



One of the highlights of the annual Senior Trip to Costa Rica is the whitewater rafting. Rafting is filled with excitement as you squeeze through narrow openings between huge boulders and run long stretches of powerful class III and IV rapids. One marvels at the raw, pounding power of the untamed Pacuare River. This river has been officially declared a Wild and Scenic

River, and offers some of the finest white water in Latin America, winding deep inside of one of Costa Rica's most impressive primordial rainforests. We traversed 18 miles of remote and scenic waters that course through a wilderness of dense vegetation covering the sides of steep gorges that rise above the riverbanks. The thick undergrowth provides shelter for jaguars, ocelots, monkeys, sloths, and numerous other species of animals and birds. The diversity in the scenery, vegetation, and wildlife gives clear testimony to the awesome creative power of God. It is exciting and humbling.

Early in my preparation for becoming a school administrator, I heard the metaphor of "riding the rapids" to describe the life of a school administrator. There would be times of great excitement, coupled with ample opportunities to learn humility. There would be times of seeming calm, although the march of the water to the sea is as powerful as ever. However, there is always the sense it was only a matter of time before the next set of rapids would appear requiring the administrator's full attention and skill because no two rapids are exactly the same in strength, shape and duration.

In his book *Learning As A Way Of Being: Strategies for Survival in a World of Permanent White Water*, Peter Vaill uses the metaphor of "permanent white water" to capture the idea of opportunity mixed with danger amid constant turbulence that is the world of today's organizational leaders (Vaill, 1989; 1996). "Permanent white water" is a continual disorderly procession of surprising, novel, ill-structured events that demand a leader's learning, with high costs of inattention or misinterpretation." In fact he contends that "leadership is mainly learning."



God is constantly reminding me of my need to depend on Him and not my own understanding. He wants me to watch, listen, interact, and thereby learn. God has been gracious and merciful in my training, except for those "stiff necked times" when stronger intervention was needed. I believe I speak for the leadership of our school, administration, faculty, and the Board when I say we have learned much this past year. The great challenge will be to take what we have learned and be good stewards with it for the glory of God and the good of His school. As we implement and steward what we have learned, your prayers, as always, are coveted. Please pray that we might have the godly wisdom described in James 3:17.

Allow me to end with one more river rapid metaphor. This year, one of our rafts carrying students along with one of our chaperones won the best flip of the day award. They entered the top of a class IV rapid guided by the expert hand of a member of the Costa Rican national rafting team. The force of the river over powered the paddling of the guide and the crew and they went nose first into a large wave. The raft immediately went bow over aft throwing everyone into the midst of the rapids. With their helmets and life jackets securely in place, they rode the class IV rapids without the raft. I asked the chaperone what he did. He said he followed the directions of the guide who yelled to swim to the nearest rock and hang on until help came. And that is what he did – cling to the rock. The metaphor is obvious. That is exactly what God wants us to do when we get in over our heads and in the rapids of life. Swim to Him and cling to the Him – the Rock.

Have a blessed and restful summer with your family. Take the time as well to get to know the Rock during this time of calm in preparation for the inevitable rapids ahead.

*Learning As A Way Of Being: Strategies for Survival in a World of Permanent White Water*, Vaill, Peter B. 1996, Jossey-Bass, Inc., San Francisco, CA



Seniors participate in service projects and VBS in Costa Rica.