



A service of the  
Northwest District  
of the  
Lutheran Church -  
Missouri Synod

# Youth Supports

A resource to encourage and empower youth  
leaders for the expansion of the Lord's kingdom.

May 2003 - Volume 4, Issue 5

- Leading from Below the Waterline
- District Youth Gathering Information

... leadership  
is an art in  
which  
mastery is a  
long process.

The  
condition of  
[the sailboat]  
below the  
waterline  
mattered  
most.

## Leading from Below the Waterline

*'The Christian leadership of the future is called to be completely irrelevant and to stand in this world with nothing to offer but his or her own vulnerable self... It is not a leadership of power and control, but a leadership of powerlessness and humility in which the suffering servant of God, Jesus Christ, is made manifest.'*

~Henri J.M. Nouwen

A couple weeks ago, I was blessed with the opportunity to go to the National DCE Conference, where Dan Webster (*Authentic Leadership, Inc.*) was one of the plenary speakers. One of the concepts that he shared with us was the concept of *leading from below the waterline*. But, before I begin, I would like to issue a disclaimer. For me, self-leadership is a work in progress. In all honesty, I still feel like a rookie, and leadership is an art in which mastery is a long process. So, that being shared, here are a few humble thoughts.

The summers of my college years were spent at a camp in southern Minnesota, where I learned to sail. Before each adventure, it was necessary to peruse the sailboat to ensure that it was a sea-worthy vessel. One portion of this standard procedure was checking the rudder. If the rudder was not functional, we would lack direction. It didn't matter that the sail looked cool, nor did it matter if I had a handful of whiny campers begging to go onto the lake. *The condition of that which lay below the waterline mattered most.*

The same can be said for us: *life below the waterline matters most*. Life below the waterline can be defined as our heart condition. Spiritual leadership is incredibly taxing on the heart. Think about it. We risk discouragement every day, when we are dealing with things and people that we love. We begin with a love for Christ and a love for people, and we lay our love and our lives on the line. After a while, we experience the sting of fatigue, discouragement, rejection, or depression. The bold passion that was once the core of our being fades. We die inside. We become a Ford salesman who is driving a Chevrolet. When we entered professional church work, we had an intimate knowledge of what it meant to have a well-tended heart. However, as we engage in ministry, we realize that it can be the "black hole of human need." Unprepared, we get sucked in. We abandon life below the waterline, in favor of "keeping it all together" or "getting everything done." The result? We challenge people to love and follow the Jesus that we used to love and follow.

Are you  
honestly  
facing your  
inner spiritual  
and emotional  
journey?

E-Newsletter  
from Board of  
Youth Ministry

K-Scope  
planned for  
July 6-11 at  
Hood Canal!

So, how are you doing at leading yourself? Are you experiencing ongoing intimacy with God? Are you honestly facing your inner spiritual and emotional journey? Are you identifying, developing, and using your God-given gifts and passions to impact the world? Here are some questions to help you assess life below the waterline.

1. Is my calling clear or unclear? Do I know what I'm about?
2. Is my vision focused or undefined? Do I know where I am to go and take others?
3. Is my passion hot enough to ignite others, or am I faking it?
4. Is my pace sustainable, or am I out of control?
5. Is my energy for people high, or am I tired of people and their needs?
6. Is my heart for God growing or shrinking?
7. Are my fears at bay (am I trusting God), or am I immobilized in any way?
8. Is my character fully submitted to God, or am I holding out in certain areas?
9. Am I hearing and following the leadings of the Holy Spirit, or am I inattentive?
10. Is my psychological baggage affecting my behavior, or am I aware and managing it?

(From a message by Bill Hybels entitled... *360 Degree Leadership*... 800-570-9812... tape #LS2000... w).

God lovingly tells us to "keep vigilant watch over your heart; *that's* where life starts." (Proverbs 4:23 (*The Message*)) The awesome thing is that He is excited to give you everything you need to be a passionate leader who brings people to Christ. You're not in this alone...

Blessings to you, as you lead from below the waterline!

—Stephanie Kosbab, DCE, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Tigard, Oregon

(Information taken from: 1) plenary sessions done by Dan Webster at the 2003 National DCE Conference. For more information, please go to [www.authenticleadershipinc.com](http://www.authenticleadershipinc.com) 2) *A Work of Heart* by Reggie McNeal (Jossey-Bass Publishers)..

Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

[http://www.nowlcms.org/educational\\_services/NetworkingMinistries/YouthSupports.aspx](http://www.nowlcms.org/educational_services/NetworkingMinistries/YouthSupports.aspx)

---

## E-Newsletter from Synod Board of Youth Ministry

The Board of Youth ministry for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has a monthly e-bulletin with youth ministry information. To subscribe to it, go to <http://www.lcms.org/enews/> and follow the directions.

---

## Kaleidoscope on Hood Canal

K-Scope is a premier youth retreat scheduled for July 6-11 this year. There is limited space so contact Rev. John Schmitd at [Kscopenow@cs.com](mailto:Kscopenow@cs.com).

---

Except as noted, all text and photographs are © Northwest District of the Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod. All contents, except as noted, may be duplicated for use in local congregations as long as the source is noted. If you have any comments or responses for this publication, please contact Glenn Zander, 2142 NE McDonald Lane, McMinnville, OR 97128 <[forgivn@macnet.com](mailto:forgivn@macnet.com)>