sciences. Alberts states, "We have always underestimated the cells…the entire cell can be viewed as a factory that contains an elaborate network of interlocking assembly lines, each of which is composed of a set of large protein machines…Why do we call the large protein assemblies that underlie cell function 'protein machines?' Precisely because like machines invented by humans…these protein assemblies contain highly coordinated moving parts" (p. 116).

Michael Behe, a biochemist from Lehigh University, is famous for his 1996 book, *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*. He argued that the molecular machines found in living cells were irreducibly complex and could never have been developed by an evolutionary process. He maintained that they were planned. They were the result of "intelligent design" by a planner who knew what the systems would look like when they were completed and then took steps to bring the systems about (Behe, p. 193)[1]

The authors of *Exploring Evolution* carefully avoid the term "intelligent design." They do so because of their intent that their textbook be usable in public schools. To speak of intelligent design is to speak of a designer, a creator. Hence, evolutionists would scream that religion was being taught. Instead, the authors simply present the evidence. They speak of a tiny organic motor found in the cell walls of certain bacteria. The motor turns a spinning whip-like tail called a flagellum. The machine has a rotor, a stator, a drive shaft, O-rings, and bushings. It propels the bacteria about the cell like an outboard motor on a fishing boat.

---

1   Behe, Michael J. (1996). *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*. New York: The Free Press

Then they ask how natural selection could have produced such a complicated molecular machine.

Finally, *Exploring Evolution* has a special section devoted to an evaluation of the evolutionary claim that both mammals and birds are supposed to have descended from reptiles. The authors concede that there are some superficial resemblances between the skeletons of reptiles and mammals. But transforming a reptile into a mammal would involve more than changing some bones along the way. It would involve major changes in internal organs that are very different. Most reptiles lay eggs while mammals carry fertilized eggs in a placenta and bear live young which they nourish by lactation. Another fundamental difference is that reptiles are cold-blooded while mammals are warm-blooded. Furthermore, most reptiles have a three-chambered heart while the hearts of mammals have four chambers. There is no way to reasonably explain how a series of mutations could bridge these fundamental differences in structure. It has been demonstrated that mutations do not produce beneficial large-scale anatomical change. There is simply no convincing evidence that reptiles produced mammals. Similar difficulties arise in attempting to demonstrate how birds may have developed from reptiles.

The authors of *Exploring Evolution* make no closing statement as to how they believe the debate comes out. This is compatible with their announced purpose of presenting both sides of the argument. The say in closing, "Practicing science should be about making a vigorous effort to make true statements about the natural world, using all the evidence we have gathered— whatever its source, wherever it leads." However, in the opinion of this reviewer and a host of other scientists, the evidence points to Intelligent Design, a Creator, and not blind evolution.

Explore Evolution deserves a place in Lutheran junior high schools, high schools and colleges. It will assure the students of a proper perspective on evolutionary theory.

In closing, it is important that we remember that our belief in Creation by God is a matter of faith. Hebrews 11:3 states plainly, "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what is visible." We do not base our stand on the latest scientific research or theory; we base our faith on the Word of God in the Scriptures.

However, Lutheran theologians speak of the "Natural Knowledge of God". The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 1:20 "Since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood by what has been made, so that men are without excuse." *LEJ*

Rev. Dr. Paul A. Zimmerman *served Concordia Teachers College, River Forest (Concordia University Chicago) as Professor of Theology and Science and as its seventh President from 1973–1974. He has served the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod in numerous consultative roles since his retirement and now resides in Traverse City, MI.*

Go … and Teach! The Teacher as Competent Problem Solver

by Jane Buerger

Part 4: Reflective Practice

Everyone has problems. What's his problem? What's *your* problem?

This column marks the fourth and final discussion of the importance of problem solving skills for the classroom teacher. For those of you that have read all or some of the preceding installments, you know that we've been comparing problem solving in the typical classroom to the problem solving process as viewed by mathematicians. We'll begin by reviewing some of the basic points that were made in the first three columns.

First of all, problem solving doesn't necessarily mean that a bad situation has occurred. Mathematically speaking, a *problem* is a new or novel situation, at least for the person who is being asked to solve the problem. When *problem* is defined in this way, it could refer to a student who is disrupting classroom routine or it could refer to an interesting challenge, such as planning a family reading night or working on a new curriculum.

In the past three articles, we've considered some of the qualities that enable a teacher to be a competent problem solver. We began by looking at the importance of having positive dispositions, such as the willingness to implement developmentally appropriate practices and to respect and support diversity. Next we discussed the importance of positive beliefs, such as belief in each student's ability to learn and in oneself as a competent professional. The third column identified a number of basic skills which lead to good problem solving. These include facility in the areas of classroom management, assessment, and technology. This final article considers the role of a teacher as a reflective practitioner.

Problems are part of the life of any classroom teacher, and it helps to have a strategy for attacking them. George Polya (1976), a mathematics professor at Stanford University, identified four steps in the problem solving process. Although he was writing

about mathematical situations, these steps can be applied to many problems, including those in the classroom. Polya's steps are "understanding the problem," "planning a solution," "carrying out the plan," and "looking back." Each of us has encountered mathematics classes and mathematics problems, as a student and/or as a teacher, and each of us is probably aware of the fact that students generally jump immediately to the third step. Students don't really care if they understand the problem, and they don't want to plan a strategy. (For example, the word *altogether* means "add all the numbers in the problem.") The students want to get a solution immediately and, when they are finished, they resist any reminders to check the solution to see if it is reasonable.

In the same way novice teachers tend to make decisions based on impulse as much as on logic (Sprinthall, Reiman, and Thies-Sprinthall, 1996). The ability to reflect seems to grow with age and experience. There are times, of course, when a classroom teacher must act quickly, especially in an emergency, but, even then, once the immediate situation has passed, it helps to think through what happened and what could be done if the same situation would arise again. For example, a teacher who is faced with a "challenging" student may have to respond immediately to prevent the child from harming him/herself or others. Afterwards, however, the teacher should take time first of all to understand the child and what is causing the problematic behavior. Then the teacher can review what was done in the situation, whether or not the action was effective, and what could be done if the behavior is repeated.

Stronge (2002) reports that a number of studies of teacher effectiveness note the importance of reflection. Schoenfeld (1985) has noted that

One of the hallmarks of good problem-solvers' control behavior is that while they are in the midst of working [on] problems, such individuals seem to maintain an internal dialogue regarding the way that their solutions evolve. Plans are not simply made, they are evaluated and contrasted with other possible plans. New pieces of information are sought and then challenged as to potential utility. Solutions are monitored and assessed, and signs of trouble suggest that current approaches might be terminated and others considered. (p. 140).

It is true that Schoenfeld was describing the activities of mathematical problem solvers, but the strategies described: planning, evaluating, challenging, monitoring, assessing, and possibly terminating, may well be part of the reflective process of an effective teacher. In terms of classroom problem solving, reflection can serve as a means to understand a situation, to plan a strategy for reacting to the situation, and for assessing the effectiveness of the strategy as well as a plan for approaching a similar situation in the future.

Reflection happens in a number of ways, and what works for one teacher may be overly tedious to another. Some teachers keep journals; some prefer to work mentally, keeping only minimal notes or no written record at all. Emig (1977) points out the value of the physical act of writing. She cites Bruner's (1966) claim that learning can be optimized by providing for enactive, iconic, and symbolic activities. Actual writing can provide for learning by engaging the hand, the eyes, and the brain. Of course, the same can be said for word-processing, and there are some who do their best reflection in the shower or while doing chores—when writing is impossible! The important point is that reflection is necessary so that a teacher does not repeat the same unsuccessful strategy over and over.

Reflection can be combined with external information. Professional reading can provide ideas for dealing with problems. It can also be useful to seek feedback from other teachers, administrators, and sometimes from the students themselves. In the interest of better serving the students, a teacher should be willing to seek and accept suggestions and constructive criticism and then review the advice honestly and with an open mind.

According to Stronge, reflection has long-term benefits for the teacher and ultimately for his/her students. As a teacher encounters novel experiences (problems), s/he is likely to develop an arsenal of solutions that can be used to solve future problems. This will lead to additional positive results in similar situations and give the teacher new confidence in his/her ability to aid children in learning and understanding.

For those of us who are teaching in Lutheran schools, there is an added advantage. Reflective practice is a powerful complement to prayer, Bible study, and meditation on Scriptural truth. As we continue to grow in our professional skills, we can

look to our God to guide us to actions that will best serve His children. *LEJ*

References

Bruner, J. S. (1966). *Toward a theory of instruction*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Emig, J. (1977). Writing as a mode of learning. *College Composition and Communication* (28) 122-128.

Polya, G. (1973). *How to solve it* (2nd ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Schoenfeld, A. H. (1985). *Mathematical problem solving*. San Diego: Academic Press.

Sprinthall, N. A., Reiman, A. J. & Thies-Sprinthall, L. (1996). Teacher professional development. In J. Sikula, T. J. Buttery, & E. Guyton (Eds.), *Handbook on research in teacher education* (2nd ed.). (pp. 666-703). New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan.

Stronge, J. H. (2002). *Qualities of effective teachers*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Jane Buerger *serves as Dean of the College of Education, Concordia University-Chicago. She may be contacted at jane.buerger@cuchicago.edu.*

Administrative Talk … From Acorns to Oaks

By Glen Kuck

It's often hard to visualize the students in our schools someday becoming adults. Maybe it's because of the immature things students do. Year after year teachers and principals are exposed to some of the same evidence—childish arguments, absent-minded forgetfulness, lack of organizational skills, inarticulate speech—that makes us wonder if some students will ever be ready for the demands placed upon them as adults.

Occasionally a child's immaturity simply defies logic. John Wilmot once said, "Before I was married I had six theories about bringing up children; now I have six children and no theories." Some things never change. Wilmot lived back in the 17th century.

I've often thought that if it weren't for kids, I'd have a great job. Just give me a school that has classrooms with empty desks and chairs, some textbooks, and an office desk with a little bit of paperwork on it. I'd be a great principal.

But obviously, children are the reasons for a school's existence. They're the lifeblood of both schools and homes.

With the birth of every child, no matter what the circumstances, the potentiality of the human race is born again. And with each new child comes the enormous responsibility placed upon adults to nurture that human life.

When Martin Luther was a boy growing up in Eisenach, he liked the principal, John Trebonius, because he treated the students with respect. The story goes that whenever Trebonius entered his classroom, he removed his hat and bowed to the students. When he was asked about this, he replied, "Among these young pupils sit some whom God may make our future leaders and great men. Though we do not know them now, it is proper that we should honor them." (p. 12)

A few years ago we had a former Chicago

Bear football player come to our school to speak with our seventh and eighth graders. He quietly entered the classroom, walked slowly to the front, and surveyed the students. After about twenty seconds of silence, he said, "I don't know any of you, but as I look at you, I see doctors, lawyers, and business leaders. I see great people." I'm sure the students appreciated those words of unconditional acceptance. Inner city youths hear that kind of thing too seldom.

It's obvious from the Gospels that Jesus had a special place in His heart for children. Recall the time Jesus' disciples were arguing among themselves about who was the greatest. Jesus responded by simply calling a child over to Him and telling the disciples that they wouldn't enter the Kingdom of heaven unless they changed and became like children.

Jesus didn't define greatness in terms of accomplishments, but rather in terms of being—being a child of God.

With that in mind, it's imperative for principals to do what they can to instill a sense of worth in each child, to help the child to be accepting of himself and therefore of others, and to inspire the child to be confident in himself and in His God.

Principals do that in subtle ways such as smiles, handshakes, and pats on the back. They also do it in more overt ways such as by conversations they have with individual children. Hearing a principal's words of affirmation can do wonders to help a child overcome the self-doubts that are a part of childhood. When a principal takes time to talk to a student at a deeper level than just, "How are you?" the child is better able to see his own worth.

David Johnson writes about constructive ways in which feedback, both positive and negative, can be given to help others feel valued. Among the things he notes is that people should be specific in their praise; they should share their perceptions and feelings, but not their advice; feedback should focus on the person's behavior, not the personality; and that the feedback should be descriptive, not judgmental. He summarizes by saying, "Remember that the purpose of feedback is to increase other people's self-awareness and feelings that 'I am liked, I am respected, I am capable, I am valued.' To invest in a relationship by providing accurate and realistic feedback is a sign of caring and commitment." (pp. 60-61)

Every student has the right to feel a part of the school family. Every student has the right to be accepted as an individual. Every student has the right to intelligent, loving guidance by the principal.

Those little students in our schools will grow up fast enough. They may someday be bigger, stronger, and wiser than we. But that in itself isn't the reason to give students our respect. We honor children not for what they someday will be, but for what they are now, children of God. *LEJ*

References:

Johnson, David W. (2006). *Reaching Out: Interpersonal Effectiveness and Self-Actualization.* Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Paulos, Victor. (1966). *Luther, Servant of God*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House.

Glen Kuck *serves as principal of St. Paul Lutheran School in Chicago. He may be contacted at **gtkuck@gmail.com**.*

DCE Expressions ... The Ministry of Presence

by Debra Arfsten

It was May, 2007 and I had just returned from a trip to Hungary when I received a voice mail message from the father of one of my students, Janet. Since it's not typical to receive calls from parents of college students, I knew something must be wrong. I called him and soon learned that Janet was in the hospital, having been diagnosed with a brain tumor just a few days earlier. I immediately went to the hospital and thus began a long journey with Janet and her family. Brain surgery two days later revealed a large tumor, and while not malignant, it was determined that it was the type of tumor that would always grow back. Janet recovered well from her surgery, and began her DCE internship in Hawaii three months later. We thought all was well. During the following year, Janet's symptoms reappeared and we spent many hours on the phone as she would call to talk about her pain, and her fears, and cry, and pray. My supervision visits to Hawaii included a lot of conversation about ministry, but a larger part of our time was spent in me just being present with her, to help her in her struggles, to listen, to talk, and to pray with her. It was all I could do. There were many times in the last several months that I truly felt helpless. I couldn't guarantee she would get well. I couldn't promise she'd have a future in DCE ministry that she so earnestly desired. I couldn't make the pain go away. All I could do was be there.

When I moved from parish ministry into the university setting, I wondered what "ministry" would look like…or, in fact, if it would actually exist in this academic setting. After all, I was here to teach and administrate a program. What I discovered very early on was that the group of DCE students that come to Concordia very quickly become my "congregation" that I serve, and I have been amazed and blessed by the opportunities to be present with them as they go through health

issues, school issues, relationship issues, homesickness, and so much more. I've been humbled at the opportunities God has given me to counsel and guide these young people, and while at times it causes great weariness, I wouldn't have it any other way. In the midst of preparing for classes, teaching, grading papers, attending meetings, and doing paperwork, the true ministry of my position is in the hearts and lives of all I am privileged to teach.

In the parish, it is easy to get caught up in many of the same things: meetings, preparation for events, writing Bible studies and devotions, organizing youth events, selecting curriculum, and so much more. Yet behind all the tasks that are required to "do" ministry, I am reminded that ministry is about people—their needs, their desires, their struggles and challenges, their sorrows and joys. That's it. God calls us to serve His people in whatever place we are in, and sometimes that means we just put the tasks aside for awhile and just be present with them and for them.

Look around the table at your next Board of Parish Education meeting. What is going on in the lives of the people sitting around you? Is someone struggling with a family issue? Or some sort of addiction? Or maybe a spiritual issue? Do you know what's going on in the hearts of those you serve with? How can you be present for them in a way that goes beyond the business of the meeting?

Or maybe you're teaching in a classroom. Do you know what struggles the children are facing? What about the young boy who just lost his dad in an accident? What about the child in a family who lives in a home in poor condition? What about the little girl who seems to have no friends and spends time alone on the playground? What about the other teachers on your staff? Is there a way you can be God's presence for them?

So, back to Janet. Do I share this story to make you sad? Absolutely not! Here's the end of this story, at least to this point. In the early part of this past summer, Janet's pain was so bad she ended up having to go home to her family in Washington and ultimately had a second brain surgery in July. This journey has been a test of faith for Janet, her family and friends, and certainly for me. I prayed so often, asking God for some understanding of why this was happening and what all of us were supposed to learn in this process. God seemed to be silent

for so long, and yet I knew He was always there. Recently, I had the opportunity to visit Janet for a couple of days while I was out in the Northwest. We spent a lot of time walking and talking, and sometimes just walking and being silent. She seemed to appreciate my presence, and I certainly valued the opportunity to be with her and her family. Only a couple of weeks after I left, it was determined that her tumor hadn't grown any more since her recent surgery, and she was free to go about her life as she desired. She accepted a call to her internship congregation in Hawaii and has been lovingly welcomed back by them. Her recent installation as a DCE was a great celebration. While we all know her health status can change at any time, we are grateful for a loving God who has cared for her and provided her with family, friends, and congregation who have supported her and prayed for her every step of the way. They have truly been present in her life.

Who are those special people in your life that God has given to be present for you? Give thanks to God for each one of them. And who can you be present for today? Look for those opportunities of ministry that God might surprise you with today. Seek out the ways you can be the light of Christ for someone who really needs that right now. God calls us to be in community with one another, and that frequently means that we put our own agenda (or the church's) aside for awhile in order to be an example of God's presence on this earth. Is it always convenient? Definitely not. Is it always worthwhile? Absolutely. Thanks be to God that He is always present with us! *LEJ*

Debra Arfsten, *Associate Professor of Leadership and Director of the DCE program at Concordia University Chicago may be reached at* ***debra.arfsten@cuchicago.edu.***

Today's Lutheran Educator ... A Climate of Change

by Jonathan C. Laabs

A new American president begins his first term on a platform of change, promising new direction for America regarding the economy, participation in wars, health care, and security.

Our world is increasingly becoming interdependent as the lines that divide countries are blurred by international travel, telecommunications, and humanitarian concerns.

The concept of "social networking" has become integrated into the fabric of communication, bringing together people from all walks of life, in all corners of the globe.

Our places of ministry are training grounds for children, youth, and adults who find themselves immersed in a world of change, exemplified by the three observations above and many more. Though sometimes feeling isolated in a community that may be removed from large populations or distant from the "mainstream" of innovation, literally *all* schools, congregations, and Lutheran education organizations are today places where the climate of change can be measured and developed. To what extent are we as Lutheran educators willing and able to adapt to the global climate in which we serve and *create* the climate most effective for ministry?

Church bodies are in important, strategic positions to create a climate for changes that are essential to the future of effective ministry. While congregations have organized under a common mission, and on the basis of God's Word, to form systems that assist them in carrying out their ministry, the structure and governance of Lutheran church bodies have experienced constant revisions through the decades. It is fitting that adjustments are made to address current challenges and to anticipate *with vision* the challenges and opportunities of the future.

During the past triennium, The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod has been very intentional

in its efforts to look forward and suggest changes that will best support the mission and ministry of the Church. The Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance was appointed in 2005 to study the critical elements and to establish a process by which changes could be considered by the LCMS. Its initial report and proposals for consideration and discussion were made public in August 2008. The process involving all districts and widespread member input leading to the 2010 convention continues.

In a developing "climate of change," the LCMS has an opportunity to fix a significant problem that has not adequately been addressed during the past few decades. During that period, those who are neither clergy nor lay (currently designated as Ministers of Religion – Commissioned) have not been allowed to vote at district or Synodical conventions. This dis-enfranchisement has been challenged at many previous conventions, but has typically been "declined," "deferred," or not brought to the floor for debate for a variety of reasons. Affecting over 6000 LCMS professional church workers (all of whom are, as defined in the LCMS Constitution and Bylaws, full *members* of Synod), this lack of action has limited the full participation and leadership of many who have been prepared for such a purpose.

Among the most important reasons for a change in the voting structure to include Commissioned Ministers:

1. Being a member of the Synod is a privilege. Opportunities to serve as voting delegates should be a member benefit made available to *all* who are privileged to serve.

2. Attracting and retaining individuals to professional church work as Commissioned Ministers—including teachers, DCEs, DCOs, deaconesses, and Certified Lay Ministers—is more challenging than ever. Uplifting and supporting those ministers as *full* participant members of the Church is critical to growing a healthy churchworker base.

3. Commissioned ministers are significant resources for the Church. They received Synodical training and serve in a number of essential ministry capacities. They need to be heard and have a voice by every available means.

4. The LCMS has changed. The ability for Commissioned Ministers to vote has not. Despite the topic being raised through overtures to many conventions, discussion has rarely reached

the convention floor. Opportunities for open consideration and resolution have been denied at the level they are most needed.

New ideas and recommendations for inclusion of Commissioned Ministers as voting delegates have been formally proposed at the district level and endorsed by the Lutheran Education Association Board of Directors. Many other suggestions will be discussed in coming months. As the "climate of change" continues to grow in our Church, our communities and the world, this may well be the time for the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod to take the bold steps that are necessary for engaging Commissioned Ministers in the decision-making process. *LEJ*

Jonathan C. Laabs, Ed.D. *is the Executive Director of the Lutheran Education Association. He may be contacted at* ***laabsjc@lea.org***.

Multiplying Ministries … Janus or Jesus

by Rich Bimler

How appropriate for the New Year to begin again with the month of January.

Of course, we know that January was derived from the Roman god, Janus, the double-headed god of beginnings and endings. Our society encourages us to use January as the time to look back and forward and to evaluate where we've been, where we're going, and what changes we can make to provide for better travels throughout the new year.

So, in the spirit of this season, as we look ahead to 2009, let's consider some seasoned suggestions to stimulate our senses:

1. Laugh at yourself daily…and share your laughter with others.
2. Watch as many sunrises and sunsets as you can. And remember, "The rising sun is no less beautiful than the setting sun."
3. Compliment 5 people every day…Those you know and those you do not know.
4. Work hard at remembering peoples' names. It makes life so much more personal. (And it is really, really important to remember the names of your family members.)
5. "Give thanks *in* all circumstances, for this is of God" (Thessalonians 5:18) Notice that it does not say "Give thanks *for* all circumstances..." There is a difference.
6. Do nothing. Just sit for a while, somewhere, someplace, and marvel at how much God loves you in Christ Jesus.
7. Be the first to say "hi" to someone. It can start the day right for two people immediately.
8. Live beneath your means. With the current economy, this might be easier than you had thought.
9. Be patient with yourself. And relax; you are never going to have a perfect day, on your own.

10. Learn to be cheerful, even when you do not feel like it.
11. Do not rain on other people's parades. Let others hear the cheers once in a while, instead of the jeers.
12. Do not waste an opportunity to tell someone that you love him or her. Those words can turn someone's life around.
13. Pray this prayer often: "Lord, make me the kind of person my dog thinks I am."
14. Never give up on anyone; Miracles still happen. (Except at Wrigley Field.)
15. Be kinder than you have to be. Why not pay the toll for the person in the car behind you? Or, pick up your neighbor's morning paper and place it closer to the front door. Or stop a little one in the school hallway just to tell her that she looks awesome today.
16. Forget the Joneses. They probably are not able to make their mortgage payments either.
17. Remember that three of the most important things you can do for people are: encourage, encourage, encourage.
18. Catch people doing things *right*.
19. Do a lot of walking, especially with the Lord.
20. See every day as a day to give away, to others.

This list should keep us busy, at least for a few months. However, if you are like I am, there is still something missing. If the Roman god Janus wants me to look backward and forward at the beginnings and endings, all I see, quite honestly, is the same old pattern of me trying to improve my life, to be happy, smile more, eat less, and on and on, but the bottom line still is that I often fail miserably at turning my life around. I might be a nicer guy for a day or two, but after that, back to the old sinful self.

And this is where we need to add a final "suggestion" to our list above: Here it is: Even when we do not follow the 20 suggestions above, and even when we fail to live up to our potential, and even when we do not feel good about ourselves (let alone other people!), we Rejoice in the fact that Jesus Christ loves us and forgives us of our sins and allows us to live joyfully in His Promise of Life and Salvation, forever.

Now that's something to live for. Now that's something

that is a given. Now that's something that really turns our lives around.

Life with God is no longer about living up to God's expectations, or others. Now it is about living expectantly, keeping alert to all of the ways that God will meet us in Jesus, the Christ.

Janus or Jesus? I choose Jesus, because He first chose me. **LEJ**

Dr. Richard Bimler *is past president of Wheat Ridge Ministries and Ambassador of Health, Hope, and Aging for Lutheran Life Communities. He may be contacted at rich@wheatridge.org or* ***RBimler@lutheranlifecommunities.org.***