



Shaping the Future



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The Best of Times

by Gail Holzer

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us.”

— THE OPENING OF A TALE OF TWO CITIES

What time is it for Lutheran schools? Are we in the best or the worst of times? Are we in the winter of despair, or the spring of hope? Do we have everything before us, or nothing before us?

As a Christian, we know that we are in the “worst of times.” There is murder, theft, destruction, war, and the like in this world where we live, all the result of sin. However, we also know that these “worst” times are finite. They will come to an end because Jesus defeated sin and death; that victory will lead us to the best of times. The best of times, for Christians, is infinite and everlasting. This understanding brings us out of the winter of despair and takes us to the spring of hope.

So, is it the “best” times for Lutheran schools? It may depend on your perspective or maybe your definition. Do we have everything before us? I believe we do.

We have...

1. A PURPOSE: The purpose for our Lutheran schools has not changed. Whether we are teaching Lutherans, non-Lutherans, or the unchurched, we exist to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We would not be needed otherwise; there are plenty of private schools available as alternatives to public education. As long as we are living in the “worst” of times, our purpose will remain. As long as there are people living in the “winter of despair” we have an obligation to take them to Jesus, the “spring of hope.” *“The faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you.”* **COLOSSIANS 1:5**

2. STRONG LEADERSHIP: I see outstanding leadership ready to meet the challenges we face in ministry. The leaders we have in our synod, districts, universities, and schools are highly qualified professionals motivated by the Gospel to move us forward with innovations and ideas. The most impactful part is the doors they are opening in the field of technology. These leaders and institutions share their knowledge and skill so that we can stand-out as academic institutions of excellence. *“Without wise leadership, a nation falls; there is safety in having many advisers.”* **PROVERBS 11:14**

3. TECHNOLOGY: Technology has made it possible for my school to add high school classes. Without it, we couldn’t afford to offer students high quality education courses in every field and content area. With technology and online learning, we can partner with other Lutheran institutions to bring a host of classes, some with college credit, to our students. Technology allows us to collaborate through listservs, Google



In what specific ways is your school in the “best of times?”
In what specific ways is your school in the “worst of times?”
How can you use both perspectives to help your school move to a better future?



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

Gospel Response by Dr. George Guidera (Feature)

How Flexible is Your Early Childhood Program? by Jill Zempel (ECNet)

Social Media Policy by Julian Petzold (LEADnet)



apps, wikis, web sites, and social networks. We are no longer isolated from each other. If I need a document, policy, or advice I can go to my Lutheran colleagues and get immediate feedback from a Christian perspective. *“So we ourselves should support them so that we can be their partners as they teach the truth.”* **3 JOHN 1:8** *“A **network** of interwoven chains festooned the capitals on top of the pillars, seven for each capital.”* **1 KINGS 7:17**

4. FAITH: We believers know that Jesus Christ creates faith in our hearts to make us part of His family; we are His relations, called to build relationships with others. Our schools will be used to grow His family one by one. Now more than ever, people are reaching out to make a connection. Opportunity to build relationships abounds. *“For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”* **EPHESIANS 2: 8, 9**

At a time when most public systems are defunding programs, Lutheran schools can be on the cutting edge, offering what others cannot. Will the public schools eventually catch up? Of course. Then we will be on to the next innovative opportunity to provide students with an excellent Christ-centered education. People may be finally learning that money is not the answer in providing a good education: teachers of faith with a purpose, supported by leaders with resources are the answer. It is the “best of times” for Lutheran education!

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ShapingtheFuture is published quarterly by Lutheran Education Association and distributed to members of LEA.

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