

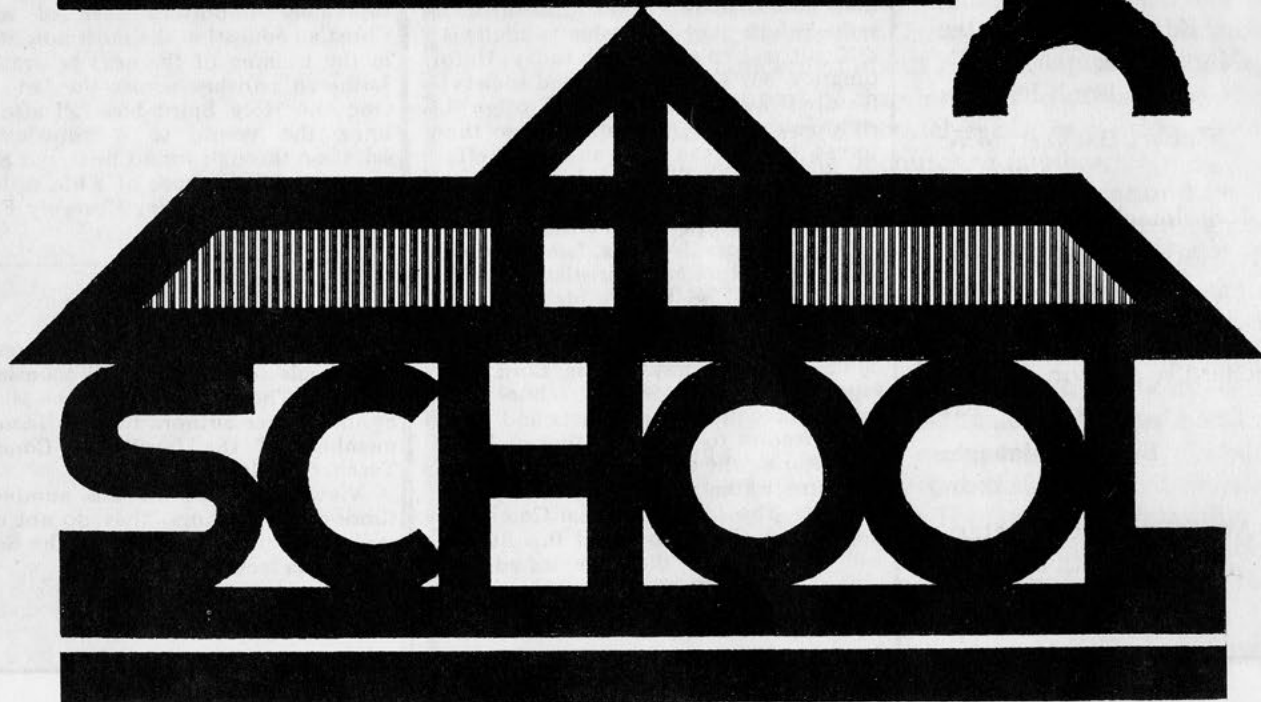
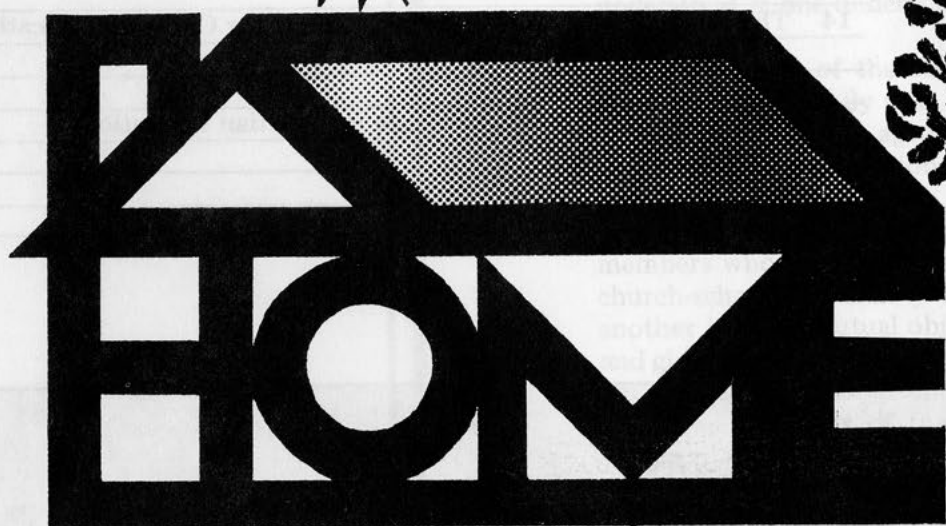
ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Fall, 1979

Vol. 14, No. 1

Concordia College
ARCHIVES
Seward, Nebraska



in Christian Education is published three times a year in fall, winter, and spring. The Editor, Rev. Dr. Robert L. Rasmussen, is located at Concordia College, Seward, Nebraska 68134. The Editor's office is also in the school building. The Editor's office is also in the school building. The Editor's office is also in the school building.

Fall, 1979
Vol. 14, No. 1

ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

HOME AND SCHOOL

3 A Fore Word

by M. J. Stelmachowicz

4 Editorials

7 A Home and School Relationship Creed

by Carl Christian

14 The Responsibility of Lutheran Teachers for Christian Education

by H. James Boldt

20 The Responsibility of The Home in Christian Education

by Paul Grabarkewitz

26 Book Reviews

Editor

Glenn C. Einspahr, Ed. D.

Editorial Committee

Marvin Bergman, Ed. D.

Book Reviews

Gilbert Daenzer, M.A.

Associate

M.J. Stelmachowicz, Ph. D.

Associate

Orville C. Walz, Ed. D.

Editorials

Richard Wiegmann, M.F.A.

Art

Business Manager

W. Th. Janzow

Administrative Secretary

Elizabeth Schmidt

EDITOR'S NOTES

To bring up children in the way that they should go and to instill in them the values which they will value as adults is a difficult task to accomplish today. Unfortunately our secularly oriented society is featured by the media and often by children's peers. We cannot erase these forces, but we can make an earnest effort to combine the Christian home and the Christian school's influences into a valiant team effort to offset secularism.

The authors for this *Issues* provide Christian parents and Christian teachers a resource pool of potent ideas whereby they can become an effective team that is working toward joint efforts to bring up children in the way of the Lord. It is especially timely, as this school term gains momentum, for parents and teachers to resolve to work together on behalf of nurturing the children whom they love and for whom they share a common concern. The *Issues* Editorial Committee hopes that those who read this number will use many of the time tested ideas

presented in the following pages in the supremely important task of making Christian education the most potent force in the training of the next generation in Lutheran parishes across the land. May God the Holy Spirit bless all efforts to bring the young to a knowledge of salvation through Jesus Christ, our Savior, and to the acceptance of a life style that is truly pleasing to our Heavenly Father.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Mr. H. James Boldt is superintendent of schools for the South Wisconsin District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Other authors for this *Issues* are members of the faculty of Concordia Teachers College.

Views expressed in this number are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the position of the Seward Concordia faculty.



CIRCULATION POLICY — *ISSUES . . . in Christian Education* is published three times a year by the faculty of Concordia Teachers College, Seward, Nebraska 68434. A copy of *ISSUES* is sent free to each church, school, district and synodical office in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Copies are also sent to high schools, colleges, and universities affiliated with the Synod. Individuals wishing personal copies may obtain them as follows: Single copy @ 75¢ each; Subscription @ \$2.00 per year; 10 or more copies mailed to the same address @ 35¢ per copy.

A FORE WORD

The combination of responsibility between church and home for Christian education can perhaps best be understood if one understands what the church really is and is not.

If one thinks of the church only as "institution" apart from the family unit, then the families could be viewed as bargaining agents or pressure groups who try to get the institution, or church-school, to do what families want. If, however, the church is properly perceived as the body of Christ composed of members who are also members of families, then the church-school and family become supportive of one another in their mutual objectives of doing God's will and glorifying His name.

Christian families promote and support Christian education programs of the church not only because of the presence of children but because they themselves are the church. The church, in serving Christian children and all family members, is ministering and nourishing itself. But Christian church schools should also be concerned about ministering to families who are not yet part of the church. Too often some of our schools do not see themselves also as mission agencies of outreach to the unchurched families.

This issue of *Issues* focuses on relationships between the roles we play as Christian family members and as members of a congregation and/or of a Christian faculty in a church-school. It is not so much a question of who is more responsible for Christian education, the family or the church. Edifying and nurturing fellow members of Christ's body is the responsibility of every Christian. Various part-time and full-time agencies and programs of the church help all of us to carry out this individual responsibility more effectively. The important question is, "How can all of us work together more efficiently to carry out God's will and apply the truths of His Holy Word to the lives of His people?"

M. J. Stelmachowicz

editorials

YOUR CHILD'S TRICKY TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIPS

Church, school and home must consider their relationship because they share the responsibility for the growth of our children in favor with God and man. On the surface it appears we are talking about a relationship between two institutions, but really there are three parties involved. The child who travels between the home and school is the main business of both. Because we are dealing with a three party relationship we must see that there is a constant danger built in. At any time it may seem to one of the parties that the other two are aligned against him or her.

There is a saying that "Two's company, three's a crowd." We have "love triangles" which mostly prove the negative image of the saying. A parent with the best of intentions may intrude upon the relations between a child and spouse and all but ruin a marriage. A couple deeply in love may see problems when the first child is born. Any family with three children knows what can happen between siblings. We've all seen our child playing happily with one friend until a third appears only to have a good time spoiled when a fight occurs. Triangular relationships are potentially a danger to everyone involved.

Christians have an answer to the dangers of the triangle. The Doctrine of the Trinity shows us how God is at work among us to make His love and will known. God the Father created the world and all that is in it; God the Son came to

save us from our sin, and God the Holy Spirit comes to guide into truth and comfort us. God's perfect love is on display in the Holy Trinity and through it we know that the three configuration is good. If we only had our human triangles to look at we might wonder if three could ever bode well for man.

Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod parochial schools are the result of church and homes united to help children grow in Christian life to full maturity. Such schools are the third element in a relationship formed on behalf of our children. The success of this cooperation is seen in both the faithfulness of the graduates to their Lord and the continued growth of this school system.

But, any good tool can be misused. The very fact that our schools do train our children so well in the knowledge of their Lord, the Bible, Lutheran doctrine and daily devotional life can lull the home into ease about the very necessity for continuing these aspects of learning in the home. Furthermore, the educational success of the Christian school today sometimes leads families that are not a part of the church to bring their children to the schools. The result of this can be to place the children between conflicting value systems. Children soon notice the difference between home and school and begin to make choices that are disruptive to either or both sources of their values. Such homes dilute the Christian nurture goals of the school by failing to supply the same nurture at home.

We all have a tendency to side with our children when questions about their rightness arise. Our children do not escape noting this tendency and at times use the home to their own advantage. Any question between pupil and teacher can evolve into trouble if the home can be convinced that the school and teacher are at fault for the pupil's difficulties. Where and how do we determine the truth in such situations? All teachers are not perfect and many probably do need more help in establishing good relations with their students, but positive help is hard to achieve when sides are taken.

Competition among students is a natural kind of thing. How do the home and school help the child to make competition positive rather than destructive? At what point do we intervene to help our child hold his own against those who taunt, tease or use other means for building self at the expense of another? Some kind of ally is needed by the child to help fight the battles of life, but here too, taking sides may not be in the best interest of growth.

General as these examples are, they point to the continuing presence of dangerous and potentially destructive triangles in the Christian growth experiences of our children. All point to the need for

the home to be actively Christian. This includes meeting the needs of our children for a very visible display of Christian values in the home. The home has so many pressures going against the building of Christian family that it needs the help of the school and the church to stand against the dangers. Children need to have mutually supporting poles of positive influence of equal strength as they try themselves the skills required for practicing and growing in the Christian faith. Not any one — child, home, school — alone will completely fill the child's need for help in this growth. Home and school may alternate or compliment and even at times they may be in conflict in holding the child to truth. In growing in faith, it may at times be the child who helps both school and home see the strength of living in Christ.

That we are devoting this edition of *Issues in Christian Education* to this question of home and church school relations indicates that somewhere some strains are being felt. How are we going to continue the education of our homes in their responsibility for the Christian education of their children? Particularly the non-Christian or inactive Christian homes lack the motivation for full cooperation and need this education the most! How will we address the problems within the home and in society-at-large which are causing strains to appear?

We live in an age of specialists. Is it time for our church schools to consider the use of a specialist teacher for work with pupils and their homes precisely at the points of conflict or need for more responsibility in the education of the child? Each teacher might be trained in such skills. The principal of each school might also be so trained. Pastors for the most part could do the job. But each of these persons also falls victim to other pressing scheduled responsibilities. Perhaps a Social Minister trained for the task of strengthening family life could be the educator for the homes and children with such needs. We can perhaps take some of the strain off child, home and school by willfully including such a person who will become an advocate for all three parties.

The potentially negative triangles of relationship can only be made positive by fitting them into the Holy Trinity of the Creator, Savior and Comforter. This is done not by preaching or teaching alone, but by placing our efforts more closely beside the home or in the home so we can get to know the people who make it as it is.

William Billow

HOW DO YOU USE PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES?

The parent-teacher conference is one of those areas of education which was once considered innovative but is now incorporated into the school calendar as automatically as registration and Christmas vacation. Its rationale for being held is every bit as valid as before; however, its mere presence on the calendar does not insure maximum usage of this important vehicle of education.

Idealistically speaking, the parent-teacher conference is held to provide the proper opportunity, time and setting for parents and teachers to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of all facets of the child's development. Properly structured, parents and teachers leave such an encounter with a deeper understanding of the child, a knowledge of the child's growth, and with redefined immediate and future goals toward which the school and home can work together to help the child realize his God-given potential in all areas.

Idealistically speaking that is, for despite the best of intentions, few educators can overcome the inherent pitfalls of dealing with an entire classroom of parents on an individual basis via a conference schedule that doesn't allow for errors of punctuality. Too often the schedule has to be so closely orchestrated that no allowance can be made for the unavoidable tardiness occasionally incurred when you are dealing with parents of small children. This is especially frustrating for a parent with conferences scheduled for several children. At this point the built-in time constraints allow neither the parent nor the teacher to interact very actively.

Once the pressure of time constraints has been alleviated, parents and teachers are freed to communicate about the needs and goals of the child. Perhaps some prior communication arrangement might help both parents and teachers to focus on the concerns, goals, or joys that they wish to share. This also helps to create an environment in which the teacher, when it is deemed necessary, can give some guidance and encouragement to parents in the challenging job of parenthood.

As educators we say we educate the whole child so that someday he might successfully take his place in society. Our conferences should reflect this goal. This means that the conference should involve the child's growth emotionally, spiritually, physically, socially, and of course academically. Sadly, it is only too easy for the conference to slip into a mere show and tell time in which the teacher describes the past academic performance of the child and the parent is the audience. Rather, with a focus on the future,

the conference will center around goals which need to be established for the child and how parents and teachers can work together to accomplish these goals.

This year it might be profitable for teachers, administrators, and parents to evaluate the type of conferences they wish to hold instead of automatically scheduling the traditional variety. With God's blessings they can then bring to fruition a worthy educational endeavor.

Richard Luebbe

THE PARENT-CHURCH CONNECTION

Statements relating to who owns the responsibility for education often arise in conversation of and between parents and educators. "If parents would only teach their children to behave, I would get some teaching done," or "If teachers did their job, I wouldn't have to teach my child at home evenings." Such statements are indicative of concern over the roles of parents and teachers in the education of children. For education to be a beneficial experience for children it is necessary for these roles to be understood, clarified and mutually agreed upon.

The Book of Proverbs addresses itself to the duties of parents. These include: teaching, training, providing for, controlling, disciplining and loving their children. Chapters 13-22 speak of the role of parents in education. One often quoted verse admonishes, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6) The particular training discussed in Proverbs focuses on the development of the total child — the spiritual, social, educational and affective aspects of development. This can be an overwhelming task.

Parents say, "But I'm not trained; I don't know how to discipline; all I know about parenting is what my parents did with me." These are legitimate concerns. They also point up the importance of the Christian parent as a model for children to follow.

Did Christ mean for parents to do this modeling alone as single family units? I hardly think so.

In John 21:15 Jesus is addressing Simon Peter. Jesus asks Peter, "Do you love me?" Peter responds, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus admonishes Peter, "Feed my lambs." At this point Christ is directing His church to educate children. This commission of Christ is used along with other Biblical references to support the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's Christian day schools and other agencies of education for its children. Through His commission

to the church, Christ provided the "support system" needed by Christian parents to do an effective job of educating their children.

Without a doubt the prime responsibility for educating children lies with their parents, but the church has an important contribution to make too. The church, through its educational agencies, programs, and activities, furnishes guidance and support to Christian parents as they work prayerfully to "train up a child..." In effect what we have is a partnership between parents and church, the goal of which is to develop Christian children to the maximum of their God-given potential and to prepare them to become the future Christian leaders of their church and their country.

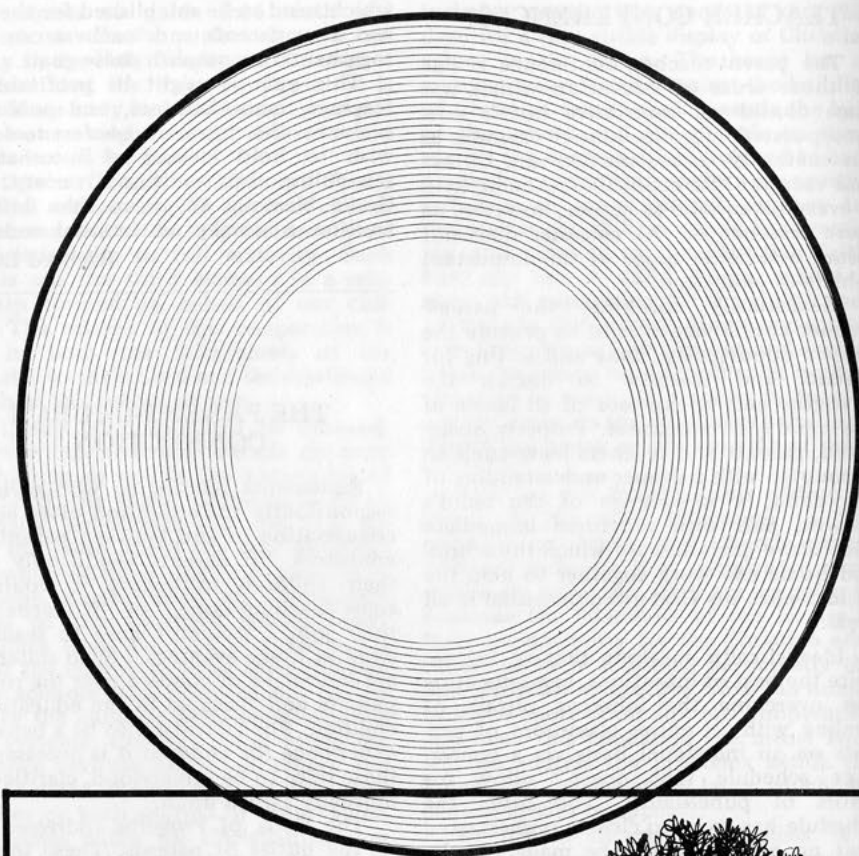
What are some of the things this partnership of parents and church can do to reach the goal? Together we can provide examples of mature Christian living at home and within the church. As children learn to give and accept love, they can practice this learning within the accepting context of the Christian school. Parents are also involved in helping their children develop a set of values. Values clarification requires refinement and this refinement can take place in the home and under the guidance of Christian day school teachers.

Witnessing to their faith is done quite freely by small children. If all children see the significant adults around them as being involved in witnessing, it will hopefully be a reinforcement leading toward the perpetuation of this ability. Providing a Christ-centered environment in which to live, learn, work and play offers a foundation upon which to build a commitment to pass the love of Christ on to the next generation. Sound like a big job? It is.

It is helpful to look at this awesome responsibility in the light of Christ's promise, "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up." (Acts 20:32) Prayerfully, by God's grace we, parents and church together as partners, can accomplish this task of training children.

The command of God to bring up their children in the way they should go was given to parents. The church, pastors, teachers, and the extended Christian family should give vigorous support and assistance to parents to enable them to carry out their first great commission, to equip the saints for whom God holds all of us accountable.

Judy Preuss



A Home & School Relationship CREED For Parents and Teachers

by Carl Christian

Christian education has been defined many times and in many ways. Several years ago, Dr. W. Th. Janzow, the guest speaker in a summer Lutheran Hour address, described Christian education as:

Something beautifully positive and enrichingly comprehensive,

A perspective to all learning,

A framework within which all learning should take place,

A value orientation against all of life,

An outlook from which all of the experiences of man are viewed,

A lens which brings everything that we learn and everything that we experience into focus with the practical answer to man's root problems in the idea and practice of Christian love.

Christian education does not happen only at certain times or in specified places. However, when we think of Christian education for children, the greater number of such educational experiences will occur either in the home or in school, and will involve parents and teachers.

This article will (1) present four statements of belief concerning the relationship which should exist between parents and teachers if children are to receive the maximum benefits of Christian education, and (2) offer practical suggestions for putting these beliefs into practice. Although most of the sugges-

tions and examples will be offered within the framework of the full-time Lutheran school teacher, teachers in part-time agencies of Christian education also adapt many of these practices to their own individual situations.

I

WE BELIEVE that Christian education is the shared responsibility of both the home and the church.

"Christian education is a responsibility of both the home and the church." This is a basic position of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, as expressed in the Bylaws of the synodical *Handbook*. The statement then continues:

Since both home and church must do their full duty, each in its own sphere and both in cooperation with each other, the Synod urges —

a. that every congregation in the Synod provide a program of Christian family life education;

b. that every congregation in the Synod be mindful of its great responsibility to provide an effective program of Christian education for all age levels. God has clearly set forth His will regarding Christian education, but He has not identified the specific agencies we are to use. Full-time Christian schools are ideal at all grade levels, for they aim at developing a Christian world view and provide for the continuous nurture of Christian faith and life. Where full-time schools are not possible, the congregation must bend every effort to achieve the maximum development of the part-time agencies.

The writer accepts the validity of the shared responsibility principle, but he also maintains that the primary responsibility for Christian education, whenever circumstances make this possible, should be assumed by the home. The primary role of parents is illustrated in the format of the baptismal service practiced in our congregation. Prior to administering the sacrament, the pastor asks the parents of the child to promise that they will bring up their child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. He then asks the sponsors to pledge their support and to assume this major responsibility if the parents are unable to do so. Finally, he turns to the congregation and asks all present to assist these parents in providing a Christian education for their children.

Every Christian teacher recognizes that some parents cannot or will not assume the responsibility for the Christian education of their children. Many of the parents of children in our schools are themselves unschooled in the Christian Faith and, therefore, unskilled as Christian educators. In such instances the church and its teachers must be willing to assume the major responsibility for the Christian education of the children until the parents are able and willing to do so.

II

WE BELIEVE that there must be an open, two-way channel of communication between the home and the school.

An ideal situation in a Christian school would be one where parents and teachers communicate a sense of love and trust toward each other as they work together toward mutual Christ-centered goals. Parents would accept their children's teachers as persons who are genuinely interested in the welfare of their pupils and who, therefore, need the wholehearted support of the home. Teachers would communicate to the home an appreciation of the parents' role as well as their own love and concern for each child.

Such an ideal situation is pleasant and easy to describe but difficult to achieve. Most of us feel uncomfortable when we leave our own familiar surroundings and enter a new and different environment. Most parents of children just entering school have not been in a school building since they themselves were students, and many feel somewhat threatened by professional educators. Teachers must take the initiative to build a warm working relationship between home and school. Among those steps which can be taken to open channels of communication and obtain parental support and cooperation are

home visitations, parent information meetings, carefully planned parent-teacher conferences, and a planned system for keeping parents informed of their child's school progress.

Planned visits by the teacher to the home of each child prior to the opening of the school year may be difficult to achieve because of transportation problems, working parents, and the press of other matters related to the beginning of school. However, when these visits are carefully planned and sensitively executed, they can contribute much to a child's chances for success in the classroom. A well-planned visit can establish a positive relationship between home and school, help to prevent problems and misunderstandings later in the year, and set the stage for parent involvement. The following are suggestions for making successful home visitations:

1. Make an appointment. Contact parents in advance by phone or letter and let them suggest a convenient time for a visit.
2. Dress neatly, but, especially in lower income areas, don't overdress.
3. Don't stare as you enter the home or give the impression that you are inspecting the home furnishings.
4. Don't ask questions which may be interpreted to be prying into the family's affairs.
5. Be prepared for the unexpected. One teacher who regularly makes home visits in a low-income rural area advised: "If a hog walks through the parlor, pet it. One did, and I did — almost!"
6. If your purpose is to obtain information about a new child in your classroom, let the parent do the talking. Don't monopolize the conversation.
7. Don't stay too long; twenty to thirty minutes is usually sufficient. Save something to talk about at your next meeting, and they'll be eager to have you return.

8. Have a plan or outline ready. Parents prefer the teacher who is businesslike as well as friendly. A typical initial home visit agenda might look like this:

- 1 - 2 minutes — Greetings and introductions; present the new Parent Handbook; provide registration information.
- 5 - 10 minutes — Secure information about the child, e.g., special interests, health concerns, academic strengths or weaknesses.
- 5 - 10 minutes — Update the permanent record; review phone numbers, emergency numbers and the like to make certain records are accurate; secure any additional information desired.
- 5 - 10 minutes — Give a preview of special programs or events for the new school year, e.g.,

revised reporting procedures, a new music program, or enrichment opportunities for pupils in your room.

1 - 2 minutes — Positive closing remarks, e.g., "I'm looking forward to having Judy in my classroom," or "I hope you'll visit our classroom soon."

Although home visits are typically made during the summer recess, some teachers regularly make visits throughout the school year. A visit to the home might also be appropriate to welcome a new baby brother or sister in a family, when a pupil has had a prolonged absence due to illness, when parents are unable to come to school for a conference or seem reluctant to do so, or when a problem involving the child seems to be emerging. On the other hand, if parents seem very cool to the idea of a home visit, it would be best not to insist upon coming. Ordinarily teachers can look forward to home visitations with anticipation and then look back upon the visits with satisfaction, knowing that the time was well spent and that their pupil will benefit from the effort.

Another helpful way to establish a positive relationship between the home and school early in the school year is to conduct group conferences or parent information meetings. These meetings are often held in conjunction with one of the first Parent-Teacher League meetings.

A few key points to keep in mind in planning group conferences are:

1. Parents are interested in teachers as personalities, and teachers should give parents a chance to know them as "real people."
2. Parents are eager to learn about their child's school program and will appreciate an honest picture of it. They want to know about good things that are happening and have a right to know about difficulties which keep the program from being as effective as it could be.
3. Parents dislike being "talked down to." They resent educational jargon or "pedagogy" that is meaningless to a lay audience.
4. There are many things which will be of common interest to all parents, but if it is possible to spend a minute or two informally with each parent, this will be especially appreciated.
5. Try to include as much parent participation as possible in the meeting. Encourage questions and try to answer them honestly.
6. Try to help parents to understand that through their support of the school, they are personally responsible for the Christian education opportunities provided for their children.
7. Humor, friendliness, informality, and a spirit of

Christian community should pervade the whole meeting. Try to have parents leave with the feeling that they would like to come back again.

Many faculties have discovered that individual conferences between parents and teachers can be a very effective way of building positive home and school relationships, as well as interpreting a child's progress report to his parents. A useful tool for preparing parents for such a conference is the short filmstrip, "Parent-Teacher Conferences."¹

The following is a checklist for conducting a successful parent-teacher conference:

1. Make careful preparation.
2. Ensure privacy.
3. Provide an informal setting.
4. Set a time limit for the meeting.
5. Take time to establish rapport.
6. Begin with a positive note.
7. Encourage parents to talk.
8. Listen attentively.
9. Develop an attitude of mutual cooperation.
10. Delay making numerous definite suggestions yourself.
11. Encourage suggestions from parents.
12. Use practical suggestions from parents as a springboard for action.
13. Summarize the points covered in the conference.
14. Make plans together for future actions.
15. End the conference on a note of continuing cooperation.
16. Make notes after the parents have left.
17. Evaluate the conference and note suggestions for possible changes in future conferences.

A worthwhile "brainstorming" activity for a faculty would be to compile a list of ways in which the channels of communication between the home and the school can be kept open after the initial home visits and conferences have been completed. A few suggestions to get a list started are offered below:

1. Take five minutes a day to write a short positive note to the parents of one of your pupils. Depending upon the size of your class, you'll be reporting to each set of parents every four to six weeks.
2. If home visits are not possible, telephone the parents of each pupil in your classroom before the school year begins.
3. Again, if home visits are not possible, write a warm letter to the parents of each of your pupils introducing yourself and outlining what you hope to accomplish for the child with the help of the parents in the coming year.
4. Since more mothers than fathers usually attend

parent conferences, arrange a strictly "Dad's Day" conference once a year.

5. Consider the possibility of holding evening office hours once a week for the convenience of parents who want to talk about their child's progress in school.

6. Invite groups of parents into your home for group conferences. Let the parents set the agenda.

Finally, all Christian teachers would do well to consider the Scriptural advice offered in Proverbs 15:2 as they seek to improve their communication skills: "A wise teacher makes learning a joy; a rebellious teacher spouts foolishness." (*Living Bible* paraphrase)

III

WE BELIEVE that parents can contribute meaningful ideas and valuable services to the program of the school.

The 1976 Gallup Poll report on "Public Attitudes Toward the Public Schools" suggests that an interesting phenomenon is occurring at the national level. (*Phi Delta Kappan*, October, 1976) The report states:

For many decades, teachers and parents have tacitly accepted something akin to a "territorial imperative." The province of the school was not to be invaded by parents; conversely, the province of the home was off limits to teachers. This arrangement is rapidly falling apart as it becomes apparent that the schools cannot function properly unless parents cooperate with teachers, and unless teachers give guidance to parents. It is obvious to parents, and to the public at large, that a new kind of shared responsibility must be accepted if students are to gain most from their education.

The report also suggests that parents are readily accepting the blame for declining test scores in schools and are not trying to place the burden on the schools alone. Nearly two-thirds of Americans surveyed in the poll said that they believe a major cause of the decline is that parents have not provided enough attention, concern, and supervision for their children.

The 1978 Gallup Poll report adds still another dimension (*Phi Delta Kappan*, September 1978). In answer to the question, "What, if anything, do you think the public schools in this community should be doing that they are not doing now?" one of the most frequently reported responses was, "Provide more opportunities for parental involvement." A frequent suggestion was for closer parent/teacher relationships and more conferences between parents and teachers. Parents want to know much more about what they can do to help their children in school.

If it is true that public school parents are eager to play a more significant role in the education of their children, it would seem likely that parents who are

supporting non-public schools would be even more concerned about this matter. Children's first learning experiences occur in the home with their parents as the instructors. As the child's world expands, parents may begin to feel that they are losing contact with their son or daughter, and this feeling becomes especially acute when the child enters school. Parents too often find that they can do very little to contribute to the school program other than pay the tuition or provide refreshments for a Valentine's party.

Many Lutheran part-time educational agencies, such as the Sunday school and weekday school, are staffed by parents. Some Lutheran day schools also use parents as aides. The following paragraphs present an appeal for even greater parental involvement and offer some practical suggestions for implementing such a program.

Some useful tools for faculties planning to begin or revise their parent involvement program can be found in a kit entitled, "Parents and Teachers Together for the Benefit of Children," which is available from the National Education Association.² One of the booklets in this kit suggests that a parent involvement program should aim to:

1. Meet the needs of individual children more fully through increased personal attention and assistance.
2. Develop a cooperative partnership between parents and teachers.
3. Enlist and strengthen parent cooperation with the school which will increase parent support of the school and its programs.
4. Create an environment which encourages two-way communication between home and school.
5. Give teachers more time, making them more effective teachers and creating a more manageable teaching role.
6. Encourage experimentation with new techniques and new learning materials which may not be possible without volunteer assistance.

7. Provide a continuous public relations feeder system from the school through the parents and into the community.

8. Allow parents to make a significant contribution to the formal education of their children.

A new publication of Synod's Board for Parish Education is also a helpful resource.³

There are, of course, some risks in embarking on a full-scale parent involvement program. Some objections which may be heard are that planning activities for volunteers will take too much time, parents may try to "take over" teaching responsibilities, or some parents may discuss confidential school information with their friends. There is no assurance that some of

these difficulties will not arise, but the potential benefits are worth the risk. Most teachers will agree that "experience is the best teacher" and that problem situations are usually easier to handle when they actually arise than when they are worried about in advance.

Careful planning is the key to an effective parent participation program. The following suggestions may help:

1. Develop *your own* parent involvement plan, suited to the needs of your pupils, and under the total control of both teacher and principal.

2. Do your homework. Learn all you can about the congregation(s) and community associated with your school and the situations of your pupils' parents.

3. Decide how many volunteers you can use. It may be best to start with one.

4. Decide how to invite parents to volunteer. Be selective. A general invitation in the school bulletin is not advisable.

5. Plan initial activities appropriate for parents beginning with relatively simple informal activities, such as:

Writing down stories or autobiographies which children dictate,

Helping children to use instructional media,

Playing reading and word games,

Helping with creative dramatics,

Assisting with math drills and reviews,

Checking out reference materials,

Assisting with art activities,

Listening to children read,

Making classroom materials at home,

Using special skills or experiences to enrich the curriculum.

6. Contact your parent volunteers and hold an orientation session in which you:

Acquaint parents with your school's program and goals,

Familiarize them with school and classroom routines,

Discuss individual duties and responsibilities,

Ascertain special skills and interests of participating parents,

Discuss child growth and development,

Stress the importance of listening to children,

Inform parents of education ethics by which they will be bound.

7. Keep your principal informed of your plans at all times. It would be very helpful if the principal would participate in the orientation meetings.

8. Involve your parent volunteers in your classroom after allowing them a time for observation. Be sure to set aside time for conferences to answer questions, solve problems, and listen to the suggestions of parents.

9. Expand your program when you are ready, perhaps with the help of a parent coordinator. A comprehensive list of over one hundred suggested activities for parent participation in the school program can be found in the parent involvement kit referred to earlier in this section.

Does all this involve a lot of work? Certainly, but it will be worth it. Parents can be good teachers, and the professional teacher, parents themselves, and especially the children will be the beneficiaries.

IV

WE BELIEVE that if conflict situations do arise between home and school, they can be resolved in a God-pleasing way, and that in all matters of conflict and difference of opinion, the welfare of the child should be given primary consideration.

Teachers must always remember that parents have the major responsibility for their children, and that a parent's perception of his child will be different from that of the teacher. It is not easy to determine just how a parent does feel toward his child. A father may speak in a derogatory manner about the behavior of his son but inwardly feel very proud of his aggressive behavior. A mother may make fun of her daughter's constant primping, but inwardly feel very pleased that she has such a lovely daughter. Teachers must not jump to conclusions or make hasty judgments concerning parental attitudes toward their children. It is necessary to look through parent's words and actions to try to determine the feelings behind them.

Parents come in many different "packages" also. For example, there are critical parents who come to school armed with "expert" opinions on how to teach children. Arguing with such a parent is fruitless, but, with patience and facts, it is sometimes possible to convince these parents that the school's methods are also effective. Some parents are worriers and need constant assurance that most learning and behavior problems can be solved. These parents need the support and assistance of a concerned teacher in dealing with their children's problems. Some parents may be over-confident and egotistical. Although it would be tempting to deflate the balloon, this would only create a lifelong enemy and would not help the child. Instead, it would be better to acknowledge this parent's ability and to use his knowledge to the advantage of the child and possibly of the entire class.

Reach the Hearts and Minds of Your Children with stimulating classroom activities...



Joyful Sounds
This new children's hymnal contains over 200 carols, hymns, chorals, spiritual songs, and folk songs specially selected for youngsters 9-14 to help them pray, praise, and give thanks.
256 pages 6 x 9 03CZ1130 \$4.95



Giant Mural Coloring Books
Give the children in your classroom the first-hand learning experience of creating a mural. Form teams to color the pages of any of the four Bible events available in our GIANT MURAL COLORING BOOKS. Then tape the pages together to form a giant mural for your classroom walls.

These coloring books are not only fun to work with but will stimulate your students imaginations, teach them Bible stories, and give them an appreciation of their creative abilities individually and as part of a team. \$2.95

Please send the following books and material in the quantities indicated:

Joyful Sounds @\$4.95
___ 03CZ1130

Giant Mural Coloring Books @ \$2.95 each
___ 62CZ1155 Garden of Eden
___ 62CZ1156 Noah's Ark
___ 62CZ1157 Good Samaritan
___ 62CZ1158 The Joy of Easter

NAME _____
TITLE _____ CHURCH _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

RETURN TO:



CONCORDIA
PUBLISHING HOUSE
3558 SOUTH JEFFERSON AVENUE
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI 63118

With care and good judgment, many potential conflict situations can be avoided or prevented. Teachers and parents must both recognize that some children will try to create a conflict situation between home and school to gain personal attention or some advantage of their own. It is always important to check out the "facts" before making a judgment or registering a complaint.

When there is a need to discuss an apparent problem, teachers should avoid "parking lot" confrontations. If parents phone late at night to register a complaint, the teacher should attempt to schedule a time for talking the problem through the next day at school or in the parent's home, if possible. Very often a cooling-off period is needed more than anything else.

Parent-teacher conferences can be very helpful, but a thoughtless remark or gesture can also undermine the parent-teacher relationship. Some things for a teacher to keep in mind during a parent conference are:

1. If you have no suggestions for improving a bad trait, don't bring it up.
2. Don't send the parent away with countless suggestions. Concentrate on one or two things you and the parent can do together to help the child.
3. Don't let comments about other children enter the conversation and, above all, don't compare brothers and sisters.
4. Don't show parents only the best or the poorest examples of a child's school work. Show the whole range and try to show how work has improved or changed.
5. Don't try to tackle serious psychological troubles of children; refer parents to the proper person or agency.

6. Don't take it for granted that parents want your help. They may only attend the conference because they think they should. Your insistence that help is needed may be taken as criticism and make it impossible to build a good helping relationship.

Parents have legitimate "pet peeves" concerning teachers. For example, some parents ask, "Why can't I get straight answers to my questions at school?" or "Why do teachers of the same grades have different homework policies?" Others ask, "Why does the teacher wait for nine weeks before telling me that my child has been misbehaving in school?" or "Why are teachers reluctant to get involved when they know a child is behaving in a way that is harmful to him?" Such concerns are indicative of poor communication between home and school and need the attention of parents and teachers.

Especially in Christian schools, there is no place for "teachers' lounge" gossip about parents or pupils. When problems do arise, the offended parent or teacher should go directly to the person who is the cause of the concern and attempt to resolve the conflict. If teachers will give careful and respectful consideration to the ideas, concerns, and even criticism of parents, and if parents will give due respect to the professional judgment and suggestions of teachers, most conflicts can be resolved and the child will be the winner. In matters of home/school disagreement, parents and teachers will often rediscover the truth of Proverbs 18:17, "Any story sounds true until someone tells the other side and sets the record straight." (*Living Bible* paraphrase)

SUMMARY

WE BELIEVE that Christian education is the shared responsibility of both the home and the church.

WE BELIEVE that there must be an open, two-way channel of communication between the home and the school.

WE BELIEVE that parents can contribute meaningful ideas and valuable services to the program of the school.

WE BELIEVE that if conflict situations do arise between home and school, they can be resolved in a God-pleasing way, and that in all matters of conflict and difference of opinion, the welfare of the child should be given primary consideration.

RESOURCE MATERIALS

- 1 *Parent-Teacher Conferences*. Color filmstrip accompanied by Leader's Guide and cassette tape or record.
- 2 *Parents and Teachers Together (For the Benefit of Children)*. A multimedia program to encourage parent involvement. Includes overhead transparencies, two books, two filmstrips, one cassette tape, and other items.
- 3 *Parents as Partners*. A source of ideas on the place of parents in the school program. Write the Board of Parish Education of the LCMS, 3558 S. Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63118 requesting publication E12 at \$1.25 per copy.



The Responsibility of Lutheran Teachers for Christian Education

by H. James Boldt



This article will point out some statements of prerequisites for Lutheran school teachers as they fulfill their responsibility in Christian education. We are speaking of all agencies of Christian education and their teachers in these statements which challenge the teacher in his/her ministry to God's young people. We must also remember that the teacher's effectiveness is directly related to the cooperation evidenced by the child, the parent, and the congregation as a whole. The burden of a child's Christian education rests with the parents or guardians of that child; however, the Church is commissioned to teach all things according to the words of Christ in the Great Commission. This is no small task and we thank and praise God for the thousands of dedicated and committed Christian teachers in our church's schools.

Preface

Dr. Martin Luther said, "Where God's Word does not rule, there I certainly do not advise anyone to send his child." For hundreds of years, Lutherans have said the same. Luther knew from his own experience that when the precious inspired message of the Holy Scriptures that Jesus Christ was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification is missing, then one's education is not complete. This message must remain in the heart and center of Lutheran education.

The message of salvation by grace in Christ alone is revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Lutherans are not biblicists as the term is frequently understood. We do not worship a book. Nevertheless, the prominence of the Holy Scriptures in Christian education needs to be very evident. Luther said, in effect, that it is the cradle of Christ. That Christ was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification is a message one learns from the Bible. That message is the means through which the Holy Spirit creates and sustains a living, dynamic faith which enables children, youth, and adults to organize their lives around the forgiveness of sins, so that they, with St. Paul can say, "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the Gospel, that I might share in its blessing." This goal or task gives Lutheran teachers a very significant responsibility.

Basic Prerequisites for Lutheran Teachers

The very first prerequisite for the Christian teacher is to have the personal, technicolor experience of knowing that God gave His Son for that individual teacher. God says to every Christian teacher, "I have called you by name, you are Mine." Showered with that wonderful grace of God in Christ, the teacher

stands before God and the children as a sinner washed clean in the blood of the Lamb. The everyday remembrance of this truth enables the Christian teacher to emit a radiance that in turn is showered over his/her class. A teacher of the children of God accepts God's forgiveness and immortality through the grace and mercy of God without any personal worthiness.

A second basic prerequisite for the Christian teacher is to be a student who studies diligently to do his best to present himself to God as one approved, a workman, who has no need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. How wonderfully blessed is the teacher and those that sit at his feet when he has been diligently studying to prepare himself to be God's teacher of God's children. This blessed study involves reading of and meditation on God's Holy Scriptures in which God speaks to us about how He created and sustains the world; how He created man and sustains him; how, in the fulness of time, He sent forth His Son made of a woman; how, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; how, while His disciples hid, He rose from the dead victorious; how we are, as new creatures, created in Christ Jesus unto good works; how Jesus has prepared a place for us in the eternal mansions of heaven; how He will come again so that we might be with Him forever and ever.

The responsible teacher's study goes beyond the Holy Scriptures to other writings which equip him to perform his calling of feeding the lambs. We suggest *The Book of Concord*. Too frequently we neglect the reading of the Confessions. Some find the writings too repetitious, too "dogmatic," perhaps even too heavy "theologically." But these writings very clearly and articulately point out the very difference (which has not changed with the centuries) between Lutherans and both the Roman Catholic and the Reformed Church bodies of the world. If more Lutheran teachers were familiar with the Confessions we would find less Reformed theology and source material in our part-time and full-time Christian education agencies. We would find less Reformed doctrine creeping into our curricula for instructing of the lambs.

While included as one of our Confessions in *The Book of Concord*, I would single out Luther's *Small Catechism* as something to be read regularly by every Lutheran teacher. The particular translation is entirely up to the teacher. There are so many available today. The respective Lutheran publishing houses have a variety of versions of Luther's *Small Catechism*. To read and to re-read it frequently keeps the Lutheran teacher in very close touch with essential

doctrines of the Lutheran Church. Dr. Martin Luther in his preface to the *Large Catechism* wrote:

As for myself, let me say that I, too, am a doctor and a preacher — yes, and as learned and as experienced as any of those who act so high and mighty, yet I do as a child who is being taught the Catechism. Every morning, and whenever else I have time, I read and recite word for word, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Psalms, etc. I must still read and study the Catechism daily, yet I cannot master it as I wish but must remain a child and pupil of the Catechism, and I do it gladly. These dainty, fastidious fellows would like quickly, with one reading, to become doctors above all doctors, to know all there is to be known. Well, this, too, is a sure sign that they despise both their office and the people's souls, yes, even God and His Word. They need not fear fall, for they have already fallen all too horribly. What they need is to become children and begin learning their A B C's, which they think they have outgrown long ago.

Additional reading should include C. F. Walther's *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*. Professional and lay church workers who are reading this book indicate that they are not finding Walther to be a "wooden" dogmatician of a hundred years ago, but rather a Spirit-filled lecturer who is as contemporary as tomorrow's newspaper. Luther's statement bears recall here. He said, "It seems a small matter to mingle faith and works, but it creates more mischief than man's brain can conceive. To mix Law and Gospel not only clouds the knowledge of grace, it cuts out Christ altogether." Teachers should also read Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics*.

Without being negative I would like to contrast the above with what is found in too many Christian book stores and in too many congregational book nooks. While I thank God for the many Christian book stores, too frequently their shelves are filled with contemporary writings of personal views, interpretations of Scripture, Christ, life, death and immortality . . . mixed in with a little (or a lot) psychology, sociology, anthropology, and intellectualism. Too frequently the libraries of our churches, schools and homes are filled with little \$2.95 "How to . . ." books.

There also needs to be serious congregational budgeting for teacher resources. Part-time Christian educational agencies such as Sunday school, VBS, and weekday schools should allocate \$75.00 to \$150.00 per teacher for books like those previously mentioned and additional resources such as commentaries, atlases, concordances, and Bible dictionaries. Each teacher should have a variety of resource skill books on such specialties as object lessons, the effective use of flannelgraphs, puppets, and chalkboard and on how to involve children in role playing, the use of questions, etc. In most cases the full-time Lutheran

school teacher will already have these resource books from college courses, but the volunteer teacher will not.

Related to this is the congregation's responsibility to provide *all* teachers, professional and volunteer, with access to audio-visual hardware and software. There is no legitimate reason (except ignorance, which is illegitimate in my thinking) why every agency of Christian education, irrespective of size or number of students, should not have sufficient overhead projectors, projection screens, tape recorders, record players, 16mm film and filmstrip projectors, opaque projectors, transparency production equipment, chalkboards, bulletin boards, and similar educational tools.

In addition to this hardware, there needs to be a lavish supply of software and software production facilities located in the Christian education center. Carpeting is increasingly becoming an economic investment. It creates a warm, inviting and wholesome atmosphere in addition to its acoustical benefits. Furthermore, there is no need to justify these expenses. They are simply a necessity for a quality Christian education ministry.

In some circles it might sound heretical, but I would entertain the idea of an appropriate "registration fee" to help underwrite the cost of Christian education. Too frequently the Sunday school student's "mission offering" is used to pay for the Sunday school's operation. Some Sunday school superintendents even take great pride in announcing at the end of the year that the Sunday school "didn't cost the congregation a penny." This is a self-defeating deception. In situations like this it costs the congregation plenty. It costs them ownership and commitment. It costs many "real missions" the needed dimes and quarters contributed for "missions" by children. It costs the commitment on the part of the parents because what costs nothing is usually worth nothing. To quote a friend, "We know the price of everything but the worth of nothing." We are teaching royalty, the sons and daughters of King Jesus. We need to become even more serious about investing the best in an education which leads to Christ and eternity.

A third basic prerequisite is that the Lutheran teacher be a student of the students. The teacher really needs to love and care about kids and the families in which they live. Whatever one wishes to say or think of Kierkegaard, I like this statement from him in 1854 *The Journals*:

This is the secret of helping others . . . in order to help another effectively, I must understand what he under-

stands. If I do not know that, my greater understanding will be of no help to him . . . for to be a teacher does not mean simply to affirm such a thing as so, or to deliver a lecture. Instruction begins with you, the teacher; learn from the learner, put yourself in his place so that you may understand what he understands and in the way he understands it . . .

A great thought that is well-worded. It concurs with St. Paul's words in I Corinthians 9:22, ". . . I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." To teach the children of God, we need to have more teachers willing to get into the playboxes of children's lives and get "our big teacher shoes" filled with the sand of their experiences and thoughts. Then we will become the effective teachers that God wants us to be.

A fourth basic prerequisite is professional growth. We would be ill-advised to utilize the services of a surgeon who hasn't bothered to keep abreast of the latest developments in medical technology. Even major automobile manufacturers "call in" their field mechanics to in-service them on new aspects of the latest model cars. Many Lutheran churches require their full-time teachers to earn a certain number of educational and professional growth credits every three to five years.

An axiom in education is "WE TEACH AS WE WERE TAUGHT." Here I am referring to methodology in teaching. BUT CHILDREN TODAY DO NOT LEARN AS WE LEARNED "WAY BACK THEN." Today's child lives in a technocratic and scientific world. Today's child knows more about DC-7's, computers, calculators, television, the world and the universe than many of us will ever know. Those little ones who sit at out feet in Lutheran schools, Sunday schools, VBS's, weekday schools, etc., not only know and experience much more than we did at their age, BUT THEY ALSO LEARN IN DIFFERENT WAYS AND, OFTEN, AT MUCH GREATER SPEED.

Through well-organized in-service workshops, seminars, institutes and conferences, Lutheran teachers gain insight and keep current with new developments and techniques in education. Here is where circuit Sunday school associations can perform a great service to volunteer teachers. Synodical and district office personnel should be organizing in-service activities directly or indirectly, through task forces or standing committees. Thank God this is already occurring in many places.

While there may be many other basic prerequisites for the teacher, a final one is that the teacher needs to have a multicultural sensitivity. Teachers need to test their own prejudices. Once teachers gain insight into their own rich ethnic backgrounds they are in a

position to more fully appreciate the ethnic backgrounds of the multicultural children who sit at their feet. Teachers should study the cultural history of the children. This study will aid the teacher in "knowing where the children are coming from." It should never be the goal of a teacher "to make children of other ethnic groups act or become Anglo-Saxons." It is better to help them bathe in their own rich cultural heritages and develop their own self-esteem for what they are. Each child is valued by God for what he or she is in Christ as an ethnic and not for what we want them to be. Let's not let our own love become restricted and crippled.

Some Practical Imperatives

What follows are points which start with the words, "We must . . ." They are all challenges to the Lutheran teacher and to me, a fellow teacher. They are shared to cause all of us to think more deeply, to assess and test our attitudes, and to see and possibly do things in a new and fresh way. They are LAW, but they are not meant to be legalistic. I am addressing "born again" people. I am speaking to fellow Christians living a sanctified life. We are people who recognize our "Pilgrim Status", we are pilgrims on a divine errand. The imperatives which follow are Gospel-motivated. They are to rekindle our faith and challenge us, as children of God, to live a confession, by God's grace, which unashamedly and boldly proclaims, "We cannot but speak the things we have heard and seen"; nor can we live and be anything other than what we are. We must be seriously prepared and willing to do what Jesus commanded in His commission to disciple people, to baptize and to teach. We must realize that through hearing the Word people grow in faith, that through digesting the Word people are given strength and vision, and that through the Word people "get outside of themselves" and are able to concern themselves with others. All this occurs through the power of the Holy Spirit.

We must realize that each generation *does* have to learn these truths for itself. We must realize that there really is a pearl of great price and that, having been given it, we must be prepared to give up everything we have to share it with others. Too many of us tend to know the value of nothing. We often misunderstand or take lightly the price that needs to be paid for the pearl. The price *costs* everything and offers everything — free!

In our ministry we need to be prepared for conflict and struggle and in the teaching and administration of Law and Gospel. We must be prepared for "healthy" tension. At a time when societal humanists

push for elimination of tension through a variety of medications, meditations, and exercises, we dare not abdicate our responsibility to confront people with sound Law and Gospel simply because it is no longer popular to do so. It is an incomplete ministry that assumes to accept the commission to talk about Christ, but does not accept the responsibility to confront the people with God's immutable Law with all its divine demands and vice versa. Half a ministry in the final analysis is no ministry at all.

We must not fall into the satanic trap of believing that Christ promises His people a life of polyanic smiles, friendliness and tulip picking along with total forgiveness, while in some other far removed cosmos the Holy Law of God and resistance to the devil is taught and someone other than Christ is saying, "Repent!" We must daily remind ourselves, and the lambs who are at our feet, that we wrestle not against mere flesh and blood but against fantastic powers and rulers of darkness. Satan is as real as we ourselves are real.

We must be prepared to face people — children, youth and adults — on a face-to-face basis, looking into their eyes, with our faces shining as did Moses' when he encountered God and then faced the people. There is no place for hiding in the King's work. And, if we are to do the King's work we must have the King's power. There is no place for taking the easy and inoffensive way out. A superficial administration of Law and Gospel is just that — superficial! To help people where they hurt and bleed (and many do not even know where they hurt and bleed or why) we must get at the gut-level sins of their lives. This calls for Lutheran teachers who understand the full impact of the concept of grace and the difference between Law and Gospel and how they are to be applied.

We must say with St. Paul, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation." We must be prepared to defend God's Holy Word and its absolute truth from attack both within and without the Church. We are in a time of ecumenism when it is popular entertainment to down-play denominational differences. For many it has become a cheap-shot to erect strawmen and to knock them down verbally to make ego points for themselves. The indiscriminating Christian says, "What difference does it make as long as we all have Christ?" Jesus said, "If ye continue in My Word (and He meant His *whole* Word), then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." He also said that brother would have conflict with brother for His sake. So be it, not for the desire to do battle or have conflict, but rather

for the commitment to yield to and stand up for Jesus Christ, and in so doing, to speak and act for His sake!

Some Strategies for Greater Effectiveness

If we can establish what we are *for* and what we are *against* for Christ's sake, we are in a position to plant our feet and not be blown about by every wind of doctrine and every wind of innovation that promises to be the recipe for success. Our centers of Christian education, now and in the future, will need to spend more time with human beings one-on-one seeking, *by God's grace* and the incomprehensible power of the Holy Spirit, to nurture people in their growth toward the full stature of Christ. In doing this we must seek to:

Conduct ourselves responsibly, avoiding actions and speech that would minimize or "make light" our mission tasks,

Mature and thereby abandon the use of oversimplistic solutions to questions, problems and strategies that demand deeper thought and more solid judgment,

Accept struggle now, with the hope of future gains,

Defend our Christian confession and life-style standards rather than compromise,

Meet stresses without disabling our effectiveness as Christian educators,

Find more satisfaction in giving of ourselves than in receiving the "strokes" that satisfy nothing but our own egos,

Relate to people in a positive, consistent manner, rather than switching from friendliness today to hostility tomorrow,

Direct our own hostility, and the hostility of others, into constructive channels and outlets,

By God's grace develop the capacity to love in Christ which, in the final analysis, is the only neutralizer of hate.

* * *

To accomplish the above, there are a number of things we must be reminded of as Christian educators and members of the community of the redeemed:

We must remember that as Christians we do take the problems of the world seriously, but we cannot take ourselves too seriously or we end up with disabling problems ourselves.

We must not make a choice between being agency-centered vs. people-centered. Rather, we must seek to develop agencies that are people-centered.

We must remember to follow religiously Christ's mandate, "If your brother trespasses against you or offends you, go and talk to him alone," and don't tell

everyone that comes along.

We must remember that he who would kindle another must himself be aglow. Long faces make long days for everyone.

We must remember that the human IS NOT born equal. He is different from every human being. He is first an individual, then male or female, and so he stands before God. We, as God's ministers, stand before him or her here on earth as individuals in similar circumstances.

We need to be reminded that we can become so preoccupied with defending the status quo that we fail to see the broader issues that involve real life, real things, and above all, real, blood-bought people.

We often operate our churches and schools in a bureaucratic, hierarchical manner; unfortunately, for some this means that being on top is somehow better than being on the bottom. To some extent, and not negating the power of the Holy Spirit, we must be reminded that we have often come to our positions, not through merit or ability alone, but also by chance and politics in both the good and the bad sense. This does not negate the importance of our being where we are. God uses individual gifts, abilities and circumstances to accomplish His will.

With great seriousness we must remember that, when we destroy another person, in essence we are destroying ourselves. When we speak ill of others, we are *really* demeaning ourselves and our potentially greater effectiveness for Christ's Kingdom.

Any worthwhile friendship or relationship is built on trust. Trust comes only through honesty, truthfulness, openness and integrity, even when it hurts.

We must remember that even as adults, there is a time to grow up.

To administer God's will on an education level, we must be filled with God's Word, both the written and the Living Word.

We must remember that many people today do not know the difference between fantasy and reality.

The greatest lesson we will ever teach children is through the way we live our own lives. We can't give away what we haven't got anymore than we can come back from where we haven't been.

We must remember the unbelievable promise Jesus makes in Matthew 18:19-20, "Again I tell you this: if two of you agree on earth about any request you have to make, that request will be granted by my heavenly Father. For where two or three have met together in My Name, I am there among them."

We must remember Jesus' words, "At that day ye shall ask in My Name; and I say unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself

loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God."

Finally, we must remember Jesus' words and action in John 13, "You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you are quite right, for I am your Teacher and Lord. But if I, your Teacher and Lord have washed your feet, you must be ready to wash one another's feet. I have given you this as an example so that you may do as I have done. Believe me, the servant is not greater than his master and the messenger is not greater than the man who sent him. ONCE YOU HAVE REALIZED THESE THINGS, YOU WILL FIND YOUR HAPPINESS IN DOING THEM."

In Conclusion

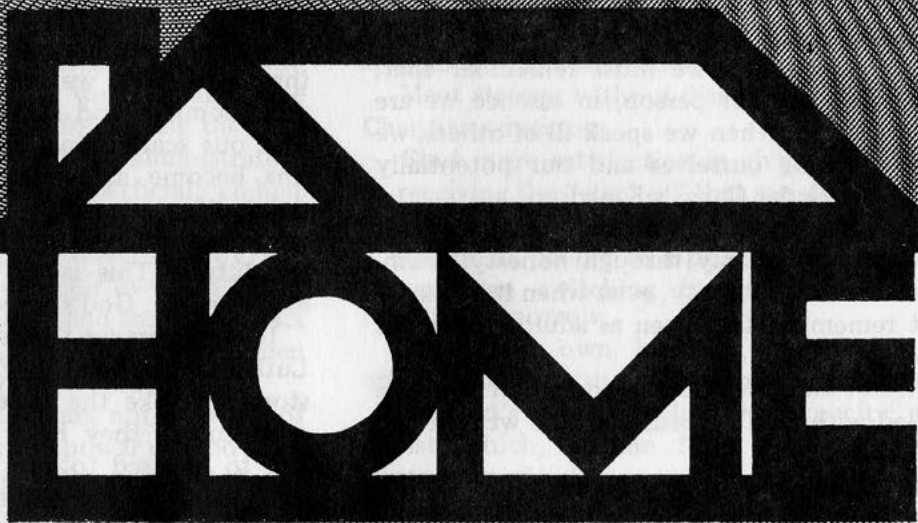
In closing it needs to be clearly stated that even dedicated, responsible Christian teachers fall short of being what they want and ought to be. In the final analysis, who of us ever meets the basic prerequisites? Who of us ever evidences all the necessary, practical imperatives? Who of us dares to say that he or she employs all the necessary strategies for greater effectiveness? The answer is, "None of us." We all fall short, but here is the wonderful bottom line of Christianity. As we, in our Spirit convicted state, come humbly and penitently to the throne of God, we are freely forgiven for all of our short-comings and sins. It is in this very forgiveness that our scarlet sins become white and our crimson sins become as wool. That's the beauty of God's redemption at work, not only to forgive, but to empower us to growth and sanctification now and in the future. This is the ultimate in the technicolor experience in God's grace in Christ Jesus.

It is my prayer that upon reading these paragraphs Lutheran teachers, professionals and volunteers will stop and take the time to think of the wonderful opportunity they have to teach Christ's little ones and to be used to win souls for Him. There are no gifted souls, no average souls, no special souls, no retarded souls in the sight of God. Thinking of His great love for us should move us to take our responsibilities with greater seriousness and humility for common concerns, common goals, common needs and greater effectiveness.

||

The Responsibility of the Home in Christian Education

by Paul Grabarkewitz



Responsibilities of Parents

The Word of God is replete with messages to parents on their responsibility to teach and nurture their children in a Christian way of living.

Old Testament examples are:

Deut. 6:5-7 — Speaking about the Ten Commandments and the great law of love, God says, "Teach them to your children."

Proverbs 19:18 — Discipline your children while they are young enough to learn. If you don't, you are helping them destroy themselves.

Proverbs 23:13 — Don't hesitate to discipline a child. A good spanking won't kill him. As a matter of fact, it may save his life.

New Testament examples include:

Eph. 6:4 — Parents do not treat your children in such a way as to make them angry. Instead, raise them with Christian discipline and instruction.

John 21:15 — In a message to Simon Peter, Jesus says, "Take care of my lambs."

For the Christian parent these admonitions from the Lord are sufficient answers to why they are responsible for the Christian education of their children. But what are some of the principal facets of Christian discipline and instruction? How can they address this responsibility in the last quarter of the 20th century with its emphasis on the thinking child participating in decision making at an early age, and on the democratic society even in the home?

This article attempts to identify some of the time-honored facets of Christian discipline — love, forgiveness, and correction, and also the modern emphasis on communication, listening, decision making, and positive thinking. The goal is to whet the reader's appetite for further growth in carrying out the responsibilities that the home has in Christian education today. The emphasis is on the parent's role.

On Loving and Showing It —

The Christian home is built, first of all, on Christ's love and forgiveness, and then on His love and forgiveness transmitted as we love and forgive.

A Christian is to be different. The difference is being rooted in love, true love of God, the neighbor, and self. And Christians need to let it show. The HONK IF YOU LOVE JESUS and ONE WAY bumper stickers are fine examples of letting our Christianity show. Open display of one's love for Christ not only serves to share Him with others. It also helps to build your own faith in Him. You have put yourself on the line as a Christian. The general public expects more from a Christian, and they will usually

get it. You will have to produce — be a living Christian. A home whose walls are graced with many emblems of Christian love should be built on that love. Such emblems and other Christ-centered gifts are excellent birthday remembrances, and a healthy mixture of such emblems among the latest rock stars or baseball heroes is a constant reminder of the permeation of Christ in our lives.

Loving needs to be verbalized. A child of eight or 80 wants and needs to hear the words, "I really love you," and we need to say those words. While those who are in our family are usually close enough so that they can see the loving things we do, they do not always see them as loving things — at least not at the time they happen. A 16 year old daughter who is given an 11:00 p.m. curfew may not see love in that action, so it becomes important for her that you express that love in words.

"Because I love you" not only serves as a reminder to our children, but in fact, at times it makes us more aware of our own actions. It restrains us from acting in unrighteous anger. Can you say, "Because I love you, you'll be grounded the rest of this week," and still be angry with that 18 year old son? Somehow the warmth of the words of love overwhelm and dissipate the anger in the heart.

Actions speak louder than words. This includes not only actions *for* someone, like sewing a dress, fixing a bike, or washing clothes, but also and especially actions *to* someone, like a warm hug, a friendly arm around the shoulder, or a kiss on the cheek. How warm and filled with Spirit was the touch of Jesus on the little children who came to Him, and now we, His servants, have the thrill of sharing His love that is in us with our children by touching them.

On Forgiveness, Freedom, and Confidence —

One of the great gifts that we have because we are Christians is forgiveness — forgiveness of whatever we may commit, even before it is committed, because Jesus paid for those sins long ago; and we are His. By the grace of God we live in the forgiveness of sins. Having His forgiveness and knowing how wonderful it is makes us want to share it with others both by telling others of His forgiveness and also by being forgiving people.

Christ has broken the chains of the devil *for* us once and for all, and we are now free to live *for* and in Him. An integral part of that freedom is the freedom we have to forgive others and help them to know some of the wonderful freedom that we have and some of the happiness and confidence that freedom and forgiveness brings.

As parents we have the obligation, the privilege, and the joy of sharing in words and actions these feelings of freedom in Christ through the forgiveness of our sins, not only so that our children might know and feel that same freedom and forgiveness, but also so that they will pass this freedom and forgiveness on to their children, and their children's children, as well as to all the world that they encounter.

Forgiveness is closely related to confidence. When a child drops and breaks one of your best dishes, how long is it before you let him carry another? Do you forgive him? If your teenage daughter wrecks her car or yours, how long is it before you let her drive the good car? Do you forgive? Or does this break down a confidence that can never be rebuilt? When God forgives through Jesus Christ, he washes us so that we are whiter than snow. He sees us as clean. Look at yourself. Over the tender teenage years, or maybe later, how you sinned grievously and deserved nothing but the worst, but by the blood of the Lamb you are washed clean and God says, "minister to this congregation," "direct this committee," "teach these young people," or "raise this family." Yes, because you are washed clean, God has confidence in you to build His Kingdom. Can you pass on that kind of forgiveness and confidence?

On Communication —

Talking between and among the family is an effective means of teaching, provided a good deal of listening is engaged in by *all*. For many parents, the control and management referred to in Titus and Timothy is a dictatorial type control. Dad and mother lay down the laws which are to be followed by the children or dire consequences will follow. One can get fairly rapid and effective control of a family by this means, at least as long as one of the parents is present, but frequently it leads to bedlam when Dad and Mom are gone. In order to help develop agreeable laws, two-way communication is necessary; each one in the family must talk and each one must listen. An effective means of communication that is sometimes overlooked is writing letters. Usually we wait until the child has left home before we exchange letters with him. But the use of dialoging by letter writing, especially on difficult issues that otherwise might develop into heated arguments and the provocation of anger, promotes listening and often helps the family to arrive at an agreeable solution.

Adults are notoriously bad listeners. We often are thinking of our response while the other person is still talking, or our thoughts are wandering to a related topic so that much of what hits our ears is not absorbed. Written correspondence is an excellent aid

to communication. Additional help in this vital area is readily available in books and workshops designed to help in communication.

On Praise and Positive Living —

One of the great, latent, but powerful forces in the life of a Christian family is the power of praise and the strength of positive thinking, speaking, and action. Christianity itself is built on that power. Can you imagine a Being who can look at a human, whom He created whole and perfect but who is now all bad, dirt, filled with hate toward that Being, not capable of doing good, not one good thing? But the Being, looking through His only Son, loves you, sees only good in us. Yes, our heavenly Father has given us the finest example of positivity in that while we were yet sinners, He love us, loved us enough so that He sent His only Son to suffer and die for us. God be praised!

One would think that as we Christians live under this powerful example of positiveness, we would respond in like manner. All too often our human nature is prone to emphasize the negative, speaking out against the bad rather than noting the good, especially with those we love the most. An example is the father who, after several anxious hours of waiting for the late return of his dating daughter, harshly says, "Where have you been? You were supposed to be in by 11 o'clock! We've been worried about you, and thank God you're safe!" The mother who, on seeing the freshly baked cake of her 12 year old daughter, remarks, "Well, you got it done, but you sure left the kitchen a mess," has missed a golden opportunity to strengthen with a word of praise one of the branches on her green and growing tree.

Our belief that the best way to get a better job done is to point out mistakes or weaknesses is not congruent with the basic need of positive reinforcement within each person, nor with our own experience. If you think back to the things you like to do and you learned to do well, you'll also remember not only the success you had, but especially the words of praise you received from someone you admired or respected. You'll remember how these words of praise made you want to do even better the next time, and you did! Speaking positively takes work and practice.

As teachers (and as parents we are all teachers) it is much easier to see and comment on mistakes than to seek out and praise the good work. Seeing a jacket and school books scattered on the floor is much easier than noticing a neat floor.

Speaking and acting positively is a skill that anyone, and most surely every Christian, can and should develop. God fills each of our lives with many blessings; all that is good comes from our Heavenly

Father, but it is up to us to see the good in what he gives us. For parents these wonderful blessings include both children and what they do. We need to see and react to the wonderful things they do each day, but we also need to look carefully at the not so wonderful things that they do, so that we can use these acts for His good.

The following are helpful suggestions for anyone who wants to develop in himself a more positive attitude:

1. Take a good look at and ponder on the wonderful gifts that God has given to you personally — your body and the intricate process that make it function, your health, your wealth, your breathing, your walking and talking, your friends and family, and praise God!

2. Take a good look at and/or ponder some of the wonderful things that each of your children has done over the last 24 hours, or last week, or last month and then make it a point to give them a compliment or two today and then praise God!

3. Plan and promise to yourself that you will look for good things and then do it. Planning ahead is a vital part of becoming good at being positive — like being a good hostess for a party. One not only plans the menu, arrangements, and the like, but also considers the "what if" questions, e.g., "What if one of the couples does not come" or "What if it rains and my plans are for a lawn party."

Likewise, in preparation for being a good positive reactor, you plan ahead. When you're going to be gone all day and three teenagers will be left alone in the home, look around at the present condition of the home so that upon returning you can see some of the good things that have been accomplished, and give a positive word of praise to each of those responsible. Even in the remark itself, you'll need to be aware that sentences like "Your room is clean, and I love it" or "That's a really nice job done in the kitchen" are positive; but little phrases tacked on such as, "Your room is clean for once," almost annihilate any positiveness.

Remember, there is always — yes, always — something good to remark about. Find it and say it. A wise friend of mine uses and promotes a two to one ratio — at least two good things — two words of praise — before one negative criticism. Try it; you'll like it; it gives great results.

Positive thinking is closely related to satisfaction in that positive thinking yields satisfaction and satisfaction breeds positive thinking. Both are healthy attitudes. To be sure, a certain amount of dissatisfaction is also healthy. We'd still be in horse and buggy

days, using kerosene lanterns, and TV-less except for the dissatisfaction of some creative people. But one who dwells on the dissatisfying things in his life or who regularly finds fault with people in his association is failing to recognize the great goodness that permeates this creation because it is of God!

Positive thinking and praise, or lack of it, can greatly influence the attitude that children have toward people, agencies, and activities outside of the home. Frequent and regular positive support of congregational agencies and the personnel associated with these agencies is essential for any successful congregational education system.

On Decision Making —

"One thing is needful, and Mary has chosen that good thing." Do you remember the story of Mary and Martha? Jesus rebuked Martha for household preparations and commended Mary for studying His messages from Him. In a way this story seems to have little to do with the family and Christian education but, in another way, it deals with the central issue in the life of every Christian — the issue of who comes first — Christ or work, Christ or money, Christ or golf, Christ or the congregation, Christ or the family, Christ or anything? It relates closely to the decisions, big and small alike, that we make every day. What's really important to me and how do I or can I show what is important to me?

Christ's answer to what is really important is always the same. Jesus Christ must rule in our hearts. He must be everything. But how we show that is not always the same. In the case of Mary, it was through the study of His Word; but in the case of the young rich man, Jesus told him to sell everything he had and give the money to the needy.

So both parents and children are going to have to decide many times each day on how they personally are going to show that Jesus Christ is #1 in their lives, how they are going to live out their commitment to Him.

The Christian parent's role in teaching good decision making is invaluable. From the time that the true faith was embedded in the parents through baptism or the hearing of the Word until their present growth to Christian maturity, the Holy Spirit has strengthened and refined that faith through love and mercy, trial and temptation, highs and lows. This is now part of their experience and they can look back at the traps and fires that Satan had set for them (and still does) and can see how God, often through their parents, safely brought them through and built them up to have the faith and confidence that they have.

Now they have children and somehow they would like to spare their children some of those bad experiences, smooth the narrow road for them, and well they should when it is *vital* to their well being; but an over-zealous parent may try to eliminate *all* rough spots in the road long after the young child should be learning that life is not all paved highway.

The life of a Christian is mixed with sorrows as well as joys, with trials and losses as well as triumphs, so that the Potter can mold His clay as He wants it. What then are some ways in which parents can help their children grow to Christian maturity? Surely one way is to make their lives models of the Christian life at all times. Christ must reign in their separate lives and in their marital union. Going to the Father in prayer should be frequent, unrehearsed, and in day to day words. Bringing praises and thanks to God as well as requests for help in a variety of decisions in a family setting promotes a recognition of the high priority that God has in their lives. Love for each other, for themselves, and for their Lord should show often around the house.

Parents actions should agree with the messages they give to their children. Quite early in life the child sees the inconsistency in a parent who readily metes out a spanking and verbal reprimand when the child lies to his teacher but then is told to "Tell her your mother is too busy to be disturbed" when a certain neighbor comes to the door.

Finally, parents can help their children by preparing them for experience. The basic Christian faith and principles need to be transmitted and alternatives or choices for specific problems that will appear should be discussed. Experience is a great teacher, especially with the Lord as their Guide.

One of my avocations is the teaching of bridge, and I frequently also play bridge with some of the same people I've taught. Early in this teaching career, my wife gave me some wise advice that I try to follow to this day. She said, "Once you've taught them in your class, don't give more advice unless and until they ask for it, especially as you're playing the game with them."

In the *game* of life with our family, this advice also has some pertinence. To be sure, it is easier in bridge to distinguish my role as teacher or as player than it is to distinguish teacher from player in family life. But there are times when we can identify really important things that are disasters if not corrected immediately, and less important things; it is very important that we do not treat these alike. The decision on when to

add sugar to the angel food cake or at what temperature it should bake could be a momentary disaster, but learning to read the directions *by experience* will outweigh by far the time and money spent on a spoiled cake.

To see this in the realm of religious activity, one can look at various means of feeding on God's Word. The basic principle derived from the Word is that frequent and regular feeding on the Word of God is as necessary to the healthy Christian life as is frequent and regular food for a healthy physical life.

There are various opportunities that God provides for us to sustain and build our faith such as participation in worship services, the Lord's Supper, Bible classes, private study of the Word, and family study of the Word. It is important that the basic concept of the necessity for frequent and regular feeding on God's Word be emphasized rather than any one of the choices; then wise choices can be made and the Holy Spirit can work to strengthen the faith. Everyone will learn by experience. A Christian parent helps to make the learning good.

Resources

What are some sources of help that can provide training so that parents are better prepared to carry out their responsibilities? In addition to the bibliography of books and Bible passages which your writer recommends, the Synod, the districts, many churches, and many of our colleges are providing one day to one week long workshops or evening seminars such as Parent Effectiveness Training and Marriage Enrichment. These provide excellent opportunities for Christian growth.

Responsibilities of Brothers and Sisters in the Home

This article includes in the title the word "home." Thus far it has dealt with parental responsibility. The greatest responsibility in the family surely rests on the parents, but the influence of brother or sister on one another and the responsibilities that they have toward each other cannot be overlooked. Quite often it's the respected brother or sister who knows what is really going on in school or at parties and he, or she is in the position to avert some serious trouble for a member of the family with the right words at the right time. In my own life, my older sisters played a significant role in helping me to know what it means to love the Lord with all my heart, my body, and my soul, and I thank God for them. God means for us to "be our brother's (and sister's) keeper" also in the family circle, and in order to do that well, all the

things that apply to parent — child relations, apply equally well to brother — brother (sister) relations. The words of this paper therefore also speak to them.

Responsibilities of a Third Group in the Home

The responsibilities of parents in Christian education, the responsibilities of brothers and sisters in Christian education — who is left? The recipients of this Christian education — and that's the whole family. As a family we have a responsibility to learn, to grow, to mature in our unity with one another and our strength and unity with our Lord. We need to be ready to receive as well as to give Christian education to one another. We need to open our hearts to the changes that will take place, be prepared for sorrows and joys that come our way, accept the criticism and the praises that will be ours. We need to accept love and forgiveness, and we each need to grow in the strengthening of Christ as the center of our lives.

Summary

As I finished writing this paper, I received a letter from one of my students telling me of the wonderful things that the Lord had worked in his life over the past two years at Concordia and especially during the closing weeks of this last semester. This young man, who was brought to the saving faith just six years ago, made special points of the following:

1. He had become aware of how the Lord had made him able to properly love himself, his friends, and those who weren't his friends;
2. He had realized that he needed to forgive his parents for shortcomings he saw in them in the past, and through this forgiveness, a new attitude toward them developed and an understanding of their love for him had changed greatly;
3. He had been made aware that while he was basking in self pity because he thought God wasn't meeting his needs, his needs were being met and God opened many doors for him to enter to serve the needs of others;
4. He had gained a new appreciation for prayer and "an inward understanding of the importance of prayer";
5. He had become acutely aware "that God was really present and active in the world and in my (his) life."

He closed his letter with several requests, one of which is pertinent to this paper, namely, that I would pray for him for two specific blessings:

1. "that his life would be characterized as a life of prayer." and
2. "that I (he) would see the worth of every individual that I (he) meet."

When I read this letter, I was deeply impressed, not only because he had several complimentary remarks for me, but especially because of the close association that his letter had with this paper and the verification that it provided for many of the points in the paper. Here is a young man from a non-Christian home who at the age of 20, after having passed through the formative family years, had come to know Christ, and now after six years he had become aware of the really great things in life: true love for God, self, and others; giving and receiving full forgiveness; the ever presence of the Lord in each life; the need for close communication with God and the greatness of the blessing received from our Father.

So what is your responsibility as a Christian parent in the Christian education of your family? This letter provides a fitting summary of the salient points of this paper which tries to help you find an answer to that question. My prayer for you is that, as the Holy Spirit works through you in your family, the response of each person whose life you touch will be to react as the writer of this letter has done. By the grace of God, each one will.

Selected Words of God that relate to The Responsibility of the Home in Christian Education

Deuteronomy 6:5-7	I Timothy 3:4
Proverbs 22:6	Titus 2:4
John 21:15	Proverbs 13:24
II Corinthians 12:14	Proverbs 19:18
Ephesians 6:4	Proverbs 22:15
Titus 1:6	Proverbs 23:13

Bibliography

- Edmund, E. *Teenagers — The Facts of Sex, Love, and Life*. Zonderman Publishing House, 1968.
- Gordon, Thomas. *Parent Effectiveness Training*. Peter H. Wyden, Inc. Publisher, 1970.
- Koehler, George E. and Nikki. *My Family, How Shall I live With It?* Rand McNally and Co., 1968.
- Kolb, Erwin J. *Parents Guide to Christian Conversation about Sex*. Concordia Publishing House, 1967.
- Mueller, Charles S. and Donald R. Bardill. *Thank God I'm a Teenager*. Augsburg Publishing Co., 1976.
- Penner, Clifford and Joyce, and H. Norman Wright. *In Touch with Each Other. Communication/Conflict Resolution in Marriage*. Family Concer, Inc., 1976.
- Riess, Walter. *Teen-ager, Christ's Love will Make You Live*. Concordia Publishing House, 1962.
- Simon, Sidney B. and Sally Wendkos Olds. *Helping Your Child Learn Right from Wrong*. Simon and Schuster, 1976.

book reviews

IF I WERE STARTING MY FAMILY AGAIN, by John M. Drescher. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979.

The author presents in a very simple fashion some of the basic concepts needed in the relationships required in Christian family living. It is unfortunate, however, that Drescher had to learn through experience what he could have done better if given a second chance. Your reviewer is convinced that the insights presented can be learned prior to marriage but refined and made more meaningful after marriage. The intent of the booklet is indeed just that. Don't wait for a life spent to find out what one should have been doing all along. Marriage must be worked at, particularly if the courtship period is of a shorter duration. In a longer courtship there is time to practice those beautiful relationships between two lovers.

In essence John Drescher is saying that it is important to know and be aware of one's values in life and where the major emphasis is to be placed in living out that life. If, for example, the husband is preoccupied with climbing the ladder of success in the business world, family relationships will generally suffer. Being the kind of father he now wishes he could have been required more than Drescher apparently was willing to give at that time.

The author does not buy the quip to "stop praying for the family." He still holds to the adage: "Families that pray together stay together," however, as he iterates in another section of the booklet, a good adaptation of the adage might be: "Families that play together stay together."

Right on with Christian family life education prior to marriage! This is indeed a good little book to read and reread, but what is more important is that one must be willing to put into practice the ideas expressed.

Walter A. Juergensen

FAMILIES WITH PURPOSE: BIBLICAL GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY ENRICHMENT, by William M. Pinson, Jr. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1978.

This book includes 12 sermons, a 16 page chapter on "How to Conduct Family Ministry in the Local Church," 15 pages of Biblical quotes that the author judges to speak to the issues of marriage and family life, a three page index of Scripture references used in the book and a three page subject index. These data alone begin to suggest evaluative comments about this book.

Eleven of the 12 sermons are hopelessly lacking in explicit expression and application of the Gospel message. Their content is frequently clever, entertaining and informed about the situation in which families find themselves today, but throughout, their content is highly moralistic. In Lutheran terminology the author confuses Law and Gospel as he attempts to motivate his hearers and readers to good works via Law, rationality, common sense and psychologizing. The only sermon that begins to approach a Lutheran standard for helpfully applied Gospel was written for Mother's Day and is entitled, "Giving Birth to a Baby Doesn't Make You a Mother." The discriminating reader may find some helpful information in these sermons but little edification and Gospel motivation.

The chapter on "How to Conduct Family Ministry in a Local Church" promises much more through its title than it delivers. Pinson does raise some important questions that need to be addressed by the leaders of a local congregation who are interested in family enrichment. However, he does not provide enough ideas or practical suggestions to assist one in initiating such a program in the parish. There are a good number of books available today on the subject of family enrichment which are far superior to *Families With Purpose* in supplying assistance for starting a family enrichment program in a local congregation.

With the high cost of printing in mind one wonders why Broadman Press chose to reprint verbatim 15 pages of Biblical material in the concluding chapter. The chapter's introduction, subject headings and reference citations could have been printed with equal effectiveness on a total of two or three pages.

In light of the book's disjointed con-

tent, sermons previously preached over a number of years, inadequate "how to" chapters, page consuming Scriptural quotations, and the book's subtitle, "Biblical Guidelines for Family Enrichment," the reviewer suspects that the publisher rushed into print with this book to tap the growing demand for books about marriage and family enrichment rather than because the high quality of the manuscript's content demanded publication.

Alan Harre

FAMILIES IN LATER LIFE, by Lillian E. Troll, Sheila J. Miller, and Robert C. Atchley. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1979.

This book presents some of the attempts of the disciplines of psychology, sociology, and family studies to grasp a more realistic understanding of the aging individual's family milieu. The authors are sensitive to the growing collection of myths that surround the aging, and to no one's real surprise, they have unearthed the presence of such mythology in the hinterlands of gerontological theory.

Such staple theoretical stuff as disengagement, activity, and developmental life-span perspectives have been seen under close scrutiny to be somewhat useful for studying the isolated nuclear family; however, the basic fabric of most family structure in our culture consists of what has been referred to as a modified extended family concept. The authors make it clear that the aging individual is more often than not included in the latter structure in much the same way as all others in family interaction. Hence, the task to which this work is addressed is multidisciplinary and as indicated in the title, about families.

The authors spend a good deal of time viewing and warning about special problems in the study of families in later life that are not perceived to be as prevalent in traditional family studies and texts. The first problem is the impression of norms that most gerontological theory gives, namely, that norms represent static and unchanging prescriptions for behavior. This understanding of norms fosters stereotypes of ourselves and others

and distorts views, including those about the elderly in our families. An example that Troll offers is the *Cassandra Complex* in which our behavior in the family unit is judged by the normative stereotype of how a parent or an adult child is supposed to behave. This is problematic because of the process nature of changing norms. It is felt that family norms today are in a process of transition, a movement away from old norms, and that many families have not been able or willing to accept new norms. This makes Cassandras not only of the old, but of all of us as family members.

The other problems appear to be largely methodological. There is an extreme variability in intervening variables such as socio-economic status, health, and longevity, all of which color family members' behavior toward their elderly. The methodological problem for any valid study of multi-generational family relationships is enormous. This is seen as especially glaring in life-span research where the methodology of data collection usually employed is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal or cohort oriented. The absence of the latter techniques allows the comparison of people of different ages or of different lengths of marriage on the assumption that the younger or shorter-lasting relationships are or will be similar to the older and long-lasting relationships. The authors repeatedly and rightly proclaim the shortcomings of this type of research when it spans generations.

In spite of the sparsity and lower quality of data presently available for analyzing the relations of elders to their families, the authors surprise the reader with the exhaustive nature of their review of the literature. Extensive research is reported on the older married couple as a unit (noting that this unit of analysis has an impact on almost 95 percent of all Americans during their lives). General conclusions from the research reported indicate that women bear the brunt of problems of daily living with increasing age. Men are reported as more happy in later married life, and they are virtually never eliminated from the marriage market because the sex ratio becomes increasingly imbalanced with age.

The most revealing research is found in the last four chapters. The long term impact of widowhood is felt to be under-

studied as well as the other means by which one is unmarried in later life or divorced and never married. Knowledge about grandparenting as revealed from the research is by and large limited to the role of grandmother. The most significant conclusion to date here has been "that their relations with grandchildren are contingent upon their relations with their own children in most cases, and where there is high involvement with children — particularly along the female line — there is also relatively high involvement with grandchildren" (p. 120). Finally, research concerning siblings is reported, the family significance of which is least recognized in gerontology. The conclusion drawn is that their function in families in later life is strongly historical. Siblings are more highly regarded for their historical connections than as personal friends, that is, for their "rounding out the family."

Troll, Miller, and Atchley are to be highly commended for this research compendium. No apologies should be given for its straightforward accounting of research. It has been of great value to me for its insightful revelations on aging family member's needs. It is an effective tool for bridging new avenues and for assisting us to be better ministers to our own aging family members. I think that the authors would concur that the aging are surrounded by a world of family and are not going to be isolated or forgotten unless we absolutely insist.

Michael Woodburn

HOW TO MINISTER TO FAMILIES, by Joseph W. Hinkle and Melva J. Cook. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1978.

This book, intended for church staff members and lay leaders, was designed to help leaders meet the family needs of church members. It attempts to identify these needs and to offer solutions to some of the problems.

The worth of the book is dependent upon the reader's social background and the knowledge the reader has in the various areas of family needs. Although the authors attempt to draw insights from the Scriptures and the Christian life as well as from contemporary work in the

social sciences, they sometimes miss their mark by quoting both Biblical and non-Biblical references out of context. At other times they seem to generalize or oversimplify in order to make a point.

In the second chapter, for example, the fourth paragraph rambles on in this manner: "In the light of its own concept of mission, each church must determine the extent of its own ministry. It may choose to minister only to its members and immediate prospects, or . . ." To say the least, this doesn't sound too much like the Great Commission. Furthermore, this is one of those times when the authors fail to use a Bible passage to support their point.

The appendix is interesting. Perhaps this is one thing that should be retained. It is laid out somewhat like a cross between a calendar and a catechism. It is virtually a list of programs and recommendations for various types of family ministry meetings. Certainly the idea is to be taken seriously. And the sample calendar isn't bad. There are helpful suggestions for a family life conference, single adult retreat, Christian marriage enrichment retreat, etc.

The heart of the book does not lie in the first several chapters which reflect little theological insight and even less help from the social sciences. The purpose of the book is found in the chapters on organizing and planning family ministry. While these chapters deal more with the mechanical problems of organizing such ministry, they certainly have their place and would be of benefit to the person, whether clergy or lay, who has had little experience in the organization of family ministry at a more formal level. Sample charts, calendars, and diagrams are provided. There are ideas planted on the pages of these chapters which may initiate a whole new emphasis in ministry in your congregation. The reader will have to pick and choose.

E. George Becker

Continued on page 28

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Seward, Nebr.
Permit No. 4

...in the second chapter, for example, the fourth paragraph reads on in the same way. In the first of its own body of text, the second paragraph reads on in the same way. In the first of its own body of text, the second paragraph reads on in the same way. In the first of its own body of text, the second paragraph reads on in the same way.

...school, day school, youth program, pastor or any person or group other than the father is assumed to be more capable of giving effective Christian training. Rickerson's basic premises are the following: "The family is really the church in miniature" (p. 7). "Parents are responsible for building up the Body of Christ in their own homes . . . Churches are responsible for equipping parents . . ." (p. 9). This book is designed to help you, as a church leader, in evaluating your ministry to families. Once areas of family needs are determined for the young, middle age, old, single, and those with and without children, purposes and goals can be readily developed. Helps are provided in the form of charts, questions, and guidelines. A specific plan for developing your own unique program of family ministry is provided. Almost 100 references are listed in the categorized bibliography. A strong emphasis on realistic implementation by example, concern and programming is provided in Rickerson's eight steps to organizing family ministry:

Step 3. State your own Biblical basis for a family ministry.
 Step 4. Determine family needs.
 Step 5. Establish purposes.
 Step 6. Set goals and priorities.
 Step 7. Plan to accomplish your goals.
 Step 8. Evaluate your goals.

Rickerson says, "A good balance is essential for a family life committee . . . An ideal committee might include . . . a young couple . . . a middle-aged couple and a couple over 65, a widow, a divorced person and a person who has never married" (p. 53). He also presents many practical and proven ways to equip families to minister to others. He asks, "Have evangelical Christians overlooked the home as a catalyst for ministry?" Such things as hospitality, evangelism, mission projects, family benevolence, projects around the church, personal ministry, and Christian living by example, word and deed are ways of helping people to grow to their full stature in the love of God (see Col. 3:17).

book reviews

(Continued from page 27)

HOW TO HELP THE CHRISTIAN HOME, by Wayne E. Rickerson. Glendale: Regal Books, 1978.

In eight succinct chapters Pastor Wayne Rickerson zips through a design for activating families as the basic unit of Christianity. Building on a solid Biblical base, he stimulates the reader to develop a clear, concise and realistic program. After helping you to determine the needs of your church, he provides specific guidance on how to organize and "sell" your congregation on a better ministry to, and through, families.

A personal relationship with God is emphasized. Specific processes to strengthen the husband-wife relationship are provided. He stresses the importance of healthy family relationships in which parents teach Christian values by example and deeds as well as by word. Such relationships will empower families to minister to others.

This little booklet could also be a significant stimulant to reactivating fathers, in particular, to take ownership for the Christian training of their households. Too often today's "family" is disjointed. In our technological society we have tended to shift responsibility to others. The church, congregation, Sunday

school, day school, youth program, pastor or any person or group other than the father is assumed to be more capable of giving effective Christian training.

Rickerson's basic premises are the following:

"The family is really the church in miniature" (p. 7). "Parents are responsible for building up the Body of Christ in their own homes . . . Churches are responsible for equipping parents . . ." (p. 9).

This book is designed to help you, as a church leader, in evaluating your ministry to families. Once areas of family needs are determined for the young, middle age, old, single, and those with and without children, purposes and goals can be readily developed. Helps are provided in the form of charts, questions, and guidelines. A specific plan for developing your own unique program of family ministry is provided. Almost 100 references are listed in the categorized bibliography.

A strong emphasis on realistic implementation by example, concern and programming is provided in Rickerson's eight steps to organizing family ministry:

- Step 1. Share your vision with church leadership.
- Step 2. Organize a family life committee.

Step 3. State your own Biblical basis for a family ministry.

- Step 4. Determine family needs.
- Step 5. Establish purposes.
- Step 6. Set goals and priorities.
- Step 7. Plan to accomplish your goals.
- Step 8. Evaluate your goals.

Rickerson says, "A good balance is essential for a family life committee . . . An ideal committee might include . . . a young couple . . . a middle-aged couple and a couple over 65, a widow, a divorced person and a person who has never married" (p. 53). He also presents many practical and proven ways to equip families to minister to others. He asks, "Have evangelical Christians overlooked the home as a catalyst for ministry?" Such things as hospitality, evangelism, mission projects, family benevolence, projects around the church, personal ministry, and Christian living by example, word and deed are ways of helping people to grow to their full stature in the love of God (see Col. 3:17).

This is a powerful little book. I wish I would have read it 25 years ago. Get it now and learn how to expand family ministry in your home and congregation.

Glenn O. Kraft