

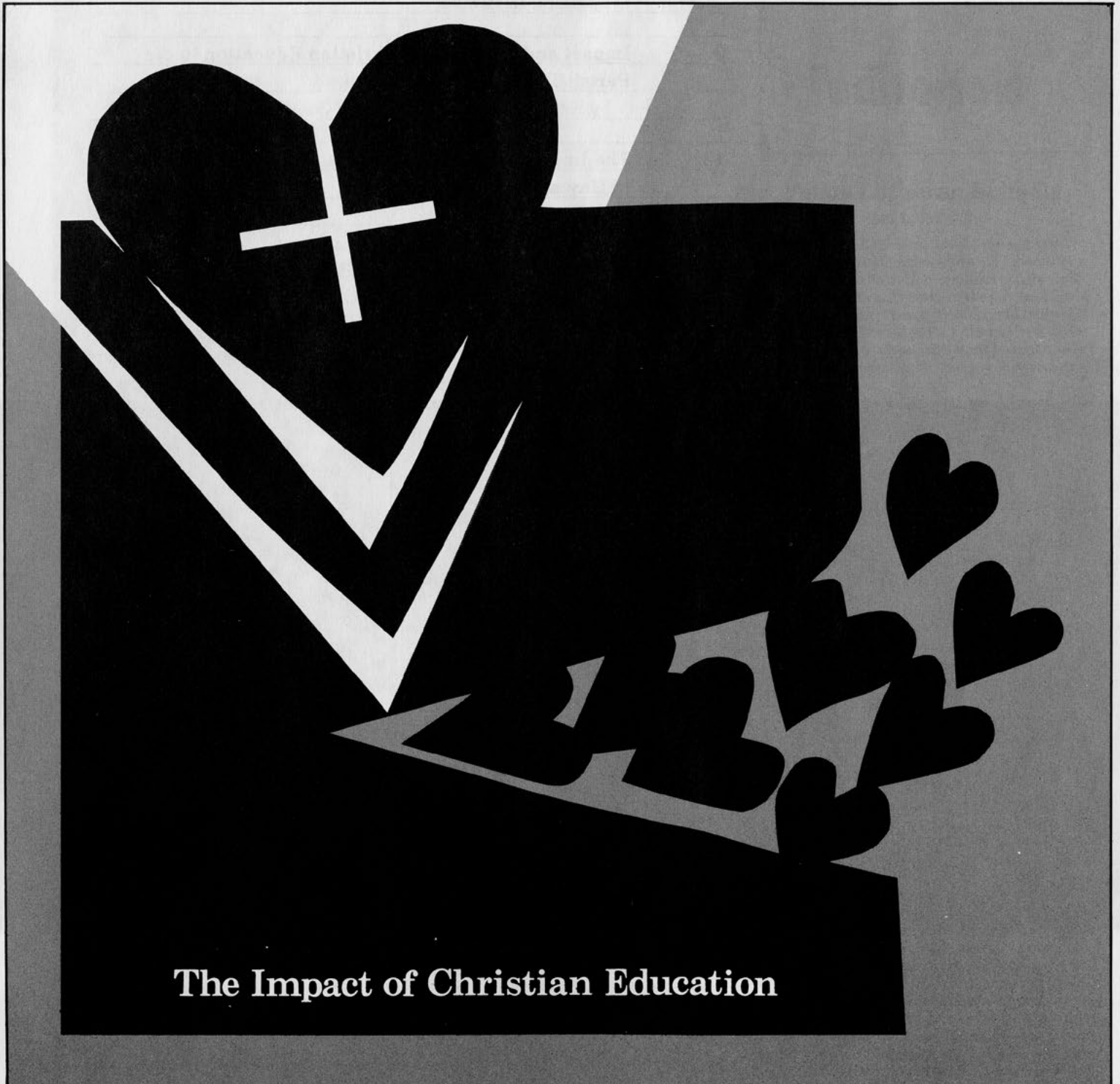
ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Spring, 1987

Vol. 21, No. 2

Concordia College
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The Impact of Christian Education

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Young teachers reportedly go through at least three stages of concern. In stage one they are primarily concerned with what others think of them. Then follows a preoccupation with the daily teaching activity itself. The third stage is a concern with what the students are learning.

In this *Issues* the authors provide idea generating material for those church leaders at every level of ministry in the third stage who are concerned about the impact of Christian education today. From their own unique experience and study these writers answer the question, "Is anything happening out there that is worth the cost and effort required to deliver quality Christian education?"

Three contributors agree that in a variety of settings Christian education is the best avenue for opening otherwise inaccessible homes to the church and for gaining support of the entire family. Two of the writers point parishoners and their leaders toward thinking of success in Christian education in terms of the Gospel living that is taking place in the parish. Indicators that point to mild enthusiasm among members of the LCMS when it comes to investing in Christian education are identified in yet another article. I wonder if that is one reason some Lutherans are rich in things and poor in spirit.

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reflections LEJECFIOW

Concordia's presidents have since the inception of *ISSUES in Christian Education* been regular contributors to the magazine. The form and substance of these columns has varied but all have articulated the unique and special character of Christian education. I have chosen to join my predecessors and to take the liberty to use these opportunities to communicate with *ISSUES* readers for conveying thoughts and information that result from my contacts with students and faculty on campus. That is why I've chosen to call this column, "Reflections."

The contributors to this journal have provided an assessment of what they have sensed is the impact of Christian education in our parishes and other locations in which LCMS is in ministry. I'd like to add a few examples of some of the ways our Lord undoubtedly is using Concordia-Seward to make an impact on the lives of both those who study and those who teach on this campus.

While the College as a professional school addresses the needs of students to be academically prepared, its fundamental function as an agency of the Christian church is to deepen the Biblical knowledge and faith of students. I observe manifestations of this deepening in the prayers for staff, students, and faculty who have special needs that are presented to the Lord in chapel regularly. The higher level of daily attendance in chapel worship reported this year points to the impact the Word has on the Concordia family.

Among Concordians it's difficult to gauge the depth of the impact of contributions of food by the faculty and others to meet some of the needs of married students. Other gifts to help meet emergency situations have a way of becoming available to many in our campus community, thanks to God. Such love of the neighbor among us warms our hearts and makes us reflect again on the power of the Gospel that led men in another age to observe how much Christians love one another.

I also wonder about the impact some unpleasant decisions we have been forced to make in the interest of institutional survival will have on Christian education in the future. How many opportunities will be lost in local parishes and mission fields alike because there will not be enough workers to go around? Future seminary students, directors of Christian education, Christian elementary and secondary teachers and Christians for other professions as well come from our Concordias.

What will it take to increase the numbers who will dedicate their lives to service of the Lord? What will it take to convince more Christians that God gave us money and resources to make an impact in His Kingdom while we have life and breath to do it? Jesus made this point many times. We hope and pray that enough people are listening in time to act and avoid a disastrous shortage of workers in the Kingdom.

May Thy Kingdom come. May Thy Will be done among us also, good Lord.

Ralph L. Reinke
President

editorials

Focus Lutheran Schools in Christ

Many of our Lutheran schools were opened to meet the needs of families who were looking for a kindergarten when the local public schools didn't offer kindergarten. As many of the public schools responded to the pressures of their citizenry and began to offer kindergartens themselves, some Lutheran schools closed and some began to offer educational programs for the pre-kindergarten children.

You may have heard that pre-kindergarten classes in the public schools appear to be just over the horizon. Some of our schools are now offering programs for two-year-olds and up. Many of these programs are custodial. Many claim to have a Christian education significance and we pray for their efforts.

Professor Kuehnert of the Concordia-River Forest faculty said in 1948 that by the year 2000 education would be from the womb to the tomb. It's not as humorous a comment today as it appeared to be then.

What does this all mean to the Lutheran schools of the future? Are we all destined to become custodial day care centers with an incidental Christian significance? There is often confusion among congregational leaders when developing a philosophy of a school in determining whether it is to be primarily a mission agency or an educational agency of the church. For a Lutheran school, education is the mission, and using every family contact made through the school to strengthen the Christianity of the home is at the core of that mission. A great sin is every missed opportunity to bring the Gospel to families searching for God's will in their lives. Sometimes our schools are missing many opportunities.

Most schools experience unpredictable, periodic changes in enrollment. Sometimes these changes in numbers are so abrupt that they cause a school to make compromises in its acceptance procedures and requirements, a change in the fee structure, a change in the curriculum or to take other such emergency measures. Abrupt changes in enrollment may also be caused by a sudden recognition that the local Lutheran school has something to offer searching families that the local public schools don't. At one time it was kindergarten; at another it was a lower pupil-teacher

editorials

ratio; and, to our embarrassment, on occasion it was the segregated classroom.

To maintain a constant enrollment and to avoid decaling, survival decisions, the school must be designed to meet a constant need in the society. Christian families are looking for schools which offer a learning environment and a curriculum which is consistent with the values taught in their Christian homes. This consistency must be reflected in the faculty of the school; all must be mature, practicing Christians. This consistency is also reflected in the curriculum of the school which recognizes God as the creator and sustainer of His creation. It is recognized in the discipline of the school, which must be based on true Christian discipleship. Adherence to Bible centered Christianity by a school offers a constant educational opportunity to those families who are basing their whole family life-style on the example set by Jesus Christ. A school grows if it fills a unique and constant need and appeals to the community on this basis in its publicity. That publicity must feature the school's commitment to a partnership with families, working together for God.

Edwin E. Zielske

The Impact of Christian Education on World Missions

While the LC-MS is a relative late-comer on the world mission scene, it has had considerable success, especially in those countries where it operates Christian schools. There are three notable reasons why Christian schools are the key to these successful mission programs: 1) Christian education opens doors to homes; 2) it provides a continuous contact with the individual and the family; and, 3) the governments often provide much of the financing for these schools.

In many overseas cultures it is very difficult for a missionary to reach the non-Christian masses, get into their homes to tell them of their Savior, or just get their attention. Opening a Christian school, at any level, and enrolling a student affords an immediate entree to that individual and the entire family. Access is always possible if you are the child's teacher or an administrator from that school. The word "pastor" or "missionary" is usually not found in oriental languages, and it may even be a hindrance, if used. Education is a scarce commodity in most developing nations, and the opportunity to receive one is intensely sought, especially if it is an American education. We have erected schools for 2000 or more pupils in Hong Kong. They were filled to capacity the day they opened. The fact that religion is a part of the curriculum is no deterrent and may even be welcomed. In many countries other than the USA, religion is considered a vital part of any education.

Once a student is enrolled, the church has a great opportunity by way of continuous contact to share the Gospel with that person on a daily basis for nine to eleven months per year as long as enrollment continues and has access to the family too. In southern India I visited a Lutheran high school which enrolled few professed Christian students. Nevertheless, during devotion all 700 bowed to the floor on elbows and knees while reciting the Lord's Prayer. While it is difficult for a child to openly profess "Christianity" in a Muslim or Hindu family, who knows what impact the Holy Spirit was making on those students?

In countries outside the USA, separation of church and state doesn't mean exclusion of religion from public schools or denial of financial support if religion is taught in them. Students must pass examinations in religion as in other subjects. In Hong Kong this is usually Anglican-flavored. In Latin American nations it's usually Roman Catholic. In Brazil, whichever church is dominant in the community teaches the religion course in the public schools, and in some cases this is a Lutheran church. In Hong Kong the government matches our school building costs on a seven-to-one basis and pays the salaries of certified teachers in the Lutheran schools. In India the state pays the salaries of all our teachers. This is also true in many Latin American countries.

There can be no doubt that without our schools and their Christian education emphasis, our mission efforts would have had considerably less success in spreading the Gospel message in New Guinea, India, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan and many Latin American nations.

Martin B. Kirch

The Christian Day School: Ally or Enemy of the Christian Congregation's Mission?

The Christian day school has undergone considerable change since the day when my grandfather pastored congregations in rural South Dakota. Those were the days when it was not uncommon for the pastor to serve as principal and teacher of the congregation's school.

It was an arrangement seemingly made to order. Public schools were poorly funded. Educational goals were modest. The congregation could, through its school, provide an education for its children consisting of "the four R's."

Under the leadership of pastors, congregations flourished and grew in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. However, much of the growth was due to a steady flow of European Lutherans to the United States. Today that immigration has all but ceased.

Congregations are now faced with a society

which is more pluralistic and resistant to the claims of Jesus Christ. In addition, the demands on the pastor's time have multiplied. One has to believe that the mission and ministry of the Christian congregation has gotten more complicated.

There is a growing awareness in The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod that the pastor cannot effectively provide all of the leadership required for a congregation to respond to the mission and ministry that needs to happen in a particular community. Congregations are beginning to see the need for a staff for the parish.

Tension levels, however, begin to rise in congregations where the available financial resources are heavily committed to the support of a Christian day school. Taking a "band-aid" approach to staffing for the parish, congregations often assign the teaching staff additional ministry tasks. Teachers may then experience an "identity crisis" as to their call, the scope of their call, and the value of the teaching ministry.

On the other hand, when staffing for the parish is not done, those members whose lives are not touched directly by the school feel betrayed by their congregation's huge investment for the sake of so few.

Can the Christian day school be an ally of the congregation and its mission? There is no question in my mind but that it can be. The main issue, however, has to do with how this ally of the congregation can be financially supported without depriving the other ministries of the parish of needed staff.

When the children of Israel determined that their loose confederacy of tribes was inadequate for their self-defense needs, they formed a monarchical form of government. They needed to "institutionalize" their oneness.

Are we at a point in our history when the Christian day school needs to become a mission of Circuits of the Synod rather than the mission of individual congregations? Has our congregational policy, which is a strength, also become our greatest hindrance when it comes to fostering cooperation between congregations in the funding of our schools?

It seems to me that unless we find a better way to pool our financial resources as congregations in the Synod, the Christian day school may cease to exist and an ally of the congregation will be lost.

Maurice Goldhammer

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by Kenneth Heintz and Arthur Constien

Impact and Potential of Christian Education in the Parish Today

The topic "Impact and Potential of Christian Education in the Parish Today" boggles the mind almost as much as being asked off-hand at a conference to say a few words on "the Church."

Sweeping words like "impact" and "potential" need some definition and focusing. We also understand that "parish" is not a building or merely an institution, but people - people together worshipping the Triune God, serving one another in the love of God, working, playing, discipling where they are.

And then there is "Christian education," our personal and professional concern. It is a concern as big and powerful as the Word of God itself, for that is what we teach. It is a concern as large as life itself, for we teach the Word toward God's purposes which encompass all of life and our destiny in Him as well.

Our immediate question is, "How are we doing?" Is Christian education making an impact in the parish? Are we reaching our full potential as a teaching, worshipping church?

In one of the popular James Bond film episodes, Agent 007 drives his sporty car into a large body of water. The viewer may not be surprised, but to the consternation of Bond's female passenger the car begins to sink. To everyone else's amazement, the car then suddenly metamorphoses into an underwater vehicle and proceeds according to Bond's direction.

Congregations have driven the same educational vehicles for years - Sunday School, Bible classes, Vacation Bible School, Midweek School, Christian Day School, *et al.* Do these vehicles automatically adjust to different environments without a change in design? Can a congregation drive the same educational vehicle into an aging urban population that it would into a community with young, growing families without at least some transformation?

A major concern of boards of Christian education, teachers, and pastors is to have the proper vehicles or tools

for education that they can use, that fit their needs and God's purposes. Some educational vehicles may be driven straight out of the synodical factory. In the eyes of the congregational leaders, most of them still need some customizing to be effective. Whatever the choice, "counting the cost" and personnel are also necessary considerations.

I. Impact

What is meant by "impact?" It's helpful to know that the word is derived from the Latin *impingere*, which means "to dash" or "to strike against." In English, as a noun, the word means (1) the striking of one body against another; a collision; and (2) the effect of one thing upon another. As a verb, the word means "to pack firmly together."¹ The second meaning of the noun, i.e., the effect of one thing upon another, in English has been turned into a verb with the meaning of a strong, direct influence of one object or person on another. It is interesting to note that modern space technicians have used the word to refer to the hook-up of two vehicles in outer space.

Impact as Law

Impact in terms of "collision" is one way of defining Christian education. Following mankind's fall into sin, it began with God's colliding with hell-bent people by means of the judgment of His Law.

The convicting effect of this collision drives us with Peter to say, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (Lk. 5:8; RSV) Confronted with the Law's judgment, we become aware of our corrupt nature, of our world with its broken relationships. We confess that because of our spiritual blindness, God is hidden to us. We are sinners, i.e., fearful of God, separated from Him.

This impact impinges on our total personhood. In repentance, we rue our behavior. There are no abstractions here. The impact is personal, total, unbelievably effective – and devastating!

Impact as Gospel

But that is not all! God is the Creator, the Life-Giver. He Himself is Life and Redeemer. The pieces of our vulnerable and fragile selves shattered by this divine encounter are pulled together by His creating Word, the final, essential, inviting Word of Promise and Life. God claims the claimless, the fragmented.

The impact of God's promise is the striking effect of One upon another, i.e., to lift us up, to give us life. The impact (n) of the Gospel is "to pack firmly together" (v). God the Father through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ forgivingly packs us firmly together with Him. He binds us redemptively to Himself. We are sealed, sustained, and nurtured in this healed, reconciled relationship by the Holy Spirit through this Good News in Word and Sacraments.

God's "pacting" us to Himself redemptively is an event. God's action is verbal, and His speaking is action.

The Word, the initiative, the process, techniques, goals are His. Together, they make up the "what" and the "how" of Christian education.

"Educated," and Educating Others

God not only loves us, but He also teaches us His love and

how to love others in His Name. Being loved and apprehending the personal relationship of His loving us together with others, we love Him. Both God and we, in His Name, are enactors in this personal, gracious, loving fellowship. The "content" and the "relationship" of being loved and loving are interdimensional. Pedagogically, method is implicit. Grammatically, the distinction is analytical, academic. Theologically, it can be only a distinction, never a separation.

Understandably, the impact of our collision with God and of His "pacting" us firmly together with Him is lifelong. It is a total, personal redemptive relationship with God that leads us graciously over all obstacles by the victory of Christ's resurrection to the culmination of the final "pacting" with God in glory at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. This is what Christian education is all about in its impact and potential. It is the heart of the ministry of the church.

To Educate

To educate means "to lead out." Christian education means to lead one out to the goal of the fullness of life together with God in all its dimensions. Christian education, on the one hand, is Christian people teaching the Word of God to non-Christians in order to offer them the benefits of God the Father's life-giving and life-filling promise through Jesus Christ by the grace-power of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, it is reciprocal mutuality with fellow Christians for the purpose of nourishing, nurturing, cultivating, and leading by means of the Gospel to the maturity in Christ of servanthood to others.

Enlightened by the living Word, Christian educators are to see themselves not only as "professionals" in a "parish," but also as part of the gathered reconciled people of God. Ministering in community to each other, they are to encourage one another to live the Christian life in terms of God's Gospel. Together they relate the Word of life in all its aspects to others as a life to be lived "in, with, and under" faith in Jesus Christ.

Christian education, thus, is meant to have an impact. It does not aim to present a nice by-product. It cannot be taken for granted.

As far as a parish is concerned, Christian education is not an optional activity, even though it does not have sacramental status. It is not one of various choices conveniently available for congregational programming and seminary/church-related college training. Either positively or negatively, in view of those outside the Christian fellowship as well as those within, both the parish and the larger corporate community "educate" by what is said and done, whether formally or informally.

Biblical Command, Ecclesiastical Heritage

Christian education has always been integral to the church's self-understanding as the Body of Christ. As indicated by Jesus' Words prior to His Ascension, teaching and baptizing, witnessing and discipling, all go together. (Matt. 28:19-20)

Christian education has always been an implicit part of the church institutionally as well. The impact that Christian education has already had in the history of Christen-

dom has firmly embedded it in the church's life and worship.

Particularly in the Lutheran Church, Christian education theologically and historically has been an equal partner with ministry. Luther's introductory remarks in his *Small Catechism* and *Large Catechism* reflect that.² In "To The Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Schools," Luther emphasized that education was a necessity for both the nation and the church.³ To him, education, regardless of the perimeters, meant rooting all pedagogical endeavor in the Word of God.

Christian education – that is, Word, Sacraments, and the life together of the worshiping Christian community – along with evangelism, missions, modeling are all interrelated dimensions of the fruits of faith in Jesus Christ. That is also the ministry of the holy Christian church, the Body of Christ. But the focus for each of these – as being Christian needs to be sharp, and the priorities clear.

Evaluation

A process of continuing evaluation of all parish educational programs will help a congregation become analytically more aware of its hopes and better prepared to carry out its desires for its teaching ministry. Ongoing evaluation will strengthen the impact of Christian education, and clarify the potential which the congregation strives to achieve as community which "incarnates" the Christian faith.

Too often, measurements for evaluation are given in terms of numbers. Generally speaking, statistical reports abound and often are the sole measurement for certain activities. The *Synodical Statistical Yearbook* annually reports on such measurements.

An important additional step is to place some value on the numbers by questioning the statistics over against effective impact. For example, some parish leaders may be satisfied with using a tremendous amount of financial resource to serve one person. But if one can be served, why not more? Are the value and effort "cost effective?" In congregational terms, is the investment of the congregation in terms of time, talents, and treasure "cost effective," that is, producing an appropriate return? Some "sacred cows" may become expensive "white elephants."

Witness to the Community

A congregation serves not only the community of its membership, but also the community in which it is located. Certainly the congregation desires a favorable image on both fronts. Members usually have a direct line for in-put, but what about the "outside" community?

In measuring the impact of its educational ministry, congregational leaders should consider first what they envision the church doing for the community in the light of the nature and needs of the people living there. Since communities often are not stable, on-going monitoring of parish educational programs is required. Along with cost-effectiveness, educational materials and facilities should be examined as to the image they project to the community.

Initially and ultimately, Christian education tries to

assist Christians individually and corporately to live according to the Gospel. To measure this is very difficult. But one must at least ask whether or not the parish image and programs contradict or support, neglect or build, ignore or attend to what the Word of God teaches.

For example, people may not look to the church for guidance in matters of emotional health when they get signals that the congregation does not consider that as one of its concerns. And yet, the Gospel as proclaimed and practiced by Christ is to be brought to bear on a person's total welfare.

Christian education by its very nature is person-centered. Historically, the parish program has often referred to age, i.e., "from the cradle to the grave," as a principle or design for educational agencies. A person, however, is more than so many years added up. S/he consists of wants, needs, interests. S/he is able to grow, develop, change. Do the various educational agencies take this into account?

At times, one may gain the impression that church educational programs are created for congregations as if every parish is alike. In the local parish, adoption of such programs requires not only adapting the structure, point of view, and materials in view of the congregation's uniqueness, but also a continuing evaluation. Programs offered should be evaluated in terms of need, impact, potential before adoption, and not simply be put into place in order to fill a void.

Also, one might well ask whether or not it is cost-effective to rely totally on outside resources for the kind of Christian educational impact that a congregation desires to make on the communities it serves.

II. Potential

To prepare for the future, one teaches in a basic way for today in continuity with the heritage from the past. By teaching carefully in the present for the future, a teacher envisions what the students will learn, and be.

As we teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we also teach for the morrow. We live and teach in terms of God's promise, wherein the Holy Spirit leads His people redemptively, in anticipation of Christ's Second Coming, to fruitful servanthood to the world.

The vision and the hope come from, and are grounded in, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. By His death and resurrection, into which we have been baptized, we receive the benefits of Christ's victory. By means of this gracious gift of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel in Word and Sacraments, we ourselves are witnesses both to the impact and the potential of the Word of God in our lives.

The End-time dimension of Baptism and Holy Communion has great potential for Christian education. By means of God's holy Word, we follow, educate – lead out – one another in the life of faith in the risen Jesus Christ amid the actualities of daily life. Addressing ourselves in terms of the Word of God to people experiencing all the ramifications of daily life, we speak, live, and model – that is, teach – the greater reality of the victory of Christ's resurrection. Therein is the potential. It is in the promise, the promise "lived out" in the social, economic, political, ecclesiastical multi-dimensions of life.

Within that God-given Sacramental and End-time perspective of the Gospel, we live and teach, teach and live.

Personnel

For the church—individuals and the corporate Body—to achieve the potential of Christian education, there is to be an emphasis not only on the Word of God, and on the total interrelated dimensions of people, agencies, and the Word, but also on all who teach.

The phrase “all who teach” includes all Christians, the entire community of Christ, the congregation as a whole. Parents, neighbors, preachers, and teachers work together. They supplement and complement each other in the informal and formal ministries of the church. They themselves need to be rooted in the Word of God. They need to be aware of the importance of relationships, personal and communal, and also acquainted with basic methods of teaching and the learning-nature of people. This is especially true for all the professional educators in the church, whether Christian day school teachers, preachers, DCEs, deaconesses, administrators.

Achieving the potential in Christian education calls for a careful, thorough training in both theology and pedagogy. Certification and ordination authenticate and mark one's beginning in the formal, public ministry of the church. They are not in themselves, however, the fulfillment of potential.

Preparation

Professional, academic study is always to be encouraged. One is never too experienced, nor too old, for learning.

On-going personal theological study is a necessity. The daily reading and study of the Scripture for its own sake should accompany the preparations for Bible classes, religion lessons, sermons, and a variety of opening devotions.

The point is not simply to be knowledgeable, but to catch the spirit of the flavor of the Scriptures in all their parts. Immersion in the Word of God, the Bible, helps readers to sense the thought-pattern and the hermeneutics of the Word itself.

One learns, for instance, not only that the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Christ is the central teaching of the Bible, but also that it gives hermeneutic focus and insight for properly grasping and teaching all the other teachings (i.e., doctrines) of Scripture as well.

Training in pedagogy is important also for pastors. Just as many teacher-trained servants of the church sense the need for further study in theology, so also many preacher-trained servants sense the need for more study about *how* people learn, and about techniques for effective teaching.

Those of us who have attended a seminary realize the need for further training in principles and practices of education. It does not work to say, “I don't use any methods; I just teach.” Most often “no method” is probably bad method, or ineffective method. Unfortunately, training in educational psychology and analytic philosophical—and theological—understanding of formal and informal methodology in teaching so far have not been a priority

requirement in seminary training.

Theology and pedagogy in Christian education are not alternatives, nor divided labor. The call and the job description may be distinct, but they are interrelated. One teaches, whether from the lectern or next to an overhead projector. To do so effectively, s/he needs to be imbued not only with the Word of God, but also with a loving interest in, and knowledge of, how to teach, how to communicate the Word of God to people.

Interrelated Parish “Ministries”

For achieving the potential of Christian education in the parish, it is also important to have a good grasp of the interrelatedness of parish activity and life. One needs to understand the unity of all endeavor in the parish and the church at large.

Parishoners should have a clear idea as to how the various educational agencies relate to each other, as well as to the various other activities and functions within the parish, such as corporate worship, devotions, fellowship meetings, and the like.

All congregational life is a teaching of the Word of God and the Christian faith. By its life in the Spirit, the congregation brings to bear on individual and communal lives the impact of God's grace through evangelism, worship, stewardship, nurture, and service. The focus is on God's Word to people.

What we do as a worshipping community is a front-line presentation not only of our self-understanding as a Christian people, but also of our educational potential. It is helpful, for example, to sense the significance of the liturgical calendar and the Scripture readings of the week for our daily lives, and also as context and perspective for the themes and emphases of parish programming.

It is important that the Sacraments be central to our “coming in and going out.” When we make Baptism a focus, not merely an addendum to the service, we also proclaim that it is basic to our everyday life. As we look upon Holy Communion as the very high point liturgically of gift and experience in God's grace, we learn also how best to use our time in our life of sanctification in order to show forth the Lord's death until He comes. (I Cor. 11:26)

In every aspect of parish life it is evident then that in our proclamation, communication, and manifestation of the up-lifting power of the Gospel, we teach. And when we teach the Gospel in relation to daily life, we communicate and experience the impact and potential of the Word of God.

End-Notes

¹The American Heritage Dictionary, pp. 658-659.

²Book of Concord (Tappert ed.), 338-341, 358-362 resp.

³Works, Am. ed., XLIV, 347-348.

The Impact of Christian Education: A Case Study in Hawaii



by E. George Becker

Do you think of Hawaii as a foreign mission field? Some people do. Many Americans may not even be sure just where the islands are located or whether Honolulu is on the big island or a smaller one. Not many Christians on the mainland are really aware of their church's historical developments in Hawaii. In fact, to many American Christians the islands remain only a paradise, a place “out there” which someday they hope to visit for at least a weekend.

This may have been the sentiment which my wife and I held before our first visit with colleagues and friends in 1980. But this was not the scene during the spring semester of 1986 while I was on a sabbatical leave from Concordia serving as a visiting professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Hawaii. While there I was able to research the impact of Lutheran churches and schools on the moral and religious values of Hawaiian children. To view the islands with a million or so tourists from all over the world is one thing. To live and work there for an extended period of time is quite another.

The Hawaiian Perspective

Demographer Andrew Lind suggests that there are few places on earth which have experienced the transformations in so brief a time as Hawaii. He notes that the basic mode of supporting human life in the past two hundred years has evolved from a stone-age subsistence economy to a state of advanced capitalism. (Lind, 1981)

What Lind ascribes to the islands in general certainly applies to the island of Oahu, the geographical and social climate of the city and county of Honolulu. The city of Honolulu, like Hong Kong, Houston, Chicago and the Big Apple, is a city of contrasts in beauty, in culture, in geography and in wealth and poverty. (Gray, 1973)

Less than a century ago Honolulu was still the capital of the Hawaiian Kingdom. In 1898 when the islands were annexed to the United States, Honolulu became the capital of the territory. In 1959 it became the capital of the 50th state, enduring in the meantime the bombings of Pearl Harbor and serving as a staging area for United States military forces ever since. (Daws, 1974)

Some missionaries who followed the explorers at the turn of the 19th century came and left. But some like Hiram Bingham, the Calvinistic Congregationalist from Vermont, came and stayed. These were men who already during the

1820s and 1830s felt compelled to preach only “the truth that every good Christian could agree upon.” They presented a hard spiritual Gospel and a corresponding work ethic that was totally foreign to the Hawaiian people. Both involved the lives of their new-found converts at almost every level: the spiritual, the social, the economic, the political and the educational. (Daws, 1974)

Although Missouri Synod Lutheranism did not arrive in the island until the aftermath of Pearl Harbor through the concerned efforts of American GIs and their chaplains, Lutherans did come to Hawaii as early as 1849. Captain Heinrich Hackfeld arrived from Germany in his sailing vessel bearing trade goods and started the firm of H. Hackfeld, which eventually grew into one of the so-called “Big Five” major firms controlling the present Hawaiian economy. The name was changed to AMFAC, an abbreviation for American Factors, Ltd., during World War I since Germany was at war with the United States. (Hormann, 1980)

Hackfeld's firm brought over 1500 Germans during the 1880s and 1890s to work in the sugar plantations on the Island of Kauai. The first Lutheran congregation was founded on that island in the town of Lihue in 1883. At the turn of the century the Lutheran Church of Honolulu was established as the first congregation in the capital city as an outgrowth of Lutheran worship services conducted in the YMCA during the 1890s by the Rev. Hans Isenberg, then the pastor of the mother church in Lihue, Kauai. (Hormann, 1980)

The first Missouri Synod Lutheran congregation, our Redeemer, located just across the street from the University of Hawaii, grew out of a Lutheran Service Center established for GIs by the church during World War II (“25th Anniversary Booklet,” 1971). Since the founding of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in 1945 the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has established five other congregations in the city and county of Honolulu, one in Hilo on the big island, and two on the island of Maui. There are now six Lutheran elementary schools, five of which are located in the city and county of Honolulu, one Lutheran high school located at Our Redeemer Church, and five pre-schools. (Statistical Yearbook, LCMS, 1985; Figure 1)

The total number of Lutherans in Hawaii today is estimated at 4,604, or about 1.30% of the some 330,000

Christians living in the islands. (*Data Book*, 1985) Missouri Synod Lutheran baptized membership approximates 1,295. (*Statistical Yearbook*, 1985)

Focus and Purpose of the Study

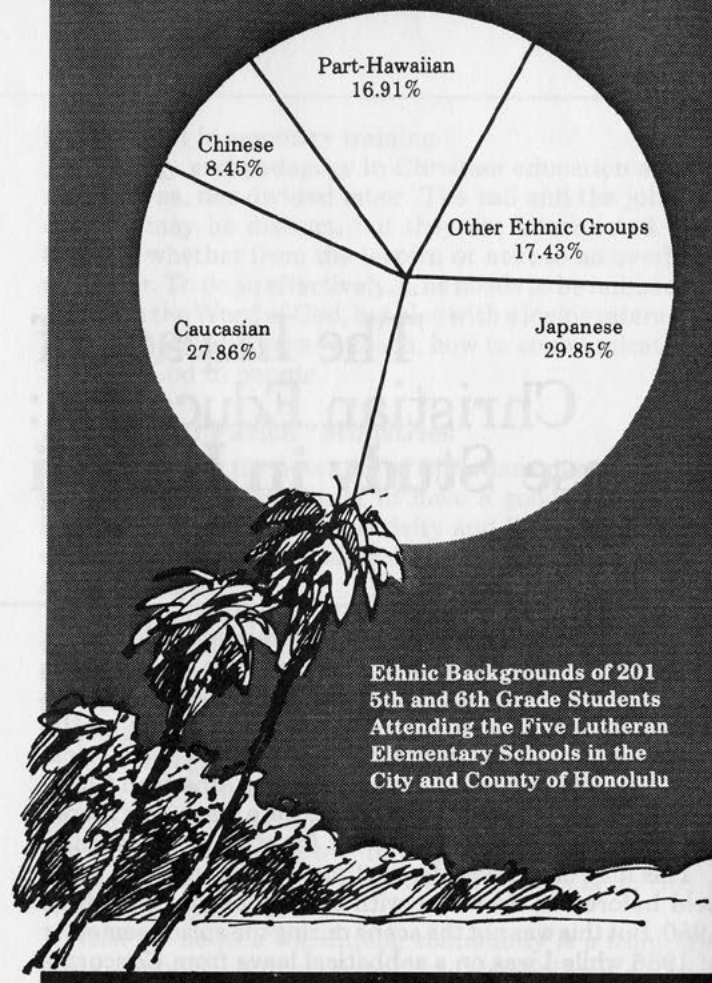
This study was primarily concerned with the five Lutheran elementary schools in the city and county of Honolulu. The five include Our Redeemer, Honolulu, located across the street from the University of Hawaii, the Lutheran school closer to Waikiki and downtown Honolulu than any of the others; Our Savior, Aiea, across the street from the Pearlridge shopping malls and reasonably close to Pearl Harbor; Trinity, Wahiawa, located almost in the center of the island of Oahu, near the pineapple field and Schofield Barracks; St. Mark, Kaneohe, on the windward side of the island, to the north and east of downtown Honolulu; and Messiah, Ewa Beach, on the leeward side, to the south and west of Pearl Harbor and Hickam Air Force Base. All schools are located within the designated boundaries of the city and county of Honolulu and have a total enrollment of 1,228 students, kindergarten through eighth grade with an average enrollment of 245 per school. (*Statistical Yearbook*, 1985; Figure 1)

The major objective of the study was to determine on the basis of observation, interviews and a short questionnaire, the significant differences in selected attitudes of Caucasian and non-Caucasian students attending the five Lutheran elementary schools located in the city and county of Honolulu. A second objective was to compare the same attitudes of parents whose children are attending or have attended these schools with the attitudes of the pupils. Only Lutheran parents were tested through the questionnaire because non-Lutheran parents could not be readily assembled into a group for the purpose of completing the questionnaire.

Quantitative data was collected by sampling 201 fifth and sixth grade students in the five schools through the questionnaire (See sample). Fifty-six, or 27.86% of the students were Caucasian, sometimes referred to as "Haole," which literally means visitor or one who is not always a part of the group or the community. This percentage figure is comparable to the 24.50% estimate of the Caucasian population in the city and county of Honolulu. (*Data Book*, 1985)

The other 145 students classified themselves as "locals" or non-Caucasians. Seventeen (8.45%) were Chinese; 34 (16.91%) were part-Hawaiian; 59 (29.35%) were Japanese; 35 (17.43%) were from other ethnic backgrounds which included Blacks, Filipino, Korean, Puerto Rican, Samoan, and Vietnamese. The above percentage figures also correspond for the most part to the percentage estimates given for the city and county of Honolulu, namely, 5.87, 16.88, 23.20 and 16.47, respectively. (*Data Book*, 1985; Figure 2)

The figure of 34 part-Hawaiians may be a bit high since students classified themselves. It is rather difficult to determine the ethnicity of Hawaii's so-called "original Polynesians" since ethnic blood relationships are so mixed. Nor is the term "native" applied only to native full-blooded Polynesian Hawaiians who comprise less than 1.00% of the total population in the Hawaiian Islands. (*Data Book*, 1985)



CONDENSED FORM OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

How I Feel About Lutheran (Sunday) Schools in the Islands

1 Strongly Agree 2 Agree 3 Disagree 4 Strongly Disagree NO Opinion

Circle one.

Item	1	2	3	4	No
The Lutheran (Sunday) School*					
1. Helps me (my child) stay closer to God.	1	2	3	4	No
2. Helps me (my child) become a better person	1	2	3	4	No
3. Is attended by a better class of people.	1	2	3	4	No
4. Is the only one I (my child) should attend.	1	2	3	4	No
5. Is the only one I (my child) wants to attend.	1	2	3	4	No
6. Is where I (my child) goes because I did.	1	2	3	4	No
7. Teaches children enough about every day living.	1	2	3	4	No
8. Helps children remember their ancestors' religion.	1	2	3	4	No
9. Is not as modern as other schools.	1	2	3	4	No
10. Doesn't attract most part-Hawaiians.	1	2	3	4	No
11. Helps me (my child) to curse less and live right.	1	2	3	4	No
12. Teaches what the Bible teaches.	1	2	3	4	No
13. Doesn't attract people who are not white.	1	2	3	4	No
14. Teaches children to be afraid of God.	1	2	3	4	No
15. Is well-known in the community.	1	2	3	4	No

*Lutheran elementary school students answered the form which read, "Helps me stay closer, etc."; Lutheran parents answered the form which read, "Helps my child, etc."; Lutheran Sunday School students answered the form which read, "The Lutheran Sunday schools help me stay closer, etc."

(Personal information such as age, sex, ethnic background, etc., was also requested on the form.)

Questionnaire Sample and Analysis

The questionnaire contained 15 items (see condensed questionnaire form) which focused on the four major value-orientations of American society set forth by Robin Williams and others: 1) religious beliefs and moral convictions; 2) racism and group superiority; 3) personal independence and external conformity; 4) achievement and success. (Williams, 1970)

Two sets of questionnaires were used to sample Lutheran elementary school students and parents. One was used to test the 201 fifth and sixth grade students, 98 males and 103 females, attending the five Lutheran elementary schools, and the other to test 104 Lutheran parents, 45 males and 59 females, attending Sunday morning Bible classes in four of the five congregations supporting these schools.

Supplementary data was collected by testing 42 Lutheran Sunday school pupils, 22 males and 20 females, enrolled in fifth and sixth grade classes. Thirty of these pupils were Caucasian. Twenty-eight of the 42 were also attending the respective Lutheran elementary schools. For our purposes here, suffice it to say that the responses on this questionnaire were similar to those given on the

Lutheran elementary school questionnaire.

Essentially four hypotheses were tested empirically and analyzed statistically, namely, that significant differences on the four value orientations already identified exist between: 1) Caucasian and non-Caucasian students; 2) Caucasian and part-Hawaiian students; 3) part-Hawaiians and all other ethnic student groups; 4) Lutheran parents and all students. A Chi Square formula was used to test the four hypotheses to determine the significant differences, that is, the differences that exist between these groups from different ethnic backgrounds on the basis of something other than mere chance. According to the formula, the value of significant differences was calculated at 9.49. Thus, all Chi Square values which are above 9.49 are indicative of significant relationships and are listed in Table I.

Resulting Clusters of Significant Differences

It is important to observe the clusters of significant differences (indicated by the boxes in Table I) that emerge within the four value-orientations. These clusters are groupings of significantly different responses which seem to thrust or bunch themselves together in consecutive or

Table I*
Clusters of Significant Differences of Items Classified By Value-Orientations

Value Orientation	Item	GROUPS COMPARED			
		Caucasian and Non-Caucasian Students	Caucasian and Part-Hawaiian Students	Part-Hawn & Other Ethnic Group Students	Lutheran Parents And All Students
Religious and Moral Convictions	1.				9.92
	2.	12.06	15.04		17.16
	8.	11.81	13.09	13.64	12.14
	11.		9.99	10.68	16.13
	12.		11.39		
Racism and Group Superiority	14.			16.39	
	3.		9.91	11.06	14.18
	10.	9.52	10.18		
Personal Independence and Conformity	13.				
	4.				11.19
	5.	10.02	10.71	10.02	
Achievement and Success	6.	9.98	12.36		
	7.		10.13	16.18	
	9.	11.48	10.86	13.05	15.27
	15.		14.19		

*Indicates scores of significant differences at .05 level of confidence (9.49) in attitudinal responses of groups compared.

adjoining items forming segments within an individual value-orientation.

These clusters meet the following criteria: 1) the number of significant differences are within the same value-orientation in which two groups are compared; 2) at least half of the items within a value-orientation show significant differences; 3) for the sake of broader comparison, a cluster may be formulated upon sufficient, significant differences in two or more related categories of groups compared. Using these criteria, we find five clusters of significant differences. (Table I)

Table I reflects the significant differences computed. It does not indicate at which levels these differences are more pronounced or in which direction such polar differences exist. For example, the lowest significant difference computed, 9.52, is found in item 10 in the value-orientation of Racism and Group Superiority under the compared groups of Caucasian and non-Caucasian.

Item 10 on the questionnaire reads, "Doesn't attract most part-Hawaiians." In this case most Caucasians felt that the schools did attract part-Hawaiians while most non-Caucasians disagreed or were not so sure. Notice, however, that there is a slightly higher figure of 10.18 given on the same item in the same value-orientation under the compared groups of Caucasian and part-Hawaiians.

Another example is the highest figure recorded, 17.16, found on item 8 in the value-orientation of Religious and Moral Convictions under the compared groups of Lutheran parents and all students regarding the question of Lutheran schools helping children to remember their ancestor's religion. According to the tabulations and the analysis of Chi Square the vast majority of the parents felt very positive about this item whereas the students on the whole did not. Apparently, the non-Caucasians felt that their own ancestors' religions were not given "prime time" as was the Christian faith and tradition.

The clusters of significant differences point up especially the polarization of attitudes which seem to exist between two groups compared, or in most cases two categories of groups compared in the four value-orientations. The most striking differences appear not only between part-Hawaiians and Caucasians, but between part-Hawaiians and all other non-Caucasian students, as well.

Two clusters are found in the first value-orientation, Religious Beliefs and Moral Convictions. Only one cluster is found in the value-orientation, Personal Independence and Group Superiority, and one in the fourth value-orientation, Achievement and Success. All clusters, with one exception, directly involve part-Hawaiians. (Table I)

This concentration of clusters of significant differences (indicated by the boxes in Table I) in the attitudinal responses of part-Hawaiians and other ethnic groups, when compared to those of the Caucasians and of other non-Caucasian student groups, is always more pronounced in this study than the responses of all other non-Caucasian student groups. It is important to note that these clusters definitely reflect Robert Park's concept of marginality as pointed up by Richard Schaefer. He describes the marginal individual as living and sharing intimately in the cultural life of two distinct peoples, never quite willing to break with

the traditional past and yet not accepting the new society because of racial prejudices. (Schaefer, 1984)

The Value of the Interviews

Lutheran elementary schools in Hawaii, like other Lutheran schools across the country, subscribe to a basic educational theory. Prime consideration is given to formal instruction in religion. The entire curriculum, as Wegehapt and Krause pointed out already two decades ago, is constructed with an attempt to bring all knowledge, attitudes and conduct into the proper relationship to both God and man. (Krause, 1964)

For this reason supplementary, qualitative data were collected through personal interview of 68 persons. These included pastors, principals, teachers, students, parents, college professors and city officials. Twenty-four of these persons were not directly affiliated with the five Lutheran elementary schools. Included in this group were six college professors and two graduate students at the University of Hawaii, seven students at Brigham Young University of Hawaii, two private school teachers, three public school teachers, two pastors who will become members of the new Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, and two city officials.

The 44 persons directly affiliated with the LCMS schools included two Caucasians (one of these Lutheran) and three non-Caucasians (one of these Lutheran) who attend the schools; 12 Caucasian and five non-Caucasian Lutheran parents; two Caucasian and ten non-Caucasian parents who are not members of the Lutheran Church but whose children attend or have attended these schools. Ten LCMS members whose children have not attended Lutheran elementary schools were also interviewed.

Questions modeled after Robin William's value-orientations were addressed to the person interviewed (Williams, 1970). Stated briefly, questions such as the following were asked:

How do you feel about the moral and religious teachings of Lutheran churches and schools?

Are they too strict or too lenient?

Do they appeal to the average "local" (non-Caucasian)?

Are they tolerant of other religions?

Do they provide a sound educational program?

The time of the interviews ranged from approximately 20 minutes to 40 minutes in length.

Although the interview responses were not measured statistically, it should be noted that 15 of the 17 Lutheran parents felt very positive about the environment of the Lutheran elementary school and its basic curriculum. Nine of the 12 non-Lutheran parents felt the same way and expressed very similar feelings. Of the five students interviewed, one expressed some negative feelings.

There seemed to be no major differences in the responses regarding moral and religious teachings between all of the parents and the students. Lutheran and non-Lutheran, Caucasian and non-Caucasian alike were willing to accept and were generally appreciative of the religious instruction. The same positive attitudes seemed to prevail with regard to strictness and leniency and to the question of attracting non-Caucasians. There were some differences expressed

by both Lutheran and non-Lutheran parents concerning the educational program and the need for improvement. There seemed to be quite a difference between the responses of Lutheran and non-Lutheran parents with regard to the question of religious tolerance; most of the Lutherans generally were content with the religious stance but most of the non-Lutherans seemingly were only willing to tolerate that stance for the sake of their children's educational advances.

Observations Worth Noting

Although approximately 80% of the children in Hawaiian Lutheran schools come from non-Lutheran homes, about 80% of the Lutheran children in the five congregations examined attend the Lutheran elementary school. This is a higher percentage than one will find in any of the other 49 states. It may be argued that the congregations are relatively small by way of comparison with many congregations on the mainland. But it can also be argued that Hawaiian parents sent their children in spite of a very high tuition rate which they pay over and above their regular church contributions since the church and school budgets are managed separately.

One school recently raised its tuition to \$1800 per child per year. Members of the congregation pay \$400 less for their child's tuition. But the tuition must be paid. Extenuating circumstances may warrant special consideration and attempts are made through special funds to provide financial aid to less fortunate families from the congregation and the larger community. But the fact remains that there is a long waiting list in each of the schools. One principal called this phenomenon a mixed blessing, explaining that he left the budget-crunch syndrome behind on the mainland.

Another positive finding is the multicultural nature of the schools. The July 14, 1986 LCMS Reporter announced that 13.2 percent of the children attending Lutheran elementary and pre-schools are non-white. In Hawaii that figure approximates 75 percent. Racial and ethnic intermarriage is taken for granted. Speaking of his ancestry and ethnic background, one youngster responded to an interview questions with, "I think I have 10 different bloods in me." On the questionnaire another reported, "I'm all mixed up."

It is true, of course, that Lutheran schools must compete with other private schools and not with the public schools. "Everybody wants into the private schools," one public school administrator stated. But according to the responses of Lutheran pastors, teachers and lay persons, the Word of God is at work in formal religious instruction classes and other environs of the Lutheran school. One Jewish mother, whose Jewish and part-Hawaiian daughter attends one of the schools during the week and the synagogue at the close of the week, stated that her daughter loves her Lutheran school and will make her own religious decisions.

The congregational members are generally supportive of their schools, but there are concerns which must be dealt with. Some of these are simply economic or sociological in nature. For one thing, the schools simply could not remain open without an adequate tuition base and the related sup-

port from the community. Furthermore, in spite of the Hawaiian racial and ethnic "mix," class stratification takes its toll on the people of the islands as on the mainland. Although only about 5 percent of the population is Chinese, these people are regarded as being near the top of the stratification ladder. They seemingly are the most knowledgeable and the richest. Then came the Japanese, the Caucasians, and the part-Hawaiians, in that order.

This, of course, may explain why Chinese and Japanese families, many of them third generation Hawaiians, are so insistent upon enrolling their children in private schools and why they give relatively little support, financial and otherwise, to the public schools. Hawaii today is controlled largely by the more intelligent and wealthier segments of these two local ethnic groups. In fact, the middle-class Haole from the mainland who enters upperclass society in Hawaii feels somewhat out of place, according to an article by Hormann in the 1979 issues of *Social Process in Hawaii*. As Hormann puts it, this middle-class Caucasian tends to take on some of the characteristics of upwardly mobile people. He becomes a "keeper-up-with-the-Jones" type: aggressive, snobbish, self-advertising, guilty of conspicuous consumption. (*Social Process*, 1979)

The stratification scale also affects church and school relationships. Generally, part-Hawaiians do not seem to feel as welcome in mainline religious groups. This is true also of the small minority groups such as Samoan, Puerto Rican, Korean, and Blacks. Perhaps Filipinos are somewhat of an exception because the vast majority identify with Roman Catholicism. Nevertheless, many Filipinos in Hawaii seem to be suffering from problems similar to those with which many Blacks and Hispanics on the mainland have had to contend: the relative question of Dirksheim's "Anomie," the need for a place in the sun, one of societal and personal identity. (Seidman, 1985)

Summary and Conclusions

The validity of the hypotheses tested was established through quantitative research with the finding of some significant differences in all four of the value-orientations as well as all four categories of groups compared (Table I). In addition, three of the five clusters involved more than one category of the groups compared. Furthermore, these three clusters always involved the part-Hawaiians whose responses to the items on the questionnaire differed significantly from those of the Caucasian students, as well as all other students.

Analysis of the questionnaire data revealed that there are significant differences in the combined attitudes of Caucasian students, all other students, and Lutheran parents in the first value-orientation, Religious and Moral Convictions. Most Caucasian students apparently agreed that the Lutheran elementary school helps them to become a better person, helps them to remember their ancestors' religion, helps them to curse less and live right, and teaches what the Bible teaches. Lutheran parents expressed these sentiments even more adamantly whereas most part-Hawaiians disagreed and a significant number of students from the other ethnic groups were not always so sure.

In the rest of the value-orientation, Caucasian students responded similarly to the parents on most of the items.

Their views on race and ethnic superiority and on achievement and success are also very similar to those of Lutheran parents. Caucasian students and Lutheran parents generally disagreed in their responses regarding independent decision-making, particularly on item 4, the Lutheran elementary school "is the only one I (my child) should attend." Some Caucasian students indicated that they would want to transfer to another school if their best friends were to do so.

One of the most significant findings is related to part-Hawaiians' feelings about racial and group superiority. Even in the Christian environment of the Lutheran school part-Hawaiians do not feel as comfortable as the other students. Their responses to items in this value-orientation are undoubtedly related, at least to a degree, to their item responses in the fourth value-orientation, Achievement and Success. This cluster of significant differences reveals mostly negative responses by part-Hawaiians to all items. Although Chinese and Japanese students voiced some negative sentiments, they were looking at the questions from a different perspective. Chinese and Japanese students are high achievers; part-Hawaiians are not. Their image is that of personal low achievement and success due largely to their low social stratification level.

Although the interview responses do not enable one to make a sound comparative statistical analysis, it is possible to make some broad, general comparisons with the questionnaire data which may be of interest to the reader. Both the questionnaire data and the results of the interviews show that the majority of the persons tested on the questionnaire or through an interview had positive feelings about the Lutheran elementary school in the city and county of Honolulu. For example, the positive responses to the first interview question, "How do you feel about the moral and religious teachings of Lutheran churches and schools?" compare favorably with the responses to items 1 and 2 on the questionnaire which assert that Lutheran schools help students to keep a "closer relationship with God" and "to become a better person."

Other inferences can also be made. The high tuition cost does not hamper the schools' enrollment. The multicultural nature of the schools is a decided plus in spite of the ethnic tensions of Hawaiian communities. The congregational members are generally supportive of the schools and so are most non-Lutheran parents who enroll their children.

Two final questions must be addressed. What kind of impact do Lutheran churches and schools make upon the people of Hawaii? What do these findings have to say to the entire field of Lutheran elementary education as well as Christian education in general?

It appears that it is easier for Lutheran elementary schools in the city and county of Honolulu to attract non-Caucasians in the environ of a private-school setting than it is for the average parish or congregation to make the non-Caucasian feel as welcome in an ecclesiastical setting. *It seems fairly clear that the churches make the greatest impact on multi-ethnic communities through the Lutheran schools.*

To what extent these or similar principles and practices can be applied to schools in other parts of the country may

be another matter. Lutheran schools in Hawaii have virtually little challenge from the public sector. But some Lutheran pastors and teachers, as well as any number of parents, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, responded favorably when asked whether the administrative dynamics of Hawaiian Lutheran schools may be worthy of consideration by congregations elsewhere. This is not to suggest, however, that these respondents felt the members of the local congregations in Hawaii were doing all they could to attract non-Caucasians to the Lutheran Church; but they seemed to be convinced that if it were not for the Lutheran elementary schools in Hawaii many non-Lutheran and unchurched families would have no contact with the Lutheran Church. As a result, they felt that even fewer would be won for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and eventually, perhaps, as members of the Lutheran Church.

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The Impact of Christian Education on the Synodical Scene

by LeeRoy Holtzen

The thoughtful reader will recognize at once that the topic of this article would properly merit the pages of an entire book. As a matter of fact, quite a number of volumes have been written concerning the impact of Christian education on the Synod. What follows is a personal perception of one individual who serves as a professor of education at one of the synodical colleges. It is also written from the vantage point of one who was privileged to be in attendance at the 56th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod meeting in Indianapolis in July of 1986. Even though references have been cited, the article is not a scholarly attempt to measure empirically the impact of Christian education on the LCMS church body. It is offered in the fervent hope that it might serve as a catalyst for readers to conduct their own assessments of the extent to which members of the church body are jointly advancing the cause of Christian education on the local level, the national level, and the international level.

Since this article was prepared for a periodical read chiefly by a specific denominational group, the term "Synod" is used to designate the body more formally known as The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The term "Christian education" is used to denote formal instruction in religious beliefs and practices even though the writer readily acknowledges that, in a broader sense, Christian education takes place through many other means, including education by example. Furthermore, no attempt has been made to distinguish between the impact of Christian education on the Synod and the impact of the Synod on Christian education. The two are interrelated. A classical law of physics recognizes that for every action there is a corresponding reaction. In like manner, the impact of Christian education on the Synod is directly related to the impact which the Synod has made on Christian education.

LCMS Gave Christian Education High Priority

The cause of Christian education requires no supporting rationale among Lutherans. The mandate is clearly set forth in both the Old Testament and the New Testament of Scripture. The mandate for Christian education was readily espoused by Martin Luther in setting in motion the forces which would eventually result in the Reformation. The foundations of a confessional church depended heavily on proper education of the laity. Already in 1524 Martin Luther issued a letter to the mayors and aldermen of German cities urging them to make proper provision for the education of the masses. Education, literacy, religion and salvation became inseparably linked on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. When Luther found that his people were not able to cope with the sophisticated language of the Bible of his day, he wrote his *Small Catechism* to serve as a

tool to enable the head of the household to teach the fundamental truths of Scripture in a simple way to his household. In the colonies of New England, a system of schools was introduced to enable the citizenry to be duly warned against the "Old Deluder Satan."

From its very beginning the Synod has been characterized by an exceptionally high level of appreciation and concern for the fostering of Christian instruction for the nurturing of its members. Even as the sailing ships of the Saxon forefathers plied the waters of the Atlantic en route to a new beginning in a new land, the pious emigrants adhered to a provision of the code governing their Auswanderungs-Gesellschaft. This provision called for daily instruction of the children to be carried out during their tedious voyage of almost eight weeks. It is interesting to contemplate the scene of a cluster of children on the open deck of a sailing ship gathered around one of the students of theology who instructed them in the teachings of *Luther's Small Catechism*. Even though their futures in the new land were poorly defined, their commitment to Christian education was such that they would not wait until they had terminated their voyage to carry out their duty of instructing their children.

After they arrived in St. Louis, the Saxon emigrants soon discovered that the frontier city of about 15,000 inhabitants was not exactly a center of intellectualism. The public school system consisted of two buildings housing the 250 children who were being taught by a faculty of four teachers (Keemle, p. 10). If members of the Lutheran assembly required any incentive for establishing their own school system, it was readily found in the fact that very few opportunities existed for children to receive even the most limited secular education in the public school system. The Saxon fathers responded by renting a house for \$12.00 per month and equipping it as their first school at a total cost of \$40.00. During the first year of operation Herr Johann Winter and his staff were paid at the rate of \$25.00 per month for their instructional services. (Forster, p. 345)

Formal Christian education among the Saxons was not limited to the instruction of their children. They soon recognized that, if they were to enjoy the services of professionally-trained pastors and teachers, they had two options. They might import such servants from among the liberal theologians that they had left in Europe, or they could train their own. During the summer of 1839, while people around them were suffering and dying for want of proper food and care, several of the stalwarts among them began the construction of a crude shelter which was to become the facility housing their first attempt at higher education. Because of a shortage of funds, the completion of the structure was delayed until the St. Louis contingent

of the Saxon group found it possible to subsidize the project in the amount of \$35.50 (Bunger in *Der Lutheraner* LXXIV, 161). College classes began on December 9, 1839, for the seven students who were instructed by a faculty of four. A decade later, the embryonic college had gathered sufficient strength to be deemed worthy of a new location in St. Louis. This was the beginnings of Concordia Seminary.

A year prior to the organization of the Synod in 1847, Lutherans in the area of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, established a similar seminary intended to serve the dual purpose of training pastors and teachers for the church. During the first eleven years of its existence, the institution graduated 79 pastors and 15 teachers (*Der Lutheraner* XII, p. 107). Eventually the institution limited its operation to the training of pastors and was later absorbed by the seminary in St. Louis.

In 1855 a group of three pastors and two teachers established their own Lutheran Teachers Seminary in Milwaukee. Although the institution might best be described as merely a brave effort in higher education, it did manage to produce four Lutheran teachers who served in the teaching ministry a total of 108 years. Perhaps the chief significance of the Milwaukee Seminary was to be found in the fact that it represented the first effort within the Synod to establish a school specifically for the purpose of training teachers.

One of the chief items on the agenda of the Synodical Convention of 1857 was the question of whether or not the Synod should take over the operation of the Milwaukee Teachers Seminary. The same convention considered a petition coming from Lutheran teachers in the vicinity of Addison, Illinois asking that a teachers college be established there. It is interesting to note that the recognition among Lutherans that teachers required special training was closely paralleled by a similar recognition in public education. The first public normal school had opened just 18 years earlier (1839) in Lexington, Massachusetts. The Convention of 1857 declined the request of the Addison delegation and also chose not to assume responsibility for the operation of the institution in Milwaukee. The delegates did, however, respond to the request for more specialized training of teachers by dividing the Ft. Wayne Seminary into two branches, one for pastors and one for teachers. The operation of the Ft. Wayne Teachers Seminary was subsidized by Lutheran congregations in the area with offerings of food, fuel, and other essentials and this assistance made it possible for a student to attend in residence for the modest cost of \$13 per year. (Stellhorn, p. 136)

The request for a separate teachers college was again presented to the Synod in its convention of 1863. This time Lutherans in the Addison area were prepared to donate the land and virtually the entire cost of the necessary buildings. The Synod cautiously accepted the gift with certain stated stipulations (*Synodal Bericht*, 1863, pp. 78-81). The Teachers Seminary at Addison opened in September of 1864 with a student body of 46 students taught by a faculty of two, counting the director, Johann Christoph Lindemann, a direct descendant of Martin Luther. (Selle, 1898, p. 92)

By the close of the century, a rather significant number of Lutherans had settled west of the Mississippi River and had established congregations throughout that area. Ordinarily a congregation opened an elementary school at the same time that members organized as a congregation. This had been the tradition of Lutheran congregations in America from the outset. In 1820, prior to the coming of the Saxons, 84 congregations in the eastern part of the country operated a system of 206 schools (Holtzen-Krause, p. 62). A similar proliferation of schools in LCMS at a later date caused congregations to experience real difficulty in locating enough teachers. At Staplehurst, Nebraska a group of Lutherans under the leadership of Rev. George Weller explored the possibility of providing the Synod with a second institution for the training of teachers. Although the Synod sanctioned the establishment of a second teachers college in Seward, Nebraska, the delegates failed to fund it adequately. Nevertheless, in the fall of 1894 a student body of 12 students assembled for instruction. By the following year, the enrollment had grown to 30 students and Director Weller was obliged to move his family from the single-building unit to a separate dwelling. The teacher-training institutions at Addison (later River Forest) and Seward continued to meet the need for synodically-trained teachers until 1965 when in convention the Synod decided to extend teacher education to some of its junior colleges as well.

The events reported in the previous paragraphs suggest that the Synod speaks most directly toward the advancement of Christian education as it assembles in convention. This assertion is supported by actions of the convention of 1947 when the Synod, meeting in Chicago, committed itself to a goal of enrolling at least half of its eligible children in its system of elementary schools within 25 years of that meeting (*Proceedings*, 1947, p. 288). Delegates at the San Francisco convention of 1958 directed that all teachers considered to be eligible for call in the school system should henceforth complete a minimum of four years of training leading to the bachelor's degree (*Proceedings*, 1958, p. 136). Other examples of convention mandates on Christian education could be cited.

Have Synodical Priorities Changed?

Recognition that the actions of a synodical convention provide one measure of the impact of Christian education on the Synod leads to the question of how the Synod in its most recent convention of 1986 addressed itself to the concerns of Christian education. One indicator is provided by a quantitative assessment of the number of resolutions relating to Christian education. The original edition of the *Convention Workbook* listed a total of 61 specific resolutions submitted under the heading of congregational ministries. Another 102 resolutions were listed under the heading of higher education. One might conclude from this number that the Synod was substantially interested in giving consideration to the advancement of Christian education. However, the extent to which these resolutions resulted in action may be deduced from an examination of the 1986 *Convention Proceedings*. Of the resolutions submitted under the categories indicated above, this volume reports a total of only 20 resolutions as adopted relating to con-

gregational ministries and only 11 resolutions relating to higher education. Admittedly, a count of the total number of resolutions adopted provides only a very crude measure of the extent to which the Synod in convention addressed the advancement of Christian education. To refine the count further one must subtract the number of resolutions adopted which were essentially acts of piety or courtesy, such as giving thanks for the services of specific institutions or individuals. In the judgment of some observers, it would be less than accurate to conclude that the advancement of Christian education was the highest, or even one of the high priorities of those assembled in the 1986 convention.

What were the chief priorities for the LCMS delegates in session at Indianapolis? Judging from the amount of time devoted to the tasks and from the amount of discussion and debate on the floor, one would have to conclude that the two highest priorities of the convention were: 1) the election of individuals to the various positions in the Synod, and 2) a rather extensive revision of the Bylaws of the Synod in order to streamline operations and reduce the probability of involving the Synod in litigation.

A great many hours of convention time were also devoted to group processes during which members of the assembly were encouraged to get to know each other as individuals and to reach some kind of informal consensus with regard to various issues confronting the church body. It is impossible to make any realistic estimate of the extent to which the group processes furthered the cause of Christian education.

Although the delegates in convention at Indianapolis passed a rather limited number of resolutions relating directly to Christian education, they did take action concerning several items worthy of note. Through the adoption of Resolution 2-01 the delegates sought in the very broadest of terms to propose a vision in Christian education for the congregations of the Synod. The resolution, however, made no reference to ways or means by which the vision was to be achieved. The chief value of the proposal would seem to be that it provided an official acknowledgment that Christian education continues to be recognized as one of the Biblical mandates for the Synod.

Through their adoption of Resolution 2-07 the delegates encouraged continued and increased support for urban Lutheran elementary schools. Once again, the resolution lacked specific details as to how urban schools are to be advanced. The action does demonstrate that the church body is sensitive to some of the current societal trends that call for new models in Christian education.

The quality of instruction in Christian schools is a function of the training of the teaching staff. This fact was recognized as the assembly of delegates passed Resolution 2-09 which called for efforts to increase the percentage of synodically-trained teachers in Lutheran schools beyond the current proportion of 78 percent. Delegates also viewed with considerable concern a downward trend from 90 percent synodically-trained teachers to the present all-time low.

This resolution was different from many in that it included proposed means by which the intended goal might be accomplished. Proposed strategies included a refinement of the calling process, improvement of salaries for

teachers in Lutheran schools, and further promotion and enhancement of college programs for the teachers presently employed but not certified by Synod.

It is difficult to consider the advancement of Christian education without giving some attention to the topic of instructional materials. Delegates to the Indianapolis convention also directed their attention to that topic. Through its adoption of Resolution 2-16 the Synod officially approved the new translation of the "Enchiridion" of *Luther's Small Catechism*. In doing so, the convention completed a project which was thought to be relatively complete almost two decades earlier in the form of an inter-synodical translation which was subsequently reconsidered and not adopted by the Synod. It was interesting to note that this resolution, which had the effect of providing a new translation of the very core of Christian teaching in Lutheran churches and schools, merited only a moderate degree of attention as measured by the time consumed on the convention floor. This might be viewed as an indication of the high level of confidence placed in the revision committee. It might also reflect the extent to which the committee had sought input from the field and previously dealt with any concerns raised by the constituency. A companion resolution designated as Resolution 2-17 authorized Synod's Board for Parish Services to proceed with the preparation of a proposed revision of "A Short Exposition" of *Luther's Small Catechism*.

Under the category of higher education, convention delegates recognized the fact that Synod is currently faced with a critical shortage of professionally-trained church workers. Through their adoption of Resolution 6-15 the delegates urged all members to make recruitment for church vocations the concern of the entire church body. The resolution called on the Synod to direct its recruitment efforts toward certain target audiences and identified some of the agencies through which such persons might be contacted. Ultimately, the success or failure of the resolution will be determined by the commitment, the persistence, and the imaginative approaches of persons working on the local level.

The documented decline in the percentage of synodically-trained teachers in Lutheran schools was addressed in Resolution 6-25 which represents a serious attempt to standardize procedures for the teaching colloquy and to bring about greater uniformity of practice among the various colleges which administer such programs. The colloquy is viewed as one useful means to be used to increase the proportion of synodically-trained persons serving in the professional ministries of the church.

Conventions are never able to deal with all resolutions of worth during the limited time available to them. Three rather significant resolutions relating to Christian education were not dealt with by the delegates at Indianapolis. Resolution 2-24 would have urged Lutheran schools to make creative use of a new curriculum guide, *Integrating the Faith*. Very probably teachers in Lutheran schools will make diligent use of this fine document even though it failed to gain a statement of formal support by the Synod. Resolution 2-25 would have been used to encourage Lutheran schools to seek accreditation of their programs through an accreditation process currently being devised

for the schools of the Synod. Once again, it is likely that this process will continue to develop even without the specific sanction of the convention. Resolution 6-24 would have caused the convention to call on all Lutheran schools to use the teacher colloquy system to achieve certified status for their teachers who had been trained outside the synodical system. For each of the previous situations, the lack of positive action on the part of the convention is regrettable. It would be a serious mistake, however, to interpret lack of action as negative action. Each of the proposals recommended a worthy means of advancing Christian education.

In addition to official acts of a convention, statistics can sometimes be used to provide a rough measure of developing trends in Christian education. A comparison of the 1975 and 1985 editions of *The Lutheran Annual* indicates that in 1975 the Board for Parish Education enjoyed the services of 18 staff members in the editorial unit of the board. The 1985 edition identifies only six persons engaged in the same responsibilities. The 1975 edition of *The Lutheran Annual* listed seven persons assigned to the field services unit of the board. A decade later, that number was only five.

The rather dramatic reduction of the work force attached to the editorial services unit focuses attention on a perennial problem faced by this board (now named Board for Parish Services). In order to carry out an effective program of Christian education, instructional materials must be made available to educators in the local congregations. For many years such materials were produced through the efforts of a dedicated staff of writers working directly under the supervision of Synod's Board for Parish Education. Because of the very significant cutbacks in funding, the board has found it necessary to depend on writers in the field to generate such materials. The board has needed to identify, to train, and to enlist the services of practitioners of Christian education. This method has the advantage of keeping the process close to the grass roots level of the church. It also has the serious disadvantage of placing the board in the position of having to rely on writers who have no direct obligations to the Synod. Since these are most commonly persons who already have full-time responsibilities of one kind or other, it seems that the supply of writers is at best unpredictable.

Some Tentative Conclusions

What are some of the tentative conclusions which might properly be drawn from an informal survey of the impact of Christian education on the Synod? The following listing is an incomplete and fallible identification of such conclusions:

1. Members of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod continue to have a high regard for the process of Christian education and continue to view it as one of the prime objectives of the organized church.

2. As the Synod has grown in numbers and corresponding bureaucracy, it has become increasingly difficult for the Synod as a corporate body to speak as specifically as in the past to the needs of Christian education on the local level.

3. So long as the Synod continues to suffer from a very

serious shortage of trained pastors and inadequate funding for its seminaries, it will be very difficult for the Synod as a corporate body to invest its resources and energies in providing for Christian education beyond the minimal and traditional needs of filling pulpits.

4. Advancing the cause of Christian education will continue to be primarily the responsibility of the local congregation. It is unrealistic to assume that the advancement of Christian education can effectively be accomplished by a random selection of delegates convening for short periods of time at three-year intervals.

5. An interesting contrast exists between methods of dealing with vacancies in the pastoral and teaching ministries. A pastoral vacancy remains officially vacant until a synodically-trained and certified replacement becomes available. Vacancies in the teaching ministry are filled by "someone" who becomes available.

6. So long as the Synod ambiguously defines its system of colleges and seminaries, all institutions within the system will suffer from a lack of synodical support. The extent to which such schools are encouraged to fend for themselves for survival may well determine the extent to which they are able to remain committed to their distinctive roles in the Synod's system of Christian education.

7. Humanly speaking, much of the past strength of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod might have been attributed to its investment in a strong system of Christian education. If the Synod allows that system to be seriously eroded, the cohesiveness and the sense of unity of the entire church body may be correspondingly eroded.

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book reviews

HANDBOOK OF ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION by Nancy Foltz, Editor, Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1986.

Published by an important religious education press, this publication is one of the most helpful resources in the field of adult religious education. The book succeeds in a number of ways. Several authors demonstrate that adult religious education is more than classes, seminars, workshops, and classrooms by exploring how the church may work with older people, middle-agers, young adults, single parents, singles, and adults involved in separation, divorce, grief, and bereavement. Principles of andragogy, i.e., the science/art of leading adults, are taken seriously and serve to sensitize leaders to recognizing that adults learn in different ways than do many children in classrooms. One author builds on a theological perspective and links adult education to three functions of the church: the kerygmatic (proclamation), diakonic (service), and koinonic (fellowship). Several discussions tap some of the research by identifying factors and models which encourage adult participation as well as barriers which limit the involvement of adults. Accepting self-directed learning by adults of various ages is a fact of life in our society that has many implications for the church's ministry. A need for new models of adult education in the church is identified by calling attention to the limitations of a schooling model as well as significant changes in the demographics of our country, such as middle-age adults becoming the largest sector in our country by the year 2000 and older adults representing nearly a fifth of our population by the next century.

At several points the book only succeeds partially. The perspectives of several authors, especially those who discuss educational ministry among young adults, middle-agers, and older persons, are restricted largely to a socio-psychological lens which ignores the theological. The roles of adults as members of families are alluded to and deserve substantial development. To view the function of religious education as a process that enables persons to acquire, explore, and express meaning is limited. Some of the statements presented as principles of adult learning, such as "time is valuable to the adult," consist more of observations than principles.

The book does not succeed in being convincing in several instances. For example, to build on Marshall McLuhan's assertion that the medium is the message by stating that the community of

learners is the kerygma ignores the other side of the coin, that the message is the medium. The Gospel is conspicuous by its absence, and an occasional reference presents a weak gospel, e.g. when Jesus is seen largely as being present in the world as a sign of God's affirmation of Jesus and humanity. The omission of a consideration of the relationship between socio-psychological and theological perspectives leads to a weakening of the role of the church's teaching ministry.

Despite these limitations, the book presents a powerful call to the church today to reverse a large-scale ignoring of large numbers of adults with significant needs that wait being addressed by the teaching ministry of the church.

Marvin Bergman

WHY THE CHURCH MUST TEACH by Lucien E. Coleman. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1984.

This is a scholarly yet easy to read booklet that anyone interested in Christian education should read. It will excite you as a teacher. Jesus came teaching a teaching church, by which is meant all that we do as church. As Coleman writes, "A church is a band of disciples who continue in His Word" (p. 150). It is that continuing process of word and deed that gives the traditional church continuous life and vitality as we live by the ancient and adapt to new reality and change.

Dr. Coleman is professor of Adult Education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He articulates concisely the imperative significance of teaching to the life of the church in the following quotations:

"The church must teach. . . When it fails to do so, false teachings rush in to fill the vacuum. The key issue, therefore, is not **whether** we shall teach but **how** we may do so effectively." (p. 9)

"A strange subordination of the teaching function. . . we spend big money on educational facilities, publish an awesome array of curriculum materials, and enlist thousands of men and women to serve as leaders in teaching and training programs. . . but. . . the teaching ministry is regarded as a

secondary, and, in some instances nonessential function of the church." (p. 12)

"Disobedience born of ignorance. . . When the function of teaching is neglected within a church, the congregation will eventually develop spiritual amnesia, forgetting who under God they are supposed to be. The result is that the church gradually becomes homogenized with the secular society surrounding her, languishing in a pattern of cultural sameness, undifferentiated and innocuous." (p. 153)

Does this describe Lutheran education today? I pray not. Yet, are we too conforming to the values and ways of the world (vapid Americanism)? How are we "peculiar?"

Coleman emphasizes the role of parents, especially the father. In a way, all Christians are teachers.

I found his approach to be balanced and refreshing. For example, he writes in his chapter titled, "Christian Teaching as Calling":

"Christian teaching is not a mere technique. It is a communication process that is centered in the person of Jesus Christ, rooted in the Word of God and devoted to the purpose of leading individuals to life-transforming commitment." (p. 136)

How could one say it better?
Glenn O. Kraft

A HISTORY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION by Stephen A. Schmidt. Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1983.

A history of the Religious Education Association (REA) may appear to be too narrow to review in a journal such as *ISSUES in Christian Education*. But Stephen Schmidt's excellent study goes beyond the REA and examines issues fundamental to everyone interested in religious education. Schmidt's thesis is that a central purpose of the founders of the REA was "to make this society and this pluralism of religion and churches into some kind of noble 'kingdom of God.'" They

believed that "all education, including religious education, was a matter of public pedagogy," not just for private edification.

The first leaders of the Association, such as William Rainey Harper and George Albert Coe, were committed to building a "democracy of God." They believed that democratic ideals and values came from God. Both anticipated the transformation of American society into a "righteous empire." Most early members of the REA came from the liberal spectrum of mainline

Protestantism. By the 1920s the faith of the association "rested in the conviction that the only pursuit of truth which was acceptable was that of scientific experimentation. The only reality of religious conviction was that of experimental humanism." In the '20s and '30s, the REA focused more on research and character formation, and reduced attention to the public dimensions of religious education.

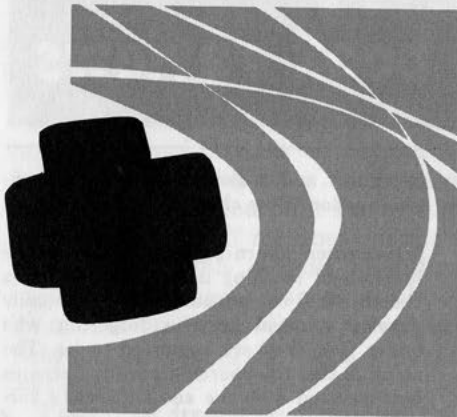
The latter half of the 1930s and the 1940s brought challenges from neoorthodox theologians with their emphasis on sin, the transcendence of God, and the need of faith. Critics such as H. Shelton Smith charged that religious education simply was a mere reworking of liberal education; he rejected experimentalism as a method for religious education. The "aging liberals" of the REA found it difficult to respond to this changing theological climate.

Change occurred, nonetheless. Leaders of the REA in the 1950s, such as Randolph Crump Miller, combined the values of neoorthodoxy with elements of the liberal tradition. By 1960, religious education tended to view the secular world as the "enemy"—a major contrast from the vision of early leaders; religious education had become much more inward-turning and self-preserving. In the '60s the Association became more ecumenical, especially through its outreach

to Roman Catholic educators. In 1969, it experienced the turmoil of American society, when many of those attending its convention insisted that religious education had to confront controversial issues such as racism and sexism. They criticized the church and the REA, specifically, for failing to live by a public pedagogy.

Schmidt's study of the REA is done with considerable skill. He treats sympathetically, yet critically, individuals of various theological perspectives in the context of their times. Most important, he keeps fundamental issues in religious education constantly before the reader. He points out that the central question of religious education depends on the definitional meaning of religion—whether religion is a special, separate element of human existence or one related to all facets of life—addressing current issues such as apartheid, nuclear war, poverty and injustice. The vision of the early REA leaders, despite their liberal theology, offers valuable insights into the purposes of religious education.

Jerrald K. Pfabe



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