

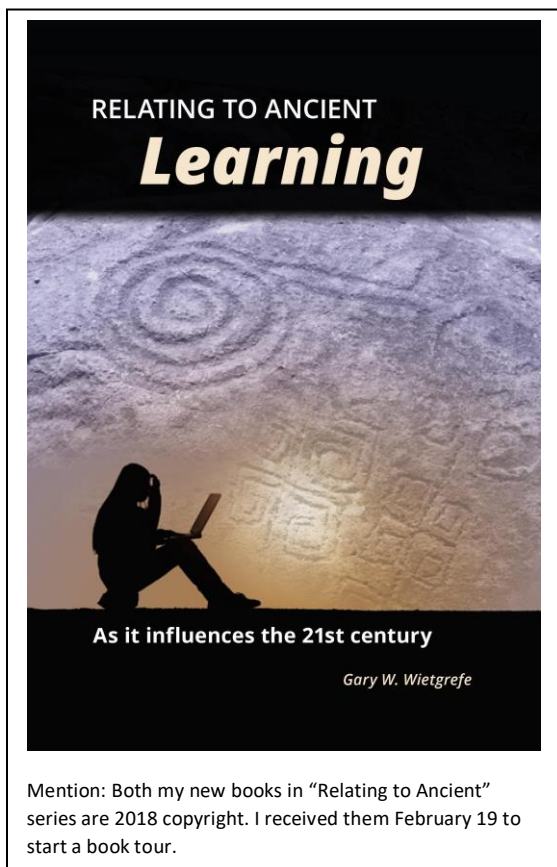
# Why the School System won't last

(2018 book tour: Gary Wietgreffe delivered this presentation in Ipswich (SD) Library (Feb. 21), books kickoff at Sioux Falls Holiday Inn (Feb. 26), Tucson Festival of Books (Mar. 10-11), and Los Compadres Resort La Penita de Jaltemba Mexico (Mar. 20, 2018). Mention my website for schedule: <https://www.RelatingtoAncients.com/>

## Introduction:

- The American school system, as currently defined, is less than 100 years old. After thousands of years of learning and formal education, what makes anyone think the school system is a permanent institution? America's school system has migrated to an international formal educational system defined by divisions of labor not by student needs.

**Learning: pg. 124:** (*Show book. Read highlights in book*) This is the second in my "**Relating to Ancient**" series of books. I wrote both books simultaneously, but "Culture" came out of the printer ten days before "Learning."



- "I used the 1982 Webster's New World Dictionary, Second College Edition copyrighted 1982 as my general reference for writing this book. Although it had twenty-four definitions of 'school' related words (e.g. school, school age, school board, schoolbook, etc.), it did not have 'school system'. In 1982, a school system definition did not exist. Consequently, I went to the current online definition which is:

*'The aggregate of the public schools of an area under the administration of an executive officer who represents and is responsible to the board of education for that area.'*

- "The 'school system' is a legal entity managing divisions of labor. It is important to note, words not found in the definition are 'student,' 'child,' or 'learning.'" (See footnote 2 on page 124 for the Merriam-Webster web reference.)

- **Brief background:** (*shorten if majority in previous session on another book topic*) My book cover bio states:

- “As an inventor, researcher, military intelligence veteran, economist, agriculturalist, systems developer, societal explorer, and author, Gary has observed and documented his findings from his many travels and experiences.”

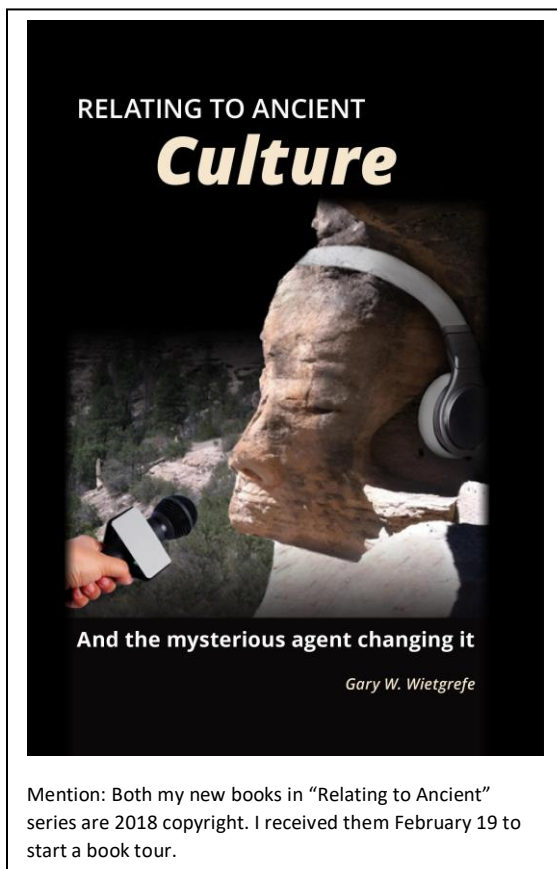
**This presentation is about the school system. Here’s a bit more of my formal education:**

- I started my formal education at grade one in a one-room country school between Gettysburg and Hoven, South Dakota. Kindergarten was not offered in our area in the late 1950s. Half-way through grade one we moved back to Ipswich where I attended another one-room school through grade four. Thereafter, we were bussed into Ipswich Public School. Although since 1972 I’ve traveled to over 30 countries, I’m a lifelong South Dakota resident: Born in Aberdeen, started school in rural Gettysburg, graduated from Ipswich, during military training in electronic intelligence gathering and radar prediction I picked up classes from the University of Maryland and University of Denver, I received degrees from South Dakota State University in Brookings. We raised our children in Pierre, had a cabin in Custer, and since 1992 called Sioux Falls home.
- My first international research was in the mid-1990s helping a student get her Master’s degree from the University of Mongolia after the former Soviet Union collapsed. I offered my first two books on the ancient crop millet, advice, and sent her research seed. That was followed by a seminar I presented at Uludag University in Bursa, Turkey in 1997 which resulted in numerous published research papers--many of which are available on ResearchGate.
- The last 14 years of my career, I covered the central and eastern U.S. and Canada (mainly Ontario), developed equipment utility patents, and I received a patent on biomass processing in 2014. Fortunately, we were able to retire early and have traveled the U.S. and mostly internationally observing various culture and learning systems since 2012.
- Some countries, like the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Western Europe, and the Canary Islands off the west African coast, I would define as fully developed. Bosnia, Mexico, Belize, and the Caribbean are certainly developing fast, but Fiji, Guatemala, and Honduras for example have undeveloped, developing, and developed areas in the same country.
- We found each society somewhat different and found shocking changes to family culture and learning systems.
- Historically, diversity was the norm. Learning was a family responsibility. Children were not grouped in same-age classrooms. In the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and certainly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the world’s education is developing around a standardized school system.

**Audience Questions:** Why do I say the School System won't last?

- Ask:
  - Do you think the school system is now a permanent institution?
  - Why?
  - If so, when was the school system as we know it today, developed?
  - As mentioned in the introduction, "school system" was not defined in the 1982 Webster Dictionary

**Rhetorical:** What are the top reasons children go to school?



▪ **Culture: pg. 81:** (*Show book. Read highlights in book*)  
"Ask any American parent why they send their children to public schools rather than home school. I have done it many times. Never once has a parent said it was for providing their children the best education. What is the number one answer? *'School offers social interaction.'*

"Home-schooling has perceived negative connotations. In the twenty-first century, primary, secondary, public and private schools, universities, and businesses use the Internet for online learning. I have asked teachers the same question but modified it to online learning. Teachers oppose non-school online learning. Why? The number one reason: *'Online learning lacks social interaction that schools offer.'*

"That means the public is paying thousands of dollars each year for each child with the primary goal to socialize."

As I was flying back to begin my book tour, I picked up the Denver Post newspaper.



- **Denver Post Feb.-17, 2018:**  
 “Facebook is forging ahead with its messaging app for kids, despite child experts who have pressed the company to shut it down and others who question Facebook’s financial support....  
 “Messenger Kids” lets kids under 13 chat with friends and family. It displays no ads and lets parents approve who their children message.”

**Social Media transition:**

If you think social media like Facebook, Whatsapp, YouTube, Twitter, Google Plus, and others are only going to stay focused on social exchange, guess again. Youth education and social life have moved from traditional family sustenance to family businesses and neighborhood socializing into government sponsored 20<sup>th</sup> century school systems occupying our youth.

21<sup>st</sup> Century socializing has moved from schools to wireless media. Internet systems, like Google, target students to enhance studying. Using web-based search engine with migration to Google Plus and Facebook’s Messenger Kids are transition tools into online learning. As I wrote:

**Learning pg. 390:** “Wireless communications is old technology—not new, not innovative. It predates radio.”

I further explain in **Culture pg. 224-225:**

- “Many battles in the next couple of decades will pit a half-century old school system against world history. Two completely different learning systems will battle: the school monopoly’s wired world versus the ancient and twenty-first century wireless world. One fears technology, the other accepts it. History proves technology wins. Will we have enough minds developed to functionally use it for learning?

“Late 1880s wireless transmissions created opportunities for a twenty-first-century wireless learning system. Obstacles exist. We have entered another world movement—a school weaning process.

“Bye school bus route. Bye school buildings. Bye, bye teacher standing in front of the classroom!

“The School system is like a telegraph wire in a wireless world.”

### **Yes. Schools outlived their usefulness--wired operating in a wireless world.**

- Everything must be sustainable—even the school system.
  - **Culture – pg. 186-187:** “All functional systems will naturally migrate to more efficient production. Agriculture has.” (Give seed example from using 2% for planting seed to half of one percent for seed.)

Likewise, the school system, if it is truly an efficient educational system, should produce more skilled workers with fewer school staff. As the developed world has, through efficiencies, migrated to service economies, schools should need fewer staff and a lower percentage of the populations should need college degrees. Why? Servants should take less time to train than technical experts and managers.

Available resources will only cover inefficiencies until more efficient systems develop. Those resources, like communications and computers, are available for education.”
  - **Learning – pg. 48:** “Today’s school system is not sustainable. Teachers, the school system, and traditional school buildings are becoming outdated, like costly textbooks intended to be used for many years.”

As an economist, I learned **Efficiency always prevails**, although obstacles may last decades or even 100’s of years. [Repeat: **Efficiency always prevails.**]

- The world has had a resource cushion that historically allowed ignorance to prevail. World population has grown requiring efficiencies for sustainability. Currently the world’s population is about 7.4 billion with the UN expecting 11.2 billion people on earth by 2100—the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Can we continue to feed, cloth, and shelter a growing population unknown in world history?
- Are our youth focused on sustaining the world’s population? No.
- 21<sup>st</sup> century is unique.
  - **Learning pg. 295:** “A recent survey asked participants what they could not live without. Youth and young adults ranked Internet and the electronic toy, cell phone, at the top (mentioning they ate and slept with it). A similar British survey

revealed the Internet, phone, and a cuppa (tea or coffee) were top choices. Food, water, shelter, and sleep did not make the top 20.”

Products listed in the surveys required services, like communications and food services.

I briefly hinted that schools should need fewer staff because service workers do not need as much formal education as technical fields.

Production, processing, and manufacturing are in competition with services created by formal education level.

- **Culture – pg. 185-186:** “Increased education level creates more service workers. Service workers are a higher percentage of the workforce now than in the late 1950s when the U.S. federal government started subsidizing college student loans.  
“Did those loans develop an innovative or a service economy? Obviously, the answer is a service economy.  
“If student loans were subsidized for an innovative economy, to develop a space program for example, why are many of today’s college graduates underemployed?  
“Lacking skills and mental processes to be innovative, they migrate to service industries.”

This is not the first time formal education was in question. Complaints about high school learning started before President Eisenhower’s college student loan program.

- **Learning – pg. 368:** “For decades...professionals have complained about poor schooling. Writer and poet, Janet Lewis Winters (1899-1998), was a classmate of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Earnest Hemingway (1899-1961). On May 8, 1952...Winters wrote...what does one learn about writing in high school? You are lucky if you’re not taught to write badly.”

All systems change. The school system, as now defined, is unique in history. The current system did not exist when I was a child. It changed in my lifetime.

- It wasn’t a part of the curriculum, but as a six-year-old I learned to track game like our ancestors the first half of first grade. That was common for boys throughout history. My sister and I often walked to the one-room country school. I remember seeing my first bluebird one morning going to school. It was on an electrical high-line wire beside the shelterbelt surrounding our ranch house.

- The first half of my first grade, I would sit in a school desk, maybe practicing drawing “A” or “B” or “C”. I think it was at ten o’clock all the boys would go outside to the surrounding fields and sloughs tracking deer, coyote, raccoons, skunk, pheasants, grouse, fox or whatever. The older boys taught me how to identify each track.
- At noon we’d go back to school. Eat our sack lunch, play kick-ball or throw softball outside and school would restart—maybe at 1:00. Our only teacher would call everybody in and we would sit in our desks, often sleeping, while the teacher would read a story. Then, she would call one of the older kids to the front to have them read their story or maybe make them spell words on the blackboard. I can’t every remember getting called to the front that first few months in school.
- At afternoon recess, I assume about 2:15, the boys would go outside and try to find the deer, coyote, raccoons, skunks, or pheasants we tracked in the morning. When school was supposed to be over, we’d walk back to the school, grab our lunch bucket and walk home.
- That was how I started the first grade. Luckily, the next 3 ½ years in country school I had better country school teachers.
- School systems change.
- For example, we didn’t have kindergarten in our country school in the late 1950s.
- Another example: Students did the janitor’s work. Students cleaned the blackboard every afternoon, swept the floor, took out the wastebasket and burned it in our school’s burning barrel. We put up the flag in the morning; took it down in the afternoon, and folded it. We had a small wooden toilet outside. Students cleaned the toilet and insured paper was available. Our school had no janitor, no indoor toilet, no running water, no telephone, no radio, no television, no kitchen, no refrigerator, no lunchroom, no organized sports except organized “Relay” events at surrounding schools, no music programs except the annual Christmas program, and certainly no paved parking lot. No paved roads—gravel lead to our school.
- My first four years of school, we had just one room, a few desks, and a teacher up front.
- From the last 1800s through the 1950s, United States rural areas were dotted with one-room country schools—often one per township (6 square miles = 36 sections of land). The school system changed with nationwide consolidation about 1960.
- In the one-room country schools, were we deprived? No. Did we learn? Yes. How many or our children today could find or produce their own food, remember their parents phone numbers, do mental arithmetic, or find a way home from an

“away game” if their bus driver didn’t return them and their cellphone battery went dead?

- School systems change. Many things are no longer taught in school. Curriculum is being set at the state and national level, despite local needs. Children are no longer grouped in classrooms with those older and younger. Lower grades used to learn lessons from upper grades. In one classroom grade schools, upper grade students are no longer embarrassed in an oral quiz when a younger student can answer the teacher’s question. School memories of mine and older generations are of previous systems. For example, gadgets are replacing memory at home and in school. Calculators have replaced calculations. We are training our youth to use electronic artificial memory. Yes, we are training a society to forget.
- You may want to attend my presentation “Why are we losing our memory? Its impact on society.”

The title of this presentation is “Why the School System Won’t Last.” If the school system won’t last, what will replace it? How will it occur? First, I ask:

- **Culture – pg. 49:** “Why were teenagers old enough to work eight hundred years ago, but not today?”
- **Learning – pg. 385:** “Children given everything, including free or subsidized formal education into their twenties, have no basic needs for shelter, food, and water. Consequently, their minds have not developed an ability to satisfy a need. Hence, when they finally do get a job, they look for one that minimizes risks because they have never been trained to deal with it. Today’s teachers are a product of that risk minimizing system; hence the teach it.”
- **Culture – pg. 125:** “What age do parents give responsibility? If it is at college graduation, they are two decades too late.”
- **Learning – pg. 217:** “Instantaneous communications, apprenticeships, and locally driven systems must bring today’s youth to the speed at which the world is moving beyond them. Staying in school (without working) into their twenties is no longer an option.”

Modern industry has developed limiting physical labor. Modern communication has reached out beyond a neighborhood, beyond a school. It reaches the world—socially and educationally. Industry is developing without the need to move. Yes, we no longer need to “move” to work. Digital technology has greatly reduced physical movement at work and at play. Secondly, in the past we had to “move” to advance our education and find employment. Both mother and father can work full-time or part-time from home and employ their skills worldwide. Our youth have picked up digital communication and analytical skills outside of school.



- **Learning – pg. 396-397:** “Being more capable of operating gadgets, young imaginations would create more efficient operations. Markets by nature would shift jobs, thereby allowing moves to jobs that are needed and wanted.  
“Just to be different, youth can be counted on to find alternative ways of doing a job.  
“The school system monopoly will fight the change. So what?  
“The school system, a division of labor, has been principally primarily and secondary education, but through delayed maturity of students, the system shifted to the college and university level.  
“Initial collapse of the school system is being revealed at the university level. It will migrate to youth. Online classes are being taken without setting foot on mortar or surrounded by overindulgent brick. Symbols of education are crumbling not by lack of enrollment, but by lack of attendance.

[Repeat: **Symbols of education are crumbling not by lack of enrollment, but by lack of attendance.**]

“Looking back, I see grandma’s apron carrying eggs and teaching me how to gather from the henhouse. Clearly, I see our Harmony Center’s one-room schoolhouse. I am sitting in my first-grade desk learning by listening to seventh and eighth graders upfront giving their lesson. Many decades later, it is easy to see independent Faceless teenagers not following in the footsteps of their college-educated, debt-laden parents. **Times have changed.**”

[Repeat: “**Times have changed.**”]

A school system is no longer needed for education to communicate ideas or to socialize. School systems changed over the years.

- In the early 1500s Dr. Martin Luther, using the new communications technology—the printing press, developed schools to help youth read—the Bible.
- In the mid-1800s kindergarten created local, part-time jobs for mothers outside the home. Mothers shared experience and taught children of others.
- Not until the mid-1900s did World War II created manufacturing jobs for women and men outside the traditional family business.
- During my lifetime, the school system became the child’s social organization parents and teachers increasingly relied upon. Yes. This is the 21<sup>st</sup> century.  
“**Times have changed**” again.

- **Learning –pg. 397-398:** “Through the ages, seniors remember troubles of the past and must have faith the Faceless younger generation will continue to support them and their family.

Edward Eggleston (1837-1902), a contemporary of Abraham Lincoln, in 1889 wrote about Lincoln being self-taught:

“(His) habit of close and careful thinking, and this practice in clothing his thoughts in words that exactly fitted them, was the best education in the world. Many boys and girls who have the good schools and good books never learned to think for themselves.’

“After more than a century of mandatory good schools and good books, the Faceless again have opportunity to ‘...learn to think for themselves.

“Throughout history, family and businesses trained youth. Young minds initiated schemes, gained experience, and advocated change. Businesses with access to transportation, communications, and youth ideas built societies when they had freedom to change.

“Fortunately, freedom to learn continues to exist outside restrained systems. Many parents give responsibilities to their youth who fortunately are more likely to lead society.”

### **Times have changed!**

**Culture – pg. 111:** “Never in human history have so many lived so long off the efforts of so few.

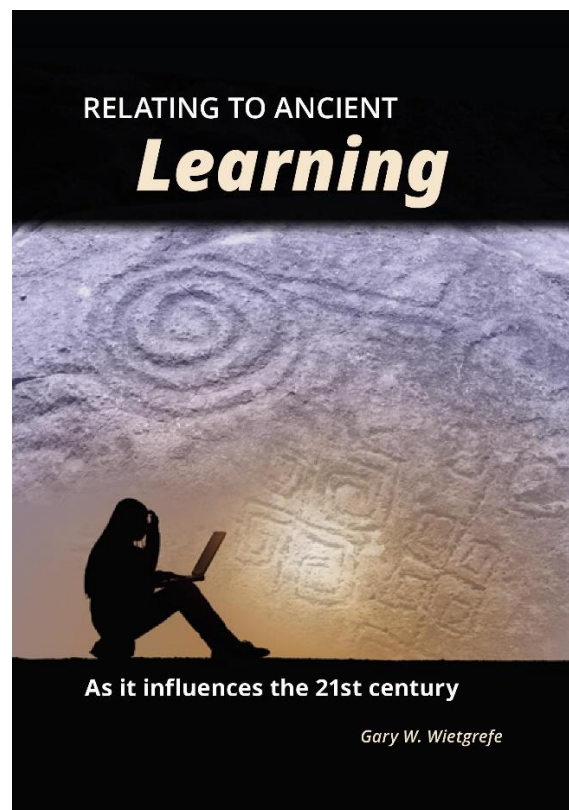
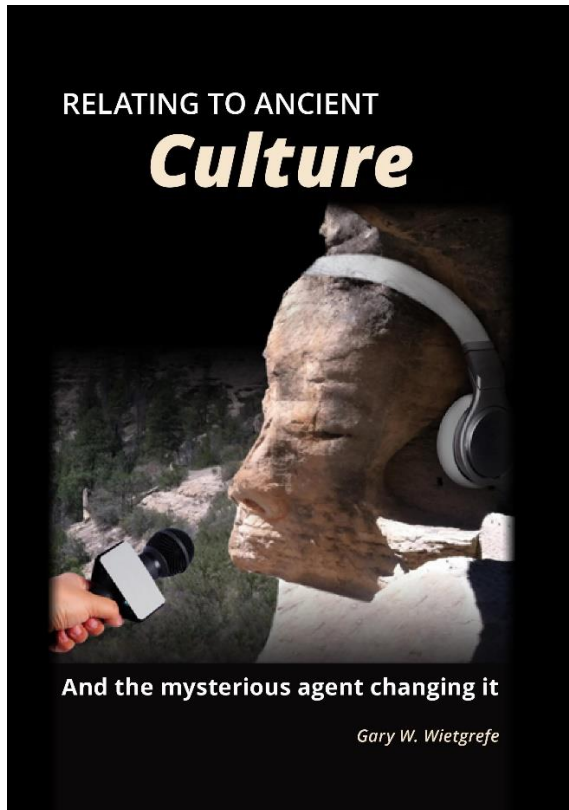
“After spending the most years in world history being formally educated, more young adults are living off older workers. Never in human history have young adults been structurally blocked from work and a decreasing part of the labor force.”

- **Learning – pg. 350:** “...Some of the world’s most fascinating and innovative problem solvers of the past two centuries were independent thinkers. School was an aid, not a solution.”
- **Learning – pg. 371:** “Experience cannot be passed on; it must be learned.”
- **Learning – pg. 386:** “The world does not survive on the smart girls or guys, or those who spent the most time in school. It survives and changes when people act, work, think, are responsible, and take risks.”

**It is evident the school system, as it is currently operating, won't last.**

**Learning – pg. 398:** “Questions remain how it will change and who will do it.”

Hold up both books:



For more background: Read my new **Relating to Ancient** series of books:

- **Culture and the mysterious agent changing it;** and
- **Learning as it influences the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

**Where can you get my books?**

- My website: [www.RelatingtoAncients.com](http://www.RelatingtoAncients.com) lists worldwide suppliers of hardcover & e-books. My New York hardcover distributor will supply all channels; as well, my e-book distributor has downloadable versions for mobile readers.