

Through my life's journey, from the cradle to childhood, teenage years, becoming a wife and mother, and now in the age of purpose and passion, for the message of the Gospel, I have known God. I have been enriched by joining a thriving and vitalising Pacific Lutheran College community.

I have worked with Lutheran schools in the Northern Territory but in the capacity of providing professional development on differentiation and adjusting curriculum for students with disability, additional needs, gifted and talented and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners. It is at Pacific Lutheran College, Sunshine Coast that I have begun my journey of learning about the unique and distinct difference that Lutheran education offers students. Our college has a wonderful sense of community, where the compassion, grace and love of Christ is a daily experience. Students and staff feel God's presence and the vibrancy of what Lutheran living offers through Christ our Lord.

### **Session 1: Grace and the Cross**

#### **1. What are important aspects of spirituality from a Lutheran perspective?**

I was deeply engaged by the Connect session on grace and yet could not see this concept without seeing the cross. And when I see the cross, I see Jesus' sacrifice, I feel the gravity of our loving God and His Father heart, who gave up His own son for me, my sins... I stand humbled by His great love and wonder how did God give up His son, for the likes of me? A sinner. In this first session my soul kept focussing on this Psalm, and resonated in my heart and mind:

"When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained: What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?" (Psalms 8:3, 4 NKJV)

What is man that You are mindful of him? Who am I, Lord, that you are mindful of me? My problems, my worries, my hopes, and my dreams? I don't deserve your love, attention and can't I even say the words...I don't deserve your unmerited favour... your grace.

So what is grace?

I have always believed, growing up in a Christian family that grace looks different depending on the situation. At 4 years old I clearly remember, even though it was 50 years ago, I gave my life to Jesus at Sunday School. My mischievous God-fearing father was delighted when I told him that I had given my heart to Jesus. He cheekily asked me how was I going to live without my heart? I thought for a moment and replied "I donno – but Jesus live with me!" And this was the start of my faith journey – understanding that God is gracious and cares about every aspect of my life. He was there at my conception and birth and will be with me in death and beyond, where I will be in His presence, where there is fullness of joy!

I knew as a little girl, that I could confidently "approach God's throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace to help me in my time of need." Hebrews 4:16 "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."<sup>1</sup> I was 12 when on the 24 January 1981, two of my sisters (16 and 19 years) were killed in a car accident. We were devastated, but God was in the midst of my pain, confusing and heartache. I felt His presence, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. I knew then that I still had a heart – because it was aching! But I also remember think that it was going to be ok because Jesus lived in my aching heart too. He was there to help me grieve and heal. I really knew and could see God in the midst of this trauma in our lives. Two months after my sisters' deaths, both my parents went into hospital for cancer. My father (54) was diagnosed with skin cancer and my mother (42) had shock related breast cancer. Both had to have surgery and the prognoses were poor. My mum was given 12 months to live and my dad's prognosis was unknown. And yet I knew God was gracious, I knew He was walking beside me and them. Martin Luther noted "Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that the believer would stake his life on it a thousand times."<sup>2</sup> I did stake my life on God's word and his salvation through grace was all I had to cling to. God's grace shined through, my mother lived a life

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 4:16 NIV <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%204%3A16&version=NIV>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/180792>

that science and the doctors could not explain, God healed her body, and she lived another 41 years. My father lived 32 years after this. I knew what God had done – he healed, and he showed me his grace – unmerited favour. I was still devastated by the loss of my sisters, but my parents would not be bitter, they were grateful to God for all he did. In session 1 of Connect I came across this quote from Luther that resounded so deeply with me and the Christian raw faith journey that I had been on “Lord, grant that anger or other bitterness does not reign over us, but that your grace, genuine kindness, loyalty, and every kind of friendliness, generosity, and gentleness may reign in us. Amen<sup>3</sup>” and realised that this is how my parents lived their lives after such great loss. I did not realise that this is how I too try to live my life, I try to be more like Christ, but I still have a way to go.

## **2. In what ways might the concept of grace shape Lutheran education communities?**

The cross is central to Lutheran education and as we looked at this concept my own faith and belief system made deep connections to Lutheran foundational beliefs. The cross in my life is the surety of my faith and salvation. I know I am saved and assured of my salvation because it is through grace alone that I have been saved.

Where do we come from? How are we all connected not just because we are all at Pacific Lutheran College?

I thought I was different from Lutherans, as I was brought up in an evangelical Christian faith – we were Methodists that were part of being lay witnesses of the Christian Faith.

Our journey of grief, loss and faith brought us as a family to become lay witness missionaries in Africa. As a family we were called to share the Gospel. I would go to schools and youth groups as a 13-year-old and share the gospel of salvation. I had realised that my sisters were young, but that we were not too young to die. We should all be ready for eternity with Christ, was my message. I felt and understood what

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/814464>

Luther so beautifully articulated in his quote, "You are not only responsible for what you say, but also for what you do not say." My sisters were Christians, they had accepted Christ as their personal saviour. I knew that they were with Christ in heaven. I could not let others die without knowing Christ.

As we worked through the material in Connect, I was amazed at the connections that I have to Lutheran education, and then it dawned on me, my South African school education was guided by a vast group of early Lutheran pioneers, and so I dug deeper into how the Bible is the foundation of our faith. South African education was influenced by a new Lutheran Church which was formed in Cape Town in 1853<sup>4</sup> and this evangelical force of Lutheran faith, played a significant role in the education and family life of early settlers in South Africa. I found the clue as to why Lutheran Education was resonating with me, not just because I was working in a Lutheran school now, but because the foundations of the Bible, were evident in the way, Lutheran teachers behave and live out their faith.

### **3. In what ways might the concept of grace inform the understanding of my role and my contribution?**

On my faith-based journey I did discover the deep connection between the cross and salvation, the true value of the cross.

Three significant teachings were pivotal to my personal understanding of the freedom in the Cross, and how we are rescued by Christ's death and resurrection – saved by faith in Christ which is the result of God's great gift of grace given freely to us and at His cost. A costly, overwhelming price that our Father God paid for us, His unrighteous, unworthy wayward children and yet He loves us so! God's Word says that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus and not by our own efforts or works (Ephesians 2:8-9). Grace Alone. Faith Alone. Grace alone means that God loves, forgives, and saves us not because of who we are or what we do, but because of the work of Christ.<sup>5</sup> I

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0256-95072014000100002](http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0256-95072014000100002)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.google.com/search?q=saved+by+faith+not+works&rlz=1C1GCEB\\_enAU991AU991&og=saved+by+faith&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i512l3j0i20i263i512j46i512j0i512j69i60.8106j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=saved+by+faith+not+works&rlz=1C1GCEB_enAU991AU991&og=saved+by+faith&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i512l3j0i20i263i512j46i512j0i512j69i60.8106j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

know this and love seeing it play out at Pacific Lutheran College, the staff who truly walk this road, are those who graciously walk alongside children who are different, difficult to teach, might not listen or follow instructions, might be unkind, silly or mean; who do not know or understand grace; they are the marginalised children. These children are the ones who tell me “Ms/Mr so and so are so nice. They always help me, never judge me, they like me!” “They are different from the other teachers.” I love asking these children to ask these teachers why they are kind! I am convinced the response is because God loves them, and they have been saved by God’s great love, mercy and grace.

## **Session 2: Connecting to Creation**

**How does Creation Theology inform the why and how of Lutheran education?**

### *Figure 1 The Whirlpool Galaxy*

My journey to research my early education roots made connections that I least expected, I understood why I instantly felt at home at Pacific Lutheran College. It was indeed a spiritual home coming.

So, when I ask where we come from, I was really thinking about



another key concept that keeps me in awe of our great God. That concept after reading all the Connect Session materials kept coming back to me, of HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD! Pastor Louie Giglio<sup>6</sup> teaches about the universe and how indescribable God is, that His majesty is beyond compare and He is the Master of the

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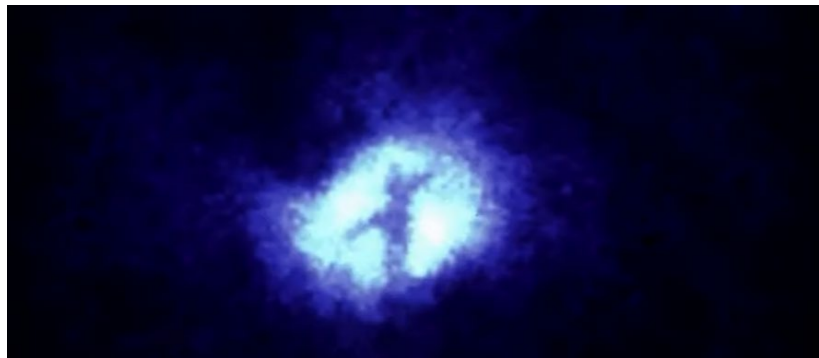
<sup>6</sup> <https://faithgateway.com/blogs/christian-books/what-god-sees-indescribable-by-louie-giglio/>

universe, reiterating what the Word of God says. When asked where you come from? We have a commonality on this earth. We all come from the same place, as Louie describes in his preaching series. We are all created by the same creator. We come from the whirlpool galaxy and we live in the galaxy that has been named the “Darling of the universe” in the centre of the division of this galaxy<sup>7</sup>. We would have to travel 186,000 miles a second for 100,000 years to reach one end to the other. And what is in the centre of our galaxy, blew me away!<sup>8</sup>

In the centre of our subdivision where the earth is, is this picture. In the middle of a dark whirlpool which has a cross in the centre of the whirlpool.

<sup>9</sup> This is the centre of our planet earth’s galaxy – we see the darling of the universe, aptly named because it is the cross in the centre. I am in awe of seeing that God reminds us daily of his love for us and how he offers us his great love through the cross. This is His great love for us and unmerited favour on an intergalactic scale! A reminder to “look up to the hills from whence our help comes. It cometh from the Lord who made the heavens and the earth. Psalm 121 v1 -2.”

In this cross we find the Eye of the universe – the little blue dot in the centre is earth. So, God’s eye is not just on



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<sup>7</sup><https://scientistsforjesus.wordpress.com/2013/11/26/our-universe-indescribable/>

<sup>8</sup>[https://www.google.com/search?q=eye+universe++louie+giglio&rlz=1C1GCEB\\_enAU991AU991&tbm=isch&sxsrf=ALiCzsbkbcVnWwKwxVMT\\_cJDSur2MSSqQ:1666421180880&source=Inms&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewiQ\\_qDUvP6AhUS7TgGHZGuC9cQ\\_AUoAXoECAoQAw&biw=1280&bih=577&dpr=1.5](https://www.google.com/search?q=eye+universe++louie+giglio&rlz=1C1GCEB_enAU991AU991&tbm=isch&sxsrf=ALiCzsbkbcVnWwKwxVMT_cJDSur2MSSqQ:1666421180880&source=Inms&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewiQ_qDUvP6AhUS7TgGHZGuC9cQ_AUoAXoECAoQAw&biw=1280&bih=577&dpr=1.5)

<sup>9</sup>

[https://www.google.com/search?q=eye+of+the+universe+louie+giglio&rlz=1C1GCEB\\_enAU991AU991&sxsrf=ALiCzsal6g5dfZKNRXMm\\_vyrYzcbGmhkXw%3A1666446765594&ei=rfVTY\\_jnl7304-EPvbKImAs&ved=0ahUKewi48v\\_7fp6AhU9-jgGHT0ZArMQ4dUDCA8&uact=5&oq=eye+of+the+universe+louie+giglio&gs\\_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAMyBQghEKABMgUIIRCgAToKCAAQRxDWBBcWAZoHCC4QsAMQQzoHCAAQsAMQQzoNCAAQ5AIQ1gQQsAMYAToECAAQQzoFCAAQgAQ6BggAEBYQHjoICAAQFhAeEAo6BQgAEIYDOgQIIIRAVOgcIIIRCgARAKSgQITRgBSgQIQRgASgQIRhgBUKAKWJ4-YJpGaAFwAXgAgAHIAyGhBhROSAQYwLjExLjKYAQcGAQHIAHAAQHaAQYIARABGAK&sclient=gws-wiz](https://www.google.com/search?q=eye+of+the+universe+louie+giglio&rlz=1C1GCEB_enAU991AU991&sxsrf=ALiCzsal6g5dfZKNRXMm_vyrYzcbGmhkXw%3A1666446765594&ei=rfVTY_jnl7304-EPvbKImAs&ved=0ahUKewi48v_7fp6AhU9-jgGHT0ZArMQ4dUDCA8&uact=5&oq=eye+of+the+universe+louie+giglio&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAMyBQghEKABMgUIIRCgAToKCAAQRxDWBBcWAZoHCC4QsAMQQzoHCAAQsAMQQzoNCAAQ5AIQ1gQQsAMYAToECAAQQzoFCAAQgAQ6BggAEBYQHjoICAAQFhAeEAo6BQgAEIYDOgQIIIRAVOgcIIIRCgARAKSgQITRgBSgQIQRgASgQIRhgBUKAKWJ4-YJpGaAFwAXgAgAHIAyGhBhROSAQYwLjExLjKYAQcGAQHIAHAAQHaAQYIARABGAK&sclient=gws-wiz)

the sparrow but is on you and me as well as the billions of other beautiful people on our planet -earth.

This is what the eye of the universe looks like from a telescope. Right in the middle is our little planet called earth or home.

I am in awe of how awesome in power and strength our God is, and that He cares for us while commanding the universe that he created. Who am I that the Lord of all the earth calls my name and knows my worth? I am His child, and it is this passion that I share with my students so that they can see God's majesty and care in and for their lives too. God tells me that he knows the number of hairs on my head<sup>10</sup> and the grains of sand on the beach... I look at the universe he created, and I know I am so small, but he knows my name and that is BIG.

In Lutheran education it is pivotal to teach from the framework of the Bible. Creation Theology is a pivotal underpinning of our knowledge of the world. When teaching within the constraints of the Australian Curriculum, I focus on looking at what is wholesome and Godly. The scripture Philippians 4:7-9 says "7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you." As teachers this too should be our guide. The topics we pick, the plays we choose to put on at school, the



music we listen to or teach to students and the attitudes we bring to our workplace should all be raised to not our standard, or the world's standard but God's standards.

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<sup>10</sup> Luke 12v7 NIV

## **2. How does creation theology shape an aspect of your work with students?**

God's word says in I Corinthians 6 v12 that "Everything is permissible for me"--but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"--but I will not be mastered by anything. "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food"--but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. Helps us teachers to realise that just because something is in the world or in the curriculum does not mean that we have to teach it. We need to submit all to God's authority. It is a delicate, sensitive balance between what students want and need to learn vs what teachers want to teach. Teaching for eternity is essential and is addressed in my session 4 of this paper. As a teacher I ask myself 3 key questions when designing curriculum and preparing work or Personalised Support Plans:

- What would Jesus think of me in my classroom? What would my dad think of my teaching?
- How effective is my teaching? To what effect do I impact the Kingdom?
- Am I making a good Godly difference and how would I know this?

With these questions which have been my drivers since I started teaching in 1990, I see a connection to the foundational tenant of Martin Luther's Creation Theology.

#1 God created all things from nothing

#2 God continues to create

#3 God's creation is good

#4 God made people in God's image

#5 God creates people as unique individuals

#6 God invites people to be co-creators

#7 God promises to restore the brokenness of creation through Jesus

As God is real to me – I need to share that reality with others. The world is distracting, and families are keen for us to be respectful of



their children and what they believe in this space. It is easy to get mainstream information, but many families choose PLC because they trust that we will entrust their children into the care of God and Christianity.

Martin Luther's quote resonates with what I believe: "I believe that God has created me together with all that exists. God has given me and still preserves my body and soul: eyes, ears, and all limbs and senses; reason and all mental faculties. In addition, God daily and abundantly provides shoes and clothing, food and drink, house and farm, spouse and children, fields, livestock, and all property – along with all the necessities and nourishment for this body and life."

Often people send their children to a faith school because they want teachers to treat their child with grace, dignity and respect. The foundational truth that Luther brought to people of faith, which has influenced Lutheran education and teaching, while bringing reformation, is consolidated into three "solas" <sup>11</sup>or tenants. Sola gratia, sola fide and sola scriptura – by faith alone, by grace alone and by scripture alone.

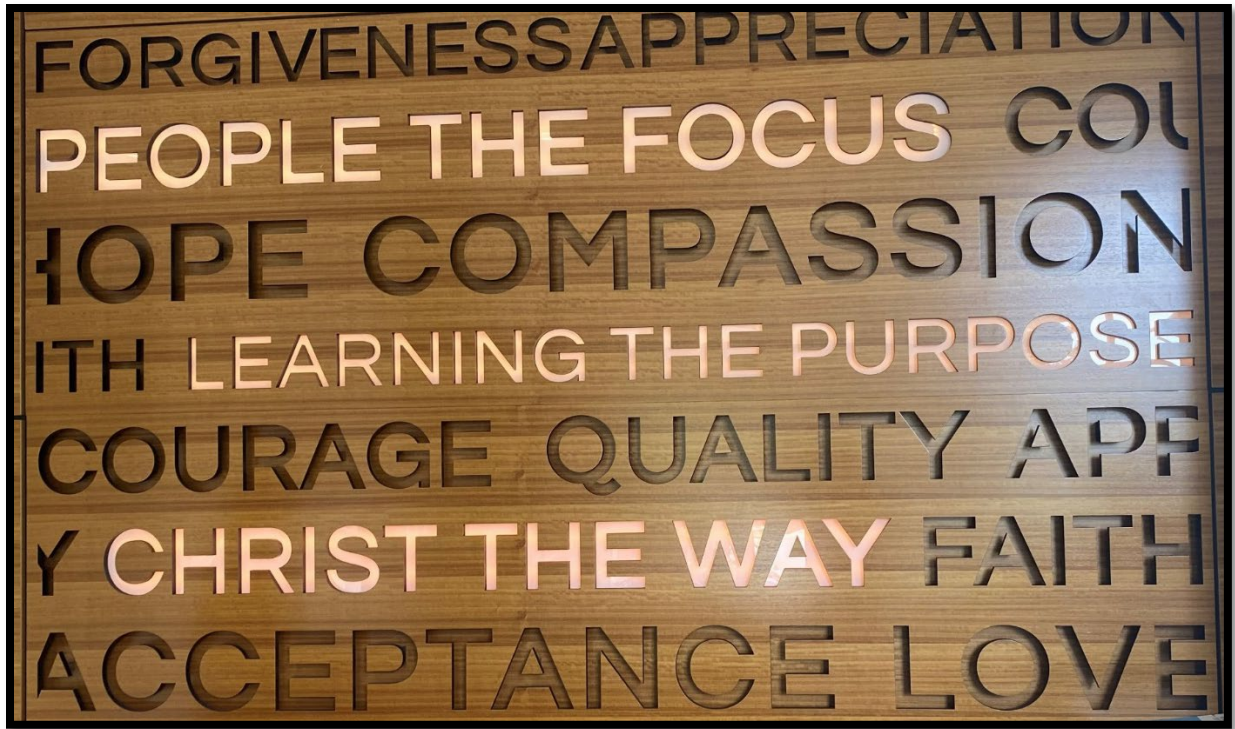
I think Pacific Lutheran College's three tenants, highlights the concept of the solas and encapsulates Lutheran education:

- Christ the way – Faith alone
- People the focus – Grace alone
- Learning the purpose - Scripture alone.

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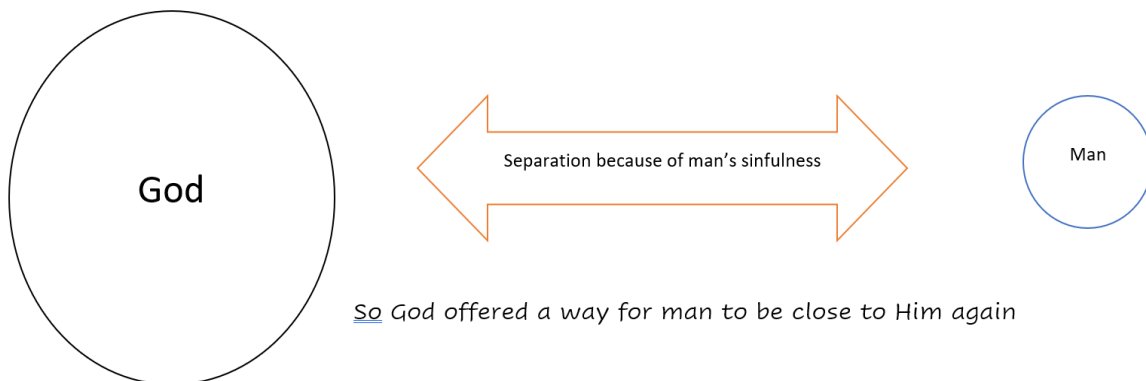
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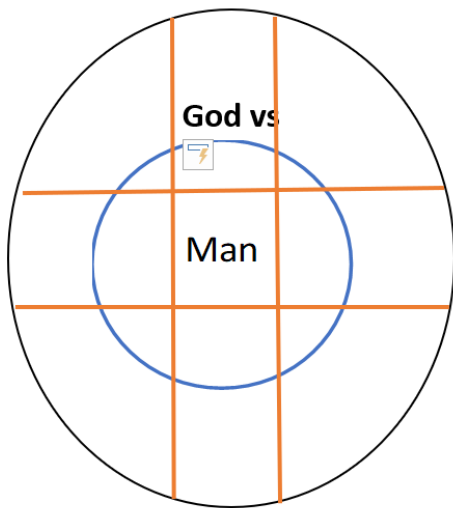
**3. What questions or issues does the concept raise for me and how can I explore my questions?**

I love the concept that Rev. John Donne, a 14 Century metaphysical poet, preacher, writer and reverend, preached about the Cross.

He believed that God deeply desired a way to connect with man after the fall of man. So God offered a dialectic scheme of salvation to mankind.



The Dialectic Scheme of Salvation: The cross formed away for man to commune with God and signifies the power of the cross.



This poem and sermon has had a profound effect on my walk with God and how I see the world, people and creation that God created.

### **THE CROSS.**

**by John Donne**

SINCE Christ embraced the cross itself,  
dare I

His image, th' image of His cross, deny?

Would I have profit by the sacrifice,

And dare the chosen altar to despise?

It bore all other sins, but is it fit

That it should bear the sin of scorning it?

Who from the picture would avert his eye,

How would he fly his pains, who there did die?

From me no pulpit, nor mis-grounded law,

Nor scandal taken, shall this cross withdraw,

It shall not, for it cannot; for the loss

Of this cross were to me another cross.

Better were worse, for no affliction,

No cross is so extreme, as to have none.

Who can blot out the cross, with th' instrument

Of God dew'd on me in the Sacrament?

Who can deny me power, and liberty

To stretch mine arms, and mine own cross to be?

Swim, and at every stroke thou art thy cross;  
The mast and yard make one, where seas do toss;  
Look down, thou spiest out crosses in small things;  
Look up, thou seest birds raised on crossed wings;  
All the globe's frame, and spheres, is nothing else  
But the meridians crossing parallels.

Material crosses then, good physic be,  
But yet spiritual have chief dignity.

These for extracted chemic medicine serve,  
And cure much better, and as well preserve.  
Then are you your own physic, or need none,  
When still'd or purged by tribulation;  
For when that cross ungrudged unto you sticks,  
Then are you to yourself a crucifix.

As perchance carvers do not faces make,  
But that away, which hid them there, do take ;  
Let crosses, so, take what hid Christ in thee,  
And be His image, or not His, but He.

...

Be covetous of crosses; let none fall;  
Cross no man else, but cross thyself in all.  
Then doth the cross of Christ work faithfully  
Within our hearts, when we love harmlessly  
That cross's pictures much, and with more care  
That cross's children, which our crosses are.

So I ask myself how I at PLC can foster this Grace based Lutheran theology. If I can help children see that the cross of Christ is central to our lives and as Donne puts it best, we are created in God's image, we are if we stand up straight, stretch out our arms east and west, we ourselves become a cross. A reminder of God's great sacrifice and love for us. This how we are his image bearers – our legs together and arms out stretched present the image of the cross! God's resounding grace to his creation.

### **Session 3:**

#### **1. How does creation theology inform the why and how of Lutheran education?**

I think for me God's nature is loving and kind, He is patient and loves us His creatures. He has created us and moulded us from clay. He continues to create not just in the environment, our world and beyond but he is still forming our habits, attitudes, thoughts and calling out to us to rest in Him, our Father God.

Yet if you are like me, I am half baked! My favourite Christian Band is HALF ALIVE. If you have not heard them, take a deep breath and listen to their song "Creature".

"Creature" this song by Half Alive, really speaks to me of what it is like to understand the essence of Christian

Lutheran living, community and the fact that we are all God's creation, whom He is still crafting, which lies within the foundation of Lutheran education. As Luther said: "For God is wholly present in all creation, in every corner, he is behind you and before you. ... He is watching over you and protecting you."

As we are made in glory but are still being molded by the author and perfecter of our faith, the Artist, Father God. We are all God's children

but are still learning, living, growing in wisdom and truth. God guides us and delights in us. We are offered His gift of salvation and eternity awaits. He gives us the opportunity to choose life or death (Deuteronomy 30 v19) and wants us to choose life! In our PLC community I so desire to see people in our community "Choose Life". It is the grace-based focus of Luther's teachings that really highlight the character of our precious Father God.

It is up to us as teachers to make sure that the way we teach leads students to know God, love God and to desire to be His alone.

God is our potter and we are clay in His hands (Isaiah 64 v8). As teachers Luther provides direction in our classrooms, when he said "If God is to create or to preserve a creature, God must be present and must make and preserve God's creation both, in its innermost and outermost aspects." - Martin Luther. So God is in our classrooms working, we are to understand this, live it and acknowledge Him and encourage our students to see how wonderfully they are created.

## **2. How does creation theology shape an aspect of your work with students?**

Working with children with Disability and additional needs and also working with children who are gifted, really does shape the way I see the world. I live by the word of God, and find the scripture of Colossians 1:27 puts it this way:

"The secret is simply this: Christ in you! Yes, Christ in you bringing with him the hope of all glorious things to come. "

It goes on to say that "the hope of glory is the fulfillment of God's promise to restore us and all creation". This scripture drives the hope that I have for our most vulnerable students; but also, for the students who are really Gifted and Talented to the extent that they often turn

away from God, as they start relying on their own mind and abilities. They become lost in the noise and lies of this world. I am passionate about making Christ known to both these ends of the learning continuum and to all those in between, because I know they are not too young to die, so they are most definitely not too young to know the grace and love of God, and not too young to accept the Gospel – remember I was 4 years old. God has created them in His marvellous image and they are perfect in His sight!

### **Session 3:**

#### **1. Why does Lutheran Education value community?**

My passion in life is to spread the Gospel, through the tool of excellence in education.

I believe education needs to be rigorous and equip students with the tools to be all God has called them to be.

There can be no compromise in the quality of education a Christian school provides and the pathways it provides for every student. I want to see the next generation of students, stepping into adulthood, choosing Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of their lives.

Lutheran Education is a system that values people because it values God's creation and workmanship. "Lutheran schools and early childhood services are communities that recognise that God has intentionally created each person and that each person is uniquely gifted to live in relationship with God and others."

It is a blessing and a privilege to see how God has created unique individuals that are all connected by a community of teacher and students striving to be more like Christ and live in harmony together, building a community of faith.

#### **2. In what ways has the learning about community relationships informed your understanding of your role and contribution?**

The profound focus in this aspect of community exists in the concept of Genesis 1:26, where humans are created in God's image and created for relationship with God. This is probably the hardest question to respond to because the greatest anxiety and conflict in schools are often teacher turf wars! I have found when I operate in my flesh things do not go well, but when I spend time in prayer and trust God to resolve the issues (which are often self-made/inflicted) – God always comes through for me. But it is not always without a lesson learned or an attitude (mine mostly) challenged, and this is what makes community relationships so important to foster.

### **3. What questions or issues does the concept raise for me and how can I explore my questions?**

I had wondered what evidence is there for God the creator and proof of His creation?

In a world where everyone questions the Bible and Christian faith, where is the evidence for God. It exists in the trinity, The God head which is the Holy Trinity: consisting of God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son and the power of God in the person of the Holy Spirit. This union reflects the value that God, the Father (and creator) places on the importance of relationships, that we as his children should emulate. If we do not believe in the Trinity it is hard to understand the value of relationships and if we need physical evidence for God's existence – where is it? This question was answered for me, a couple of years ago, I learned another profound concept from Pastor Louie Giglio. 5 min so worth a watch.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSR8z\\_0uW5E&ab\\_channel=Asaph](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSR8z_0uW5E&ab_channel=Asaph)

I am overwhelmed by what I have learned about an indescribable God and Luther was able to bring forth our best life as Christians by highlighting the three Solas: Sola gratia, sola fide and sola scriptura.

Against this back drop I learned about the relationship of our created bodies, where God has built living proof of who He is by the evidence of laminin in our bodies.



Considering the Laminin: Evidence of God's Existence?<sup>12</sup>, the scripture "In Him All Things Hold Together" ([Colossians 1:17](#)) has profound implications for the concept of proof of God through His creation.

When Louie Giglio, pastor of Passion City Church, pitched his congregation with the Laminin protein proposition, suggesting that the cross-shaped protein is scientific evidence that Christ is holding our bodies together, he got my undivided attention. His theological proposition suggests that [Colossians 1:17](#) is directly referencing the cross-shaped laminin protein for two reasons:

- (1) It is shaped like the cross that Jesus was crucified upon, and
- (2) Laminin's primary function of binding our cells together is the meaning of the latter part of verse 17, **"in him all things hold together."**

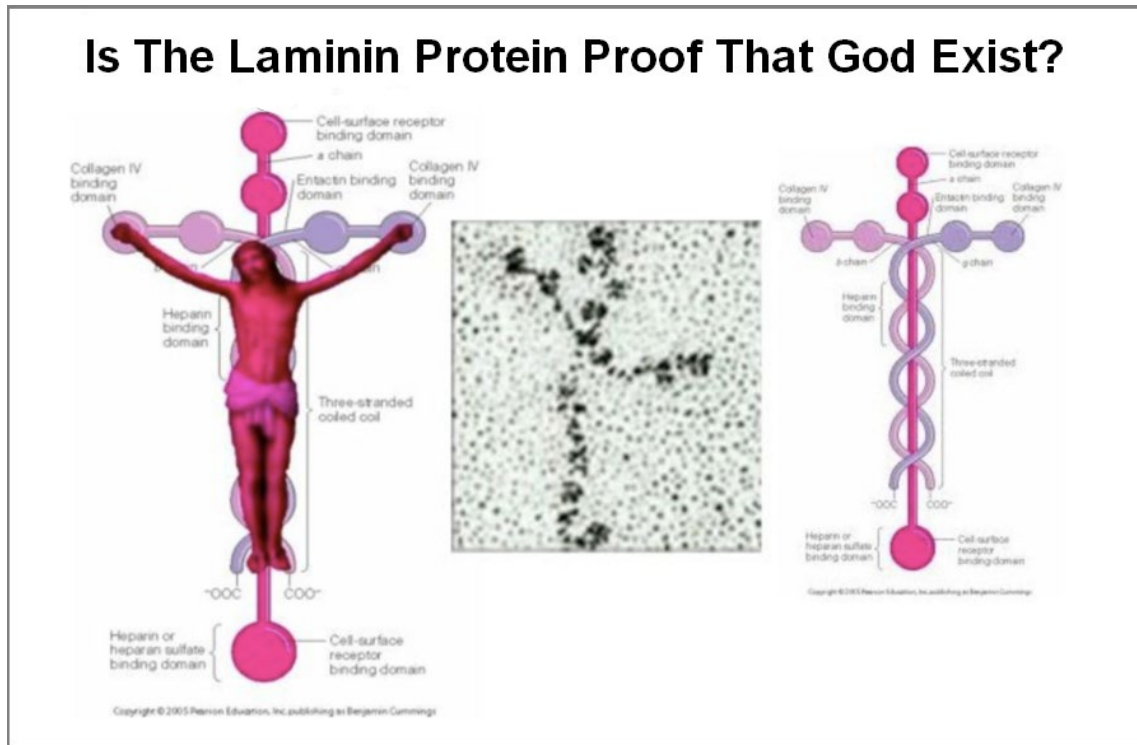
Therefore, Pastor Giglio excitedly concluded that God purposely created the cross-shaped laminin protein as proof that Christ is holding us together and referenced [Colossians 1:17](#) as his proof text. So if the relationship of laminin in the body is key to our body and living, how much more does the relationship between people, the church, and the Gospel mean to God? In Barstch<sup>13</sup> discussion of the Trinity he sums it up so very well: "When God speaks and acts, he draws people into this eternal, dynamic relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Christians not only relate to the three persons of God individually but are caught up within the intertrinitarian relationship and conversation." Interconnectedness is perfectly illustrated by the trinity of the Christian faith.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://newlifeexchange.com/2017/12/06/laminin-evidence-gods-existence/>

<sup>13</sup> [PLC Connect Session 3 - Community \(padlet.com\)](#)

## Laminin the cell adhesion molecule – protein.



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### Session 4 (Our foundation) The Bible

#### *Growing deep: our foundation*

Lutheran schools are communities of hope, nurtured by the promises of God's word, love and forgiveness which empower staff and students to embrace the future with confidence.

The foundation of God's word which inspires and guides Lutheran education communities provides a way for Lutherans to live in community with each other by reading and following God's word in the scriptures, extending grace towards one another as Christ freely gives to us, and by faith alone, by grace alone and by scripture alone.

- How can we know about God?

<sup>14</sup> <https://newlifeexchange.com/2017/12/06/laminin-evidence-gods-existence/>

In my role as leader of our Learning Enrichment Centre, I ask how can we not know God? My Christian Faith has been central and foundational to who I am. I cannot live life without Christ, He is my joy in the morning, my Shepherd in the weariness of midday, my soul's delight at the end of the day and my sustainer and Lifter of my head at night. It is God's word that I draw from when I feel weary, defeated or empowered, strengthened, and HIS word that I seek when I look for guidance, strength or search for hope and need wisdom. There is nothing that I take from anywhere else but His word.

- How does God's word form and inform Lutheran education communities and my role?

In the LEC we spend our time with students who are struggling, students who are experiencing success and adults, staff and parents who are walking burdened by the complexities of life on earth. I have learned that I can only walk-in faith, because strangely enough my own flesh is weak, I do not have strength to walk alone. How wonderful and grateful I am to God who says in His word, that he will never leave me nor forsake me<sup>15</sup> Deuteronomy 31:8! He cares for little old me! He created me! I am His child – a good and bad child, but he still calls me His child. What a wonderous title that is to be a child of God!

- What are the most significant aspects of Lutheran theology for Lutheran education?

I am overwhelmed by God's grace towards me. I don't deserve it, I am so unworthy, and there is nothing I can do to earn it. But Lutheran Education really puts this into perspective for not just the teachers but for the parents and students as well. Isaiah 41:10-13<sup>16</sup> highlights God's great love for His children and people, "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Behold, all who are incensed against you shall be put to shame and confounded; those who strive against you shall be as nothing and shall perish. You

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+31%3A8&version=ESV>

<sup>16</sup> Isaiah 41:10-13 ESV / 1,401 helpful votes Helpful Not Helpful  
[https://www.openbible.info/topics/i\\_will\\_never\\_leave\\_you\\_nor\\_forsake\\_you](https://www.openbible.info/topics/i_will_never_leave_you_nor_forsake_you)

shall seek those who contend with you, but you shall not find them; those who war against you shall be as nothing at all. For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you." No matter how tough life gets God is there. He watches over us, His mercy and grace are lavishly bestowed on us.

In our LEC we see God's grace in action daily, students who are feeling overwhelmed, broken and struggle to measure up to the expectations of this world and those academically strong who are overwhelmed by the weight of the responsibility of using their gifts, come into the LEC and find God's grace, peace and favour on them because of the gentle staff who live out the Lutheran ethos of grace, compassion, dedication and love. These precious children are surrounded by God's grace and love working through Lutheran Christian teachers and aides.

- What questions or issues does the concept raise for me and how can I explore my questions?

My deepest concern is on a very small aspect of our school. It is a policy that is related to MIB's Minor Infractions of Behaviours, which in essence is to control the small behaviours so we don't have bigger issues develop. But I feel that it is the one aspect of our beautiful Godly school community ethos that does not operate from a place of grace. It is a punitive, relationship breaking system that I cannot explain its virtue or value to a child who is being punished for their disability/condition. It is all about judging the student's external appearance rather than looking to the heart and intention of the mistake or infraction.

"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

The challenge of educating our students to become ethical thinkers and championing ethical behaviour as an outcome, is the 21 century educators' nightmare. Where do we start?

In order to develop ethical beings, Christian education needs to identify the foundation and focus of each Christian school. As I dipped my toe in to Lutheran Education Connect sessions, I saw a set of learner profiles that reflect the desired outcomes of a successful learner, within the education sphere. My years teaching in secular education, has created within me, an acute awareness of the presumption of secular teachers with regards to their imparting of their own "socially accepted" value system. Moving to a Lutheran Education has brought me full circle. Indeed Christian education has a foundation embedded in a Biblical World View and I have had to grapple with, and deeply connect with the question of what makes Lutheran education the same and different?<sup>17</sup>

It is often these exact assumed "politically correct" value systems that poses conflict for the Christian student and their Christian parents. A Biblical worldview requires that one teaches from God's perspective. The only way to be successful in this endeavour is to get to know God and His character. This is what Martin Luther did with his 95-thesis statement, helped others to get to know and understand God.

Lutheran education values and delivers quality academic rigor, while through God's grace and unmerited favour, as well as supports the maturation of the learner to take up their place in community/society. Lutheran education addresses the student's academic, social, emotional and spiritual needs. A truly holistic education requires the student's entire being, to actively take part in their learning. The rigor and well-balanced approach of the Pacific Lutheran College program is seamless. It is the relationship between academic excellence and a grace filled Biblical worldview, that makes Lutheran education unique. Quality education stems from a ground motive that declares a Christ-centered, loving ethos. Only true transformation and eternal education can take place in a school that values and understands that education is at its best when the whole child is educated. Principled, ethical thinking and behaviour cannot be effectively developed in the student without the ground-motive of a Biblical worldview. Martin Luther understood this so intimately he could not accept anything less for

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<sup>17</sup> <https://educationforeternity.weebly.com/>

Christianity, than what Hebrews 4 v12 notes: God's word is living and active, judging our thoughts and attitudes of the heart – it is only by God's grace that we are forgiven, our 'works' are like, in Isaiah 64 v 6, but "filthy rags"<sup>18</sup>." So this does make me wonder how the "MIB" process are in line with Lutheran education? These are works based, students walk past teachers and quickly tuck their shirts in and then turn the corner and pull them out when they think no one can see. We are missing the heart connection. This is a heart matter, and attitude to learning that we are not inculcating or fostering through faith. It's a tough one, but I am convinced God can change this, if staff come together, maybe it is about Monitoring Infractions of Behaviour and speak to the attitudes to life and love – growing the heart attitude of the child.

As I learned more about the impact of Martin Luther's faith in God and his commitment to serving God, I realized that it was his actions that remain the foundation of a deep commitment and exemplar as to how best to serve God and others. Our faith is not about good works. Luther wrote about "sola gratia" as the justification of sinful humankind "by grace... (as) the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). He expressed his thoughts on "salvation through faith in Christ" (2 Timothy 3:14-4:2) as "sola fide"<sup>19</sup>. Living the life that God desires of us, requires us to see the world through the eyes of God. The Christian world is impacted by the "fruit of the Spirit" - our guidelines for Biblical living revolve around the glorious example that our Lord and Saviour has given to us from the Word of God. In using the King James Version of Galatians 5:22-23, these attributes are easy to highlight, but are a challenge to truly absorb and live out: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance.

The world is filled with conflicting worldviews. It would be so easy to see the world through a Biblical perspective/worldview if we were born with a Biblical worldview in our minds; but we are born into this world with a sinful nature and therefore do not have an automatic Biblical

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<sup>18</sup>[https://www.google.com/search?q=works+are+like+filthy+rags+kjv&rlz=1C1GCEB\\_enAU991AU991&oq=&ags=chrome.0.35i39i362i8.68096i0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=works+are+like+filthy+rags+kjv&rlz=1C1GCEB_enAU991AU991&oq=&ags=chrome.0.35i39i362i8.68096i0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.123helpme.com/essay/Martin-Luthers-Impact-On-The-Church-535192>

approach to life. As Luther notes in his teachings<sup>20</sup>, which he wisely drew from the Bible, this is the crux of conflict in our lives: we spend so much time feeding our flesh or physical being that our spiritual lives are marginalised or reduced to meaningless, godless activities like yoga; alternative meditation and modern spiritual distractions. We forget to seek God in spirit and truth. We allow our sinful nature to guide our souls - God requires of us to "Seek His kingdom first" Matthew 3 v 7. This concept is really hard to follow if we do not adopt a Biblical worldview to govern our lives. For 15 years of my teaching career I was a Christian - teaching in a secular environment. I was expected to educate students about the world but definitely NOT about God. The impact this had on my personal worldview perspective was significant, and posed the greatest challenge for me as a teacher - how does one teach without using a worldview? Impossible! It cannot be done. If not a Biblical worldview, then which worldview is significant enough to prepare students for life and life here after? The fact of the matter is that all teachers teach from a worldview: that is why Christian and especially Lutheran education is essential to excellence in educational practices.

A Biblical worldview is not just a "lens" through which we see the world but rather an action required of us to take! We have to grow a perspective of being Kingdom minded and think like Christ, which is what Luther did, not just by thinking and writing but by doing. In order to develop the mind of Christ we must reject the mind of this world, which is the flesh, and celebrate the mind of God. A Biblical Worldview requires you to make a choice.

In Acts 17:28<sup>21</sup> God reminds us of our need to see the world through His eyes, "for in Him we live and move and have our being." Wow, thank you God, for reminding us of our high calling to make the truth incarnate through our lives. A Biblical World view means that "In Him, we live and move and have our being." Ultimately when one realises that, as in Ephesians 1 v 17 - 20, God is all powerful and mighty to

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.quora.com/What-were-the-main-points-of-Martin-Luthers-teachings>

<sup>21</sup> New International Version © 2010

save, there is no other worldview worthy enough, through which to educate God's precious children.

Lastly the impact of a Lutheran Education from God's own word through the apostle Paul is so powerfully expressed in Ephesians 1 v 17-21<sup>22</sup>:

" 17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength 20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come."

Being grounded in grace is an essential part of understanding the underpinning of Lutheran education. A foundational element of Lutheran education and Lutheran living is the reading of scripture with five Lutheran lenses. Lens one is the Law & Gospel, where the reader notes messages throughout the "Bible of both law and gospel. The Bible points to Jesus Christ and his saving message to man. Scripture is interpreted in the light of the whole Bible. Lutherans avoid isolating passages and note that some scripture is more important than other scripture. For a more detailed explanation the Lutheran Study Bible provides the foundational concepts of the 5 lenses.<sup>23</sup>

In conclusion the value and importance of a Lutheran College is to have the revelation, like Martin Luther had, where his life and work was always to honour God, and point others to Christ in a practical way. A Lutheran Education brings forth a rich fabric of community,

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%201%3A17-21&version=NIV>

<sup>23</sup> \*For a lengthier discussion of these Lutheran insights see Mark Allan Powell's article in the Lutheran Study Bible, pp. 1535-1543. \*\*\*These descriptions have been adapted by Rev. Luther Dale, Saint Paul Area Synod, Book of Faith Leadership Team. Adapted from Lutheran Study Bible copyright © 2009 Augsburg



which operates with the hallmark of God's love and God's grace for us and towards us, that we may be like Christ to those in need, and above all, love and honour God our Creator. Luther was inspired by God's Holy Spirit to bring God's Word in action to His people. "The Bible is the cradle wherein Christ is laid," Martin Luther remarked, pointing people to the mission and vision for our lives that God has made a way through Christ to commune with his people, who are his creation. This highlights the foundational understanding of the "solas": Sola gratia, sola fide and sola scriptura – by faith, grace, and by scripture alone. In that vein "The whole Bible points to Jesus Christ and His saving (grace) message to us. Lutherans are Jesus people, and the Bible is a Jesus book. We worship Jesus, not the Bible." Reading Scripture with 5 Lutheran Lenses enables us to read God's Word and ask questions that lead to spiritual growth.