



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.

August 2003 - Volume 4, Issue 8

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## What's in a Trademark?

The school assembly was going well. Various plaudits for recognitions were being handed to the students for their achievements. This was the annual end-of-the-school-year assembly and the energy could be felt all over the gym.

As I was about to wrap up this festive activity with a prayer of thanks for safekeeping, John, an upper grade teacher, walked up on stage with a group of students. John motioned for me to follow him to the microphone.

Earlier in the school year, (actually, for several years), I was in charge of the outdoor education program in northern Wisconsin. The entire classes of 5-8th graders, along with teachers and helpers, would "go north" for a week of school in the great outdoors.



*Author Gary Gable has his trademark staff while working with children.*

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E-Newsletter  
from Board of  
Youth Ministry

I don't remember how John got it on the stage, but he unveiled a wooden staff that resembled what a shepherd would use while leading sheep. As a way of saying thanks for all the great times we had, John and the students wanted me to promise to take that staff wherever God would lead me in teaching. I did promise that I would have it nearby while teaching children. That promise has been kept ever since 1977. That staff has become a trademark to all who have seen me with it over the years. It proclaims my purpose apart from the secular world.

Twelve years later, just before a teachers' conference, I had a dream. I was part of a huge "net" of people all joined by hands or feet. People floated to the net. Some became attached. Others passed through. Once again, I took this dream to act as validation of God's grace in my life. To this day, I sign the majority of my correspondence with "A Part of the Fishnet." Another trademark.

If all believers would think about it, they would recognize a special one-of-kind trademark given to each one at their baptisms. The sign of the cross sets us apart from the secular world for a specific purpose in God's plan of salvation. The additional gifts from the Holy Spirit become trademarks that help validate who believers are. This produces a huge kaleidoscope of tasks that can be accomplished under God's guidance.

Take time to read I Cor. 3:5b-22 slowly. Every believer will find themselves as a part of that Word. I did not design my life, God did. Because of sin, there is a trap that pulls us away from God's plan. That trap is to compare one's self to anything. Comparing brings about discouragement, self-pity, or needless worry. "Showing off" your trademark brings about work righteousness or pride in self that further separates a person from the source of God's grace. God has given each person abilities that are unique to carry out a ministry of a caring model of His love.

My encouragement to believers is to regularly audit one's self to detect anything that stands between you and the intimate love connection of your Savior, Jesus Christ. Your trademark will become known, because God is making it happen. Your trademark will be active because God is not a static creator. He is a life renewing, life changing truth that faith alone can trust.

"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29)  
Ultimately, your life of faith becomes a trademark. You are set apart for a purpose. You are in God's plans. What's in a trademark? Everything.

—A Part of the Fishnet  
—Gary Gable, Parish Administrator for King of Kings Lutheran Church in  
Renton, Washington <[gggab@mail.earthlink.net](mailto:gggab@mail.earthlink.net)> Photo provided by  
Gary Gable

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

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## 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.

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