

to illuminate the path of salvation. You know how He made your blaze a source of warmth and compassion. You are ablaze in your classroom, congregation, and neighborhood.

Now, with the Emmaus disciples, you can exclaim, *Didn't we feel on fire as he conversed with us ... as he opened Scripture for us?* (Luke 24:32 MSG).

So go in peace now. Converse with Jesus. Read and hear His Scripture. Feel the heat. Let God's Word set you ablaze—and spread those flames to all whom you teach.

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**LEA 2008 Convocation
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School Ministry, LEA, and Children's Ministry commit to work together, to support each other's ministry, and to collaboratively seek to meet the needs of children, workers, schools, and congregations in the process of Lutheran education. Through this partnership we agree to meet regularly, to hold each other accountable, and to focus our energies and projects on the needs of Lutheran education.

Discussion/reflection questions are available at www.lea.org/discussps0709.htm



Professionally Speaking is provided through partnership among Lutheran Education Association, LCMS School Ministry, and LCMS Children's Ministry.

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Professionally Speaking

Topics for Terrific Teachers
in Lutheran Schools

Ablaze!

September 2007

Ablaze!

He is here, you know.

Every day, every hour he is very interested in what you do ... very involved in your future.

Like a crafty counselor, he whispers in your ear and plants and cultivates new ideas.

Lulled by his worldliness, you are bound to like some things he suggests—and sometimes you'll follow him. And he is ablaze. In fact, he is more ablaze than most anyone else.

Indeed, he is here.

Amid all the crosses on the walls and Bibles in the desks—amid all the good news and knowledge, Satan is here—ablaze in all his hellish glare! As we talk about ablaze in LCMS circles, we also must consider other potential spins on that otherwise welcome word.

Satan lurks wherever God's people gather to grow in faith and spirit and education. It's likely that he is uncomfortable in the presence of people made righteous and holy through the obedience, the suffering, the death, the victorious resurrection of Jesus Christ. But he is no stranger to suffering. In fact, he is the father of discomfort, distress, and misery. Yes, Satan often works well within our congregations and schools—an arsonist-in-waiting, ready to smoke our dreams, our plans, our best intentions.

We might chuckle about Satan being ablaze. That's the very essence of his home and his image. But if Satan came at us like some fire-breathing monster, we certainly would flee in horror or attempt some defensive strategy. His fire often is more subtle, starting with a smolder or a few glowing embers.

Where is Satan ablaze in your life?

Maybe Satan tries to burn you with ...

... that parent who believes his child's outrageous lies about you.

... the colleague whose gossip singes your reputation.

... the board that governs but neither understands ministry nor its role in it.

... the skeptics or bullies who try to stop those seeking refuge and solace in Lutheran schools.

... the congregation that practices little care for its workers.

Truly, Satan finds many ways to work within the church and among the body of believers. It is a pretty safe place; who would expect to find him there? Among those who are ablaze, what's another blaze? Maybe we won't notice until the blaze roars into a withering inferno!

But this isn't the stuff we want to hear when we're getting energized for a successful school year (or week or day or hour!). And it's true; we don't have to let Satan's fires burn unrestrained. After all, we do have a blaze of our own!

We fight fire with fire. (It's like the brave men and women fighting wildfires with controlled burns to rob the fire of its fuel.) For only when we are ablaze with the Spirit's fire can we stop Satan's fire.

And we certainly can point to God's word in Luke 10, when triumphant disciples declared, "*Master, even the demons danced to your tune!*" Jesus said, "*I know. I saw Satan fall, a bolt of lightning out of the sky.*" See what I've given you? *Safe passage ... and protection from every assault of the enemy. No one can put a hand on you*" (Luke 10:17–19 MSG).

Satan ablaze? Yes indeed. By God's power, Satan crashed and burned. We'll see it with our own eyes some day, as John said in his Revelation: *... death and hell were hurled into the Lake of Fire* (Revelation 20:14 MSG). Ablaze indeed!

There is no doubt that we are ablaze—with the Spirit's fire, endowed with spiritual and educational excellence, but to what end?

Jesus, in Luke's account, went on to remind His elated disciples, *The great triumph is not in your authority over evil, but in God's authority over you and presence with you. Not what you do for God, but what God does for you—that's the agenda for rejoicing* (Luke 10:20 MSG).

You already know what God has done for you—how He set one blaze to outburn the other. You know how, fueled by the Holy Spirit in Word and sacrament, He made your blaze a light to show others their Savior and