

¶¶ for Parents

2 May 2005

Gossip and the Sovereignty of God

"The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated."

Mark Twain

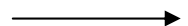
We are a tightly knit little community and it is difficult to keep confidences sometimes. But as any leader will tell you, there are many times when information must be kept confidential, or innocent people will suffer. This actually goes against my nature, because I tend to be an "open disclosure" type of person. So it is with regret that I am not always free to give the best explanations when people ask me sensitive questions that would impugn or betray the character or confidences of those who are trusting in my discretion.

Several recent rounds of rumors concerning the status of a number of individuals within our school family have ranged from vicious to laughable. If I were to recount some of them to you, it would remind you of the "telephone" game many of us played as children, where the final version of a whispered phrase passed around a circle bore no resemblance to the original version. But I can't even describe how ludicrous some of them are, because individuals who know they have passed these on would be hurt and embarrassed. I hope.

What is most frightening about this is how quickly a perception (or more frequently, a *misperception*) becomes fact in these conversations. It is frustrating for someone who knows the truth to attempt to correct one of these distortions because to protest always sounds so defensive. Denials of a well-liked (and the juicier, the more popular!) rumor are often met with knowing nods and winks, as if to say "Sure, that's what you *would* say. But we know!"

"We should fear and love God that we may not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, nor defame our neighbor, but defend him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything."

from Martin Luther's Small Catechism



Some of these rumors concern inadequacies in Cornerstone's educational accomplishments, while others speculate on the implications of some individuals' choice to disassociate themselves with this school. I hope everyone would realize that Cornerstone Christian Academy does not purport to be the perfect school for every individual in Tucson. I trust that we can bless those who for whatever reason need to disassociate themselves from this community. This is particularly easy for me to do, because I was raised in a very controlling family. It had the effect of making me a lover of liberty - mine and everyone else's as well.

But I am also a bond slave of Christ, and that compels me to protect the innocent entrusted to my oversight and to reprove sin when I see it...even in myself! I am committing myself to a new zeal regarding the application of the Matthew 18 principle as stated in our Parent/School Handbook, and I would entreat all others in our fellowship to do the same.

As for comings and goings, I hope we all trust in God's sovereignty to lead His children where they should be. I am encouraged by a wonderful group of new families we have been interviewing for next year, as well as an excellent crop of prospective teachers. May Cornerstone continue to reach the families it was brought into existence to bless...long past my tenure here! I take comfort in the reality that in my thirty years in God's school system, I have seen God sovereignty close schools which were not honoring to His Name. I trust that He would do that here should we not live humbly in accordance with His Word.

But we need not live in fear. Time changes things, and we must all adjust. A leaf falling off a tree does not mean the sky is falling, no matter how many times Chicken Little says that it is. I pray that all our families will continue to trust God for a future for Cornerstone as bright as its excellent first seven years!

*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.
Philippians 2:13*