



Shaping the Future



- Winter 2012 ▾
- Letters ▾
- Features ▾
- Networks ▾
- Resources ▾
- Conferences
- LEA Home

K.I.D.S. Count helps children recognize God's blessings and learn how to give from the heart.

K.I.D.S. Count
Lives in Sharing God's Blessings

Stewardship curriculum for kindergarten through eighth grade.

Learn more at www.icefkids.org



Surrounded by a Cloud of Witnesses

by Greg Hasseldahl

For times like these...we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses who have walked our path in a different time and in different ways, but the commonalities are eerie. Take heart! We all share the human condition. We learn this truth from God's Word:

And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.

HEBREWS 11:39-12:2A ESV



Last fall I happened upon a commemorative booklet by the 18 members of the graduating class of 1911 from Concordia Teacher's College in Seward, Nebraska. This is a collection of reflections 25 years after their training on the prairie. As the days and years begin to pile up, the tendency may be to become a bit more reflective, and part of this reflection can be to consider all those Lutheran educators who have come before.

Twenty-five years later some of those from the class of 1911 were still in ministry, others had changed vocation to the secular world, and two had already been called home. What struck me most in these histories is the similarity of the experiences of those church workers with our experiences today. While it is unlikely that we fear actually being tarred and feathered by townspeople (like P. Gabbert, who taught with a revolver in his hip pocket) the usual progression of their lives remains delightfully similar to ours.

What struck me most in these histories is the similarity of the experiences of those church workers with our experiences today.

So are there there any differences between the class of 1911 and the class of 2011?

Each of us will answer this question from the perspective of our personal history more than from the perspective of our shared history, but the shared history is key to seeing the blessings that God has bestowed on His people. In this commemorative booklet one sees that individuals are given into marriage, children are born, calls are issued, accepted and declined... but through it all, the essential fabric remains intact. God provides all that is needed to support this body and life.

We recognize that the changes in the world around us, as well as those within our Lutheran Schools, have been sweeping. Technology aside, the most significant change has been the prevailing attitude in many local ministries which has moved from that of raising children within the Lutheran community to reaching those around us. This change is God

Teaching For Life®

Teaching For Life is a unique, Gospel-centered, positive way to help Lutheran school teachers (PK-8) apply God's Word to the life issues!

Teaching For Life teaches nine key For Life concepts and gives ideas on how to integrate them into religion, math, social studies, etc.

Teaching For Life provides you with all you need to teach a key life concept each month

www.lutheransforlife.org

Review, Reflect, Resolve

How well do you know the history of your school? Has anyone recorded it, or is it buried in minutes or newsletters? Why might it be worth time to find a person who could put together a history document? Where is God in the history of your school? What would you like the high points in the history of your school to be 25 years from now? 50 years? More?

Other articles you might be interested in in this issue of Shaping the Future:

Questions Push Us Farther than Answers by [Dr. Patrick Ferry](#) (Feature)

Teaching Why You Believe What You Believe by [Brad Alles](#) (Feature)

Writing Across the Curriculum by [Denise Rice](#) (ETnet)



pleasing, but brings with it countless new challenges.

The historian's adage is that those who don't learn from history may be doomed to repeat it, or at least believe that what they are experiencing is novel and unique. The way we reflect on our situation and the work we share affects the way we live out our vocation as ministers and our profession as teachers in Lutheran Schools.

Back in 1982 Crosby, Stills and Nash sang:

*Look around me I can see my life before me
Running rings around the way it used to be
I am older now I have more than what I wanted
But I wish that I had started long before I did*

*And there's so much time to make up everywhere you turn
Time we have wasted on the way
So much water moving underneath the bridge
Let the water come and carry us away*

A lot of water has passed under the bridge, and there are two ways of standing on the bridge. One can peer upstream or look downstream. Lutheran educators spend so much time looking upstream that perhaps we miss the benefits and blessings of looking downstream. Much of our time and energy is spent forecasting, looking for trends, seeing the changes in our profession and in the people we serve, or could serve. This is good, right, and salutary, but taking time to look downstream serves to instruct us that people have not really changed all that much. We see our shared history and human nature. Looking downstream can show the mundane routines, and the wrenching hardships, that have come before us. It can also reveal the shared joys and blessings. This is encouraging because it frees us to revel in who we have been, who we are as God's dearly beloved, and to anticipate with great joy those servants yet to follow.

Taking time to look downstream serves to instruct us that people have not really changed all that much. We see our shared history and human nature.

A wise man of God was inspired to write this regarding what he had seen of life:

*What has been is what will be,
and what has been done is what will be done,
and there is nothing new under the sun.
Is there a thing of which it is said,
"See, this is new?"
It has been already
in the ages before us.
There is no remembrance of former things,
nor will there be any remembrance of later things
yet to be among those who come after.*

We are further encouraged by this truth:

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

And so we are led to take joy together in knowing:

So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work, for that is his lot.

My prayer is that you are energized to live out your vocation and to share your story with those around you. They may be fascinated to learn that your history and theirs have more in common than one would think. Deo Duce!

Greg Hasseldahl is a member of LEA and an educator who has spent nearly three decades serving schools in the midwest.

Photos courtesy Kathryn Brewer.



ShapingtheFuture is published three times a year by Lutheran Education Association and distributed to members of LEA.
All material included in ShapingtheFuture is the property of Lutheran Education Association and may not be reproduced without permission.

Copyright © 2012 Lutheran Education Association.

Lutheran Education Association 7400 Augusta Street, River Forest, IL 60305-1499 Phone: 708-209-3343

Web site: www.lea.org **E-mail:** lea@lea.org

Executive Director: Jonathan C. Laabs, Ed.D.

Director of Publications and Communications: Ed Grube, LL.D.

Executive Assistant: [Kathy Slupik](#)

Editor: [Jill Zempel](#)

Art Director: [Kathryn Brewer](#)

To submit copy, letters to the editor, or media for review, contact [Ed Grube](#)

For ShapingtheFuture advertising rates and schedule, contact [Jonathan Laabs](#)

