

Grandparents Can Influence Future Church Workers



HIGHER EDUCATION NETWORK

by Rev. Dr. Wayne Wilke
Director Concordia House Studies

This month I am reflecting on the role that grandparents can play in the recruitment of professional church workers. We all know how influential grandparents can be in the life of a child. You may have experienced the kind word that only a grandma can say, the approving smile that means so much when it comes from a grandpa.

The Apostle Paul encouraged the young pastor Timothy by reminding Timothy how his grandmother, Lois, was instrumental in his coming to faith. Later on, Paul writes, "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become

a Lay Minister at Marco Lutheran Church, recently shared this insight into the importance of encouragement:

Is it ever too soon or too late to think about working for God? A child playacting the role of teacher or minister deserves encouragement. It's not too soon. Someone 68 years old wonders about life as a minister of the Gospel. Is it too late? If Samuel had said, "Nope, God, I'm too young to hear you now." Or if Moses had said, "Lord, I'm too comfortable to go back to Egypt now." Then how would God have completed his work? Try on a new role. Your work for God could give the Gospel to one who needs to hear it.

in a U of M tee-shirt – it's never too early to recruit a Wolverine. I am sure some of you are also sports fans and have given your small children or grandchildren the same kind of shirt for your team.

My point is, if we want to get our children or grandchildren thinking about our favorite team when they are young, why wouldn't we do the same about serving the Lord?



If we were to begin trying to intentionally identify those with gifts for full time service in the church, we would certainly include a prayer for the individual. As we regularly keep our grandchildren in prayer, we can

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I am a proud new grandfather, and even though we are separated by distance, I am experiencing all of the joy of that condition. I have joked that my grandson, Drew, is certain to become a church worker. He was born on the Day of Epiphany and he was baptized on Palm Sunday.

But even as I joke about this, I am reminded that the work of encouragement can't start too soon. My daughter and son-in-law are ardent University of Michigan fans, so one of the first pictures we have of Drew is him

also pray that God would bless them with a developing and maturing faith. We would be looking for certain gifts in the lives of our children:

One would be **enthusiasm for sharing the Gospel**. Does this child enjoy sharing stories about Jesus? Does he or she tell his or her friends about what has been learned in Sunday School? All of these are indicators of the presence of this gift.

Another gift is **good communications skills**. Does this child enjoy talking? Do they speak clearly and are they able to get their ideas across to the listener? Do they like to share in the conversation with adults?

All of these are indicators of good communication skills.

Another gift to look for is **compassion and concern for others**. Is this child concerned for others? Does he or she

adults. The point is that the presence of these gifts is an indication that the child may be well suited for serving as a full time worker in the church. It is important to affirm the special

As we regularly keep our grandchildren in prayer, we can also pray that God would bless them with a developing and maturing faith. We would be looking for certain gifts in the lives of our children . . . enthusiasm for sharing the Gospel, good communications skills, compassion and concern for others, perseverance and patience, self-discipline and a sense of responsibility.

want to be helpful to others? Are they easily moved to share with those less fortunate? Again, these are signs of the presence of this gift.

Another cluster of gifts would be **perseverance and patience**. Does your child have a "stick-to-it" attitude? Are they willing to maintain focus until a task is completed? These are highly desirable traits in a church worker, and are good signs that God may have full time service in the church in mind for this child.

The final gift I would like to mention is **self-discipline and a sense of responsibility**. Again, one who serves in church work must have these traits, and their presence in the lives of your children can be a sign.



I realize that the gifts mentioned above are not always typical of young people, and they may be present in flashes rather than in steady doses. But that is also true of

gifts and talents observed in the individual, and to direct his or her attention to a specific career in life.

When you notice these gifts present, confirm them by speaking with your family, your friends, and with members of your congregation. Do they see these gifts as well? Talk to your pastor – he is there to give you the guidance and support that you need.

I am including a small picture of my grandson to remind you that one is never too young to begin considering whether God has given the gifts necessary for full time work in the church.

For additional information about how the Concordia House of Studies can assist in preparing church workers locally, or about having someone from CHS speak in your congregation, please contact Dr. Wayne Wilke, Director of CHS. You can call him in Orlando locally at 407-857-5556, ext 5, toll free at 877-457-5556, ext. 5, or via e-mail at wwilke@flga-lcms.org. □



Drew

convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it . . ." (2 Timothy 3:14)

Joyce Heffernan, a member of the Advisory Council on Church Worker Recruitment and

Volunteer Ministry Offers Opportunity for Wittenburg, Germany, Service

A special report from Rev. Hubert Temme on his two-week involvement in the Wittenburg English Ministry volunteer program for English-speaking visitors.

Who could ever imagine that a pastor's kid born of poor parents in a small Australian village called Marburg would ever climb the 43 steps to the high pulpit in the Schloss Kirche to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ — with Martin Luther checking me from his grave below the pulpit and Melancthon supervising from below the lectern?

But it happened! I have preached in Australia, Hong Kong, the Peoples Republic of China, Guam, Taiwan, Germany, the United States, Bahamas, Grand Cayman, on board ship

in the Caribbean — but sharing in the English ministry in Wittenburg is one of the most energizing and humbling pastoral experiences in my life. It is unique.

It is a little like going out "into the highways and byways"

inviting people to sing Luther's great hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" and to share in some of the evangelical wisdom he handed down. Unlike your own congregation, be prepared for anything and everything. In a chapel built in the 15th century,

an English Methodist pastor led our singing of that hymn.

Another visitor with her knapsack shared with us after the devotion that she was riding her bicycle across Germany; not a big deal — she does it every summer. Other tourists wandered in, took their pictures and wandered out. Most of those worshipers we will never see again — but maybe the Spirit stills stirs in their hearts from worshiping together in Luther's town.

Four visiting Lutherans changed their plans to stay over for the chapel devotions to worship with us in the Schloss Kirche. They loved Lutherland. So did all the other visitors, whether it was Gerry Perschbacher

from the Lutheran Hour office whom we met by chance at breakfast; the Lutheran pastor and his new wife who met us also by chance as we listened to an organ recital in the Castle church; or the Lutheran pastor and his wife who shared in the wedding renewal service in St. Mariens church (where Luther frequently preached for more than 30 years).

The local German pastor shared in our wedding renewal service as 40,000 local inhabitants plus the same number of festival goers celebrated the anniversary of Martin and Katie Luther's wedding.

As I look back I remember several other special days — when we would just sit in the churches watching tourists and speaking to ones who looked like they understood English, maybe listening to an organ recital or reflecting in front of the original pulpit in Luther Haus. □



Four couples shared in the wedding renewal ceremony at St. Mariens, including Rev. Hubert and June Temme (center). It was a special event for the Temmes, who celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary in 2005.