



Shaping theFuture

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Life in the Real World

by *Steven Buuck*

I am penning this article from 37,000 feet in a Southwest Airlines plane on my way back to Las Vegas from Milwaukee. From this vantage point in my window seat, I have a “plane’s eye” view of the world as I fly over several towns with Lutheran high schools in them. It all looks so peaceful down in the “real world.” But as a denizen of the U.S. and principal of a Lutheran high school, I know it is anything but.

When I was first asked to write this article, my sole intention was to provide concrete examples of how Lutheran high schools prepare their students for life in the “real world.” Upon further reflection, I realized it is important to note that the “real world” is alive and well in our Lutheran high schools. Some of our students are fully developed in their Christian faith while others have never heard of our Savior. We have an incredible mission field brought into our schools each day.

Truthfully, most Lutheran high schools have students who have experimented with alcohol, drugs, sex, and tobacco. Additionally, other than murder (although by Luther’s definition even that, too!), I have seen all ten commandments broken repeatedly by students (and, truth be told, by faculty, staff, and administrators). I have been involved in discipline cases of students involved in graffiti, disrespect, stealing, cheating, lying, drinking, smoking, pregnancies, truancy, and bullying. Most of our Lutheran schools have student handbooks filled with rules, which are consistently broken. Thus, the importance of our Lutheran high schools! We get to share Law and Gospel every day! What a blessing!

Yes, we are schools filled with, taught by, and led by sinners. But praise God that there is another side to the reality of Lutheran high schools. We are also schools filled with saints.

Christian worldview. God sends tens of thousands of young people into our Lutheran high schools every day and gives us a chance to share with them the greatest news in the history of the world – that God Himself sent His Son Jesus to save sinners!

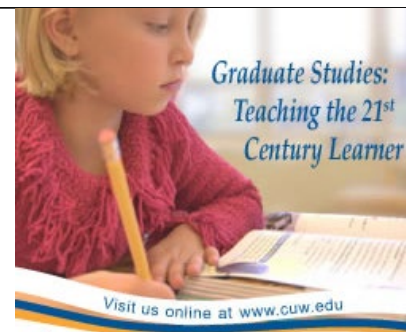
We also have the privilege of trying to prepare them for life beyond our schools; American culture is hostile

Yes, we are schools filled with, taught by, and led by sinners. But praise God that there is another side to the reality of Lutheran high schools. We are also schools filled with saints. I stand amazed at the adults who serve in our schools and care for our Lutheran high school students every day. The patience, wisdom, courage, discernment, strength, and grace with which they serve are nothing short of amazing. I stand amazed at the students who fill our schools. Their bold witness to their Savior Jesus and their commitment to service to their fellow man is truly inspiring.

Our schools are “bubbles” and safe havens to many. Our schools are places where it is safe to be Godly, safe to speak up for Jesus, safe to take Biblical stances on current events, and safe to espouse a

We also have the privilege of trying to prepare them for life beyond our schools; American culture is hostile to the Christian worldview. It takes great courage to live as ambassadors for Christ outside the spiritual safety of our campuses. I have recently spoken with sundry graduates of Lutheran high

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Review, Reflect, Resolve

If someone commented that Lutheran high schools do not reflect life in the “real world,” what would you say?

In your own words, why are Lutheran high schools important? Does your answer reflect Law, Gospel, or both?

Of what value are Lutheran high schools to the “real world?”

Links & Resources

A [pdf](#) of Lutheran school statistics



Other articles you might be
interested in in this issue of
ShapingtheFuture:

[Who Advocates for the Church Worker?](#) by *Julie Pallas* (Feature)

[Dysfunctional no longer: Dealing with dysfunctional boards and board members](#) by *Paul Brandt* (LEADnet)

[Recognizing the Gifts of the Spirit](#) by *Jeffrey E. Burkart* (PEN)

to the Christian worldview. schools and asked them how their Lutheran high school prepared them for life in college and beyond. Students were quick to mention theology classes in which students learn the Old and New Testaments, Christian ethics, Lutheran doctrine, church history, and apologetics. These courses strengthen faith and provide students with tools necessary to lead Christian lives in the real world.

Graduates appreciated how Lutheran high schools reinforce daily devotions as a spiritual habit. Chapels articulating the Gospel with piercing clarity in a relevant ways encourage students to live sanctified lives in response to what Jesus has done for them. Shown forgiveness, students learn to forgive. Rigorously high expectations for academic preparation and behavior prepare students for the discipline needed in the real world. Students learn that they are rewarded for their efforts and held accountable for their actions. Students learn that God has blessed them with unique gifts to serve Him while serving others. Service opportunities are practical ways to teach students to look, learn, and live outside of themselves – everything from the oxymoronic “mandatory volunteer” hours, which some schools have as graduation requirements, to local or international mission trips. These core life lessons have tremendous value to future employers, spouses, churches, and community organizations, and fit them with the full armor of God.



A recent graduate stated, “My (Lutheran high school) education was an invaluable experience that hugely influenced my identity in Christ. I had previously attended a public school, and was desperately in need of spiritual nourishment. I look back and see how God had in mind what I needed and provided it through (my Lutheran high school). If I had gone to a public high school instead, I don't think I would have matured in my faith nearly enough to prepare me for an entire world filled with conflicting worldviews, which I am faced with every day at (my large public university).”

Another added, “The Lutheran high school from which I graduated is, to this day, my favorite place in the world for many reasons but the primary being it is where Jesus came to me, and I completely understood His love for me. Nowhere else can I go in at any time to talk to a teacher or administrator about my personal or faith life.”

Our Lutheran schools provide incredible models of Christian living for our students. Teachers, staff, administrators, coaches, directors, and volunteers influence lives in profound ways. Large or small, Lutheran high schools understand that developing Godly relationships grounded in the grace of Jesus are the key in making our schools special places of preparation for life beyond the walls of our schools.

Infinitely more important, our schools are passionately intentional about preparing students for their future in heaven by sharing the love of Jesus with them. At our Lutheran high schools, the goal is the soul. Yes, Lutheran high schools are devoted to preparing students for future success in college, the workplace, and/or the military. Infinitely more important, our schools are passionately intentional about preparing students for their future in heaven by sharing the love of Jesus with them, by praying for them, by teaching them God's word, by modeling forgiveness, and by providing a Christian culture in which they study, learn, create, grow, develop, think, run, play, act, sing, dance, teach, understand, blog, laugh, collaborate, podcast, design, paint, draw, present, upload, share, explain, read, write, and bask – in the glow of God's grace while loving, worshipping, honoring, and serving Him in the real world on this side of heaven. We look forward to seeing our students succeed in the real world and, most importantly, living next door to us in heaven.

Dr. Steven Buuck is High School Principal at Faith Junior/Senior High School, Las Vegas, Nevada. The author would like to thank selected faculty and students from Lutheran High School North in Macomb, Michigan, and Faith Lutheran Junior/Senior High School, Las Vegas, for their contributions to this article.

Photos courtesy Faith Lutheran Junior/Senior High School, Las Vegas.



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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.

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