

ISSUES

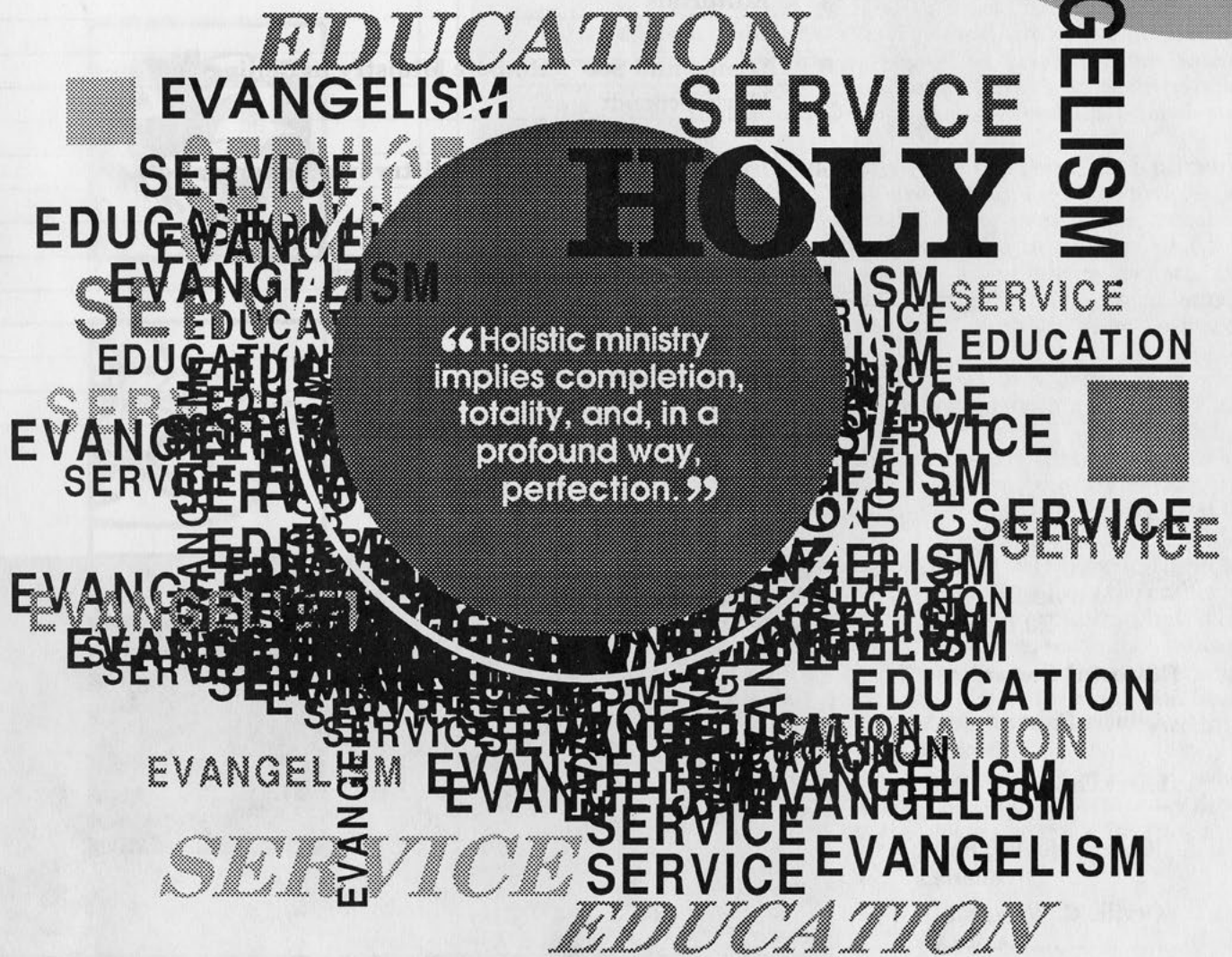
IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Spring 1991

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SERVICE

EVANGELISM



Holistic Ministry: The Church's Mission

Spring, 1991
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Holistic Ministry: The Church's Mission

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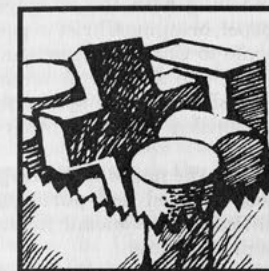
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Reflections

WHAT IS THE PRIMARY MISSION of the Church in the 1990's? Is it evangelism, as emphasized by numerous church growth advocates? Or is it Christian education, as practiced by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod throughout its history? Or is it service, modeled after Jesus Christ Himself?

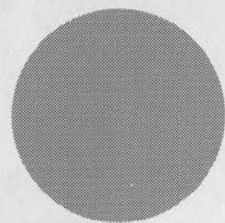
A case could be made for any of the three as a primary mission of the Church. If you are looking for three articles in this edition of ISSUES, one defending evangelism, another holding high Christian education, and a third espousing the virtues of service, at the expense of the others, you will be disappointed. Instead, the authors highlight the interrelationships among all three arms of the Church's mission—service, evangelism, and education.

The article by Marty Schmidt tells of a young man who consciously chose first to develop a relationship with two Chinese friends who did not know Jesus Christ, and then to share the Gospel. What patience this brother in Christ showed as he said to his friends, "I will not attempt to force you to take it," but invited them to "come and see" what Jesus Christ meant to him.

In writing on "The Primary Mission of the Church," Herman Etzold reminds us that "Christian education from the cradle to the grave is as incumbent upon the New Testament church as it was upon Old Testament Israel. However, it cannot be something separate from the evangelistic call to come and worship Christ as Lord and Savior. Nor can it be done in isolation from service, which is basically the knowledge of God translated into a life of love and faithfulness to God's will."

David Benke tells a heart-warming story about Keisha, who received the Bread of Life. Yet, he points out that the story does not focus on Keisha, but on the means of grace in a holistic ministry in which education, evangelism, and service are the primary mission of the Church.

Orville C. Walz, President



The People Principle

There is no reason Peter should have all the principles or Murphy all the laws. I offer, therefore, a Lobienian theory: For a brief time congregational ministries may rise above pastoral leadership, but ultimately those ministries will degenerate to the level of a congregation's professional staff.

In planning holistic ministry it is necessary for pastors and staff to know themselves, to understand their people, and to assess accurately the needs of the community in which their fellowship of faith resides. In addition, good ministry will be shaped by the cultural condition of the age in which a congregation serves God without being acculturated to the world so that its witness is no longer distinctive.

An holistic ministry would include **witness**—evangelism, mission work, helping people communicate the Gospel; **nurture**—Christian education and training for ministry; **fellowship**—relating to each other as a community of redeemed people, the body of Christ; **celebration**—worship and commemorating important events; **service**—caring for the hurting parts of the body and the world; **stewardship**—investing spiritual gifts, time, talents, and money to the glory of God. How these and other ministries are “fleshed out,” however, depends upon people.

To state the obvious, the ministry of a congregation belongs to people (Ephesians 4:1-16). Pastors, teachers, musicians, administrators, the laity, are people. Just as all people are simultaneously sinners and saints so all people are gifted by God and subject to human limitations.

In structuring ministry, therefore, the admonition remains relevant, “Know yourself!” Professional leaders need to know themselves to build on their competencies and to compensate for their inadequacies. Those who believe that God deliberately sends people to parishes will accept the spiritual gifts, talents, and resources of those people as indicative of the ministry God expects them to carry out. When leaders focus on people to shape ministry, they do not attempt to stretch or shrink them to fit a preconceived ministerial plan.

The implications of this theory are obvious. The professional staff is God's gift to understand, inspire, recruit, train, support, and preclude failure among the laity. The ministry of each congregation will be as unique as the “manifestation of the Spirit” given to people for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:7). The

“footprints of the Spirit's presence” in the lives of individuals will produce unique ministry plans. One congregation may be strongly oriented to social ministry projects, while another features day school education, and a third emphasizes inspiring worship services with professional music.

Each congregation should first answer the question, “What has God done for us?” before tackling the challenge, “What can we do for God?” Look at yourself, your people, the place in which you gather for worship. Look at the world and the age in which you are doing ministry. Then be faithful! Congregations who are deliberately faithful, inclusive, and missional in their ministry can be humbly proud of what they do well and humbly unapologetic about what they do not do at all.

Peter, Murphy, Lobien—take them for what they are worth.

George F. Lobien, Pastor
The Lutheran Church of St. Andrew
Silver Springs, Maryland

High T.O.U.C.H. Ministry

The way a congregation does ministry together—as in the way a family lives together—expresses what that congregation is, what it values, and how it relates to each other and the community in which it does ministry.

Such a reality invites congregations to take their pulses in an effort to sharpen their vision for ministry. Pulse-taking calls for a rehearsal of what the Scriptures say concerning the Church's mission. Pulse-taking calls for a discussion of the congregation's mission statement that grows out of the Scriptures and results in strategy for ministry.

The early Church serves as a model in rehearsing the congregation's mission and ministry for the 20th century. Luke in the Book of Acts writes, “They devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayers.

... and they gave to anyone as he had need” (Acts 2:42, 45b NIV). The model continues in the Book of and the Epistles of Paul, Peter, John, and Jude, affirming that the Church exists for the purpose of reaching out and touching people with Jesus Christ for healing and serving.

To do that, the congregation is involved in:

Teaching the faith, helping people to grow and mature in the faith (nurture).

Outreaching with the message of the Gospel, bringing Christ to people and people to Christ (evangelism).

Uplifting one another through fellowship, sharing in a spiritual, loving relationship with each other (fellowship).

Caring for the needs of others, giving to those in need and pursuing social, political, and economic justice for all people (services).

Honoring God through dynamic and creative worship, praising and thanking God in prayer, song, liturgy, and preaching (worship).

These five functions of ministry are the marks of the growing Church in the Book of Acts. These five functions of ministry are also the marks of growing churches in the 20th century. All five functions are essential.

Dare we do less?

Walter Schoedel, Pastor
Concordia Lutheran Church
Kirkwood, Missouri

Aging and Ministry in Tomorrow's Church

Psychographics, the tracking of consumer attitudes and behaviors, is big business. Baby Boomers, 77 million adults between the ages of 26 and 44, are monitored carefully because of their enormous impact on our society. The Church has been observing Boomers since the 1950's. The Search Institute studied Boomers as adolescents, from which the *Five Cries of Parents* emerged. Many Boomers left the Church as adolescents and are now returning with families to the Church, making them prime prospects for the Church's ministry. George Gallup projects that Boomers may be the key to the Church's survival if we respond to their church-shopping behaviors, minister spiritually, provide child care, offer leadership roles, recognize their moral dilemmas in the work place, and teach sex education for children. Lyle Schaller's research depicts Boomers as the new generation of churchgoers who provide an opportunity for the LCMS to open 300-500 mission stations per year during this decade.

One implication is that we have a second chance to minister to Boomers, just as we did in the 1950's and 1960's when we opened new mission stations to accommodate all the children. Many of us left teacher colleges before graduation in order to meet the teacher shortage in our schools. Now that the Boomers are adults, those often-talked-about 300-500 mission congregations per year could become a reality. One important question involves

human resources.
Who is going

to help lead the church in expanded ministries of opening new missions and educating Boomer families? Boomers do not have a lot of time, as their primary focus is the work world, financial struggles, and rearing families. Yet, they volunteer 42 percent more time than any other age group.

It is interesting that God has given to the world a new gift during this particular historical time period. Two-thirds of all older adults age 65 plus who ever lived in the world are alive today. In the United States, people age 65 and over outnumber the entire population of Canada. People of this age often feel and think ten or more years younger than their chronological age. In fact, the longer a person lives, the greater one's “statistical” life expectancy. A 70-year-old person can expect to live to age 83, while the 85-year-old can expect to live past 90.

Why are so many more people living longer now than preceding generations? For what purpose? Can it be that God envisions many more older adults taking up the mantle of evangelists and service workers?

Today's Church is beginning to awaken to the tidal wave of older adults in its midst as church professionals and lay people recognize the tremendous opportunities for transformation in the Church under God's guidance. Our opportunities remind one of the world of Jeremiah. “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11). Living out their baptismal calling, many more older adults can share their gifts of time through multiple kinds of ministries. Older adults today have countless opportunities to engage in holistic ministry. The challenges are to share the need for later life ministry and the personal responsibility to be stewards of God's gifts, as opposed to reciting “Let the younger ones do it; I've served my time,” or “I've never been so busy as I am in retirement,” leaving little time for others.

Consider these needs and opportunities for intergenerational ministry.

- Increasing numbers of American children are experiencing poverty in our own communities.
- At the end of this decade more than half of all children will spend part of

their childhood in single parent homes, living at or near the poverty level in our own communities.

- Most children will never know a time when their mothers did not work outside the home. Most Boomers struggle financially because of competition for jobs, high housing costs, and low-paying jobs in the service sector.
- All of us will belong to a minority group shortly after the turn of the century. New paradigms for reaching into the community are working in some congregations. Children in our Lutheran schools are tremendous linkages to homes.

Tomorrow's Church is in need of a new vision of ministry by and with older adults in today's Church who can model behaviors for the Boomers in their later-life ministries in tomorrow's Church.

You will know it is already tomorrow's Church when you hear:

“St. Paul's is so fortunate to have so many older people.”

“When do I get a chance to share my evangelism experience?”

“Please include me on the teacher lists for Adult Basic Education, VBS, and SS.”

“Last year the New Frontiers Think Tank initiated 20 new ministries.”

“Older adults spearheaded the intergenerational ministries of 500 new mission congregations.”

These are the kinds of vision and ministry behaviors that God gets excited about: older people responding to their life-long calling through today's ministry and bequeathing a living legacy to the Church of tomorrow.

The vitality of the Church may be determined by the vitality of its graying membership. There is no age limit on service and ministry in today's and tomorrow's Church.

Shirley Bergman, Director
Lutheran Institute on Aging
Concordia College—Seward

“Come and See”

Nearly two years later, though having thought little about going overseas, I was contemplating whether I should remain in my present major at a state university or begin training for the Lutheran teaching ministry. I was prayerfully looking for some hands-on teaching experience. It was then that my father wrote that a good friend whom he had met at the missions conference needed teachers to go to China for a summer to teach conversational English to Chinese English teachers. This opportunity was exactly what I was looking for.

Goals and Expectations

I had three goals as I approached the summer of 1987 in Beijing, China. First, I wanted to have a cross-cultural experience, knowing that God desires us to be global Christians. Second, I wanted to see if teaching was something for me. Third, I wanted to bring the good news about Jesus to my Chinese students.

Concerning this third aim, the philosophy of the organization (Educational Services Exchange with China) was that we should not aggressively share our faith in the classroom. Instead, we were to wait for the Chinese to ask questions as they watched us live our lives. Reaching out, then, would come not so much from the daily English classes but from the relationships that were so easily built with our students.

Several days before our teaching began, as our team of five teachers was returning from sightseeing at the Temple of Heaven, one of my students suddenly turned to us on the bus and asked, “Are you Christians?” Not knowing to what extent one should answer this question in a bus with our Chinese principal within earshot, I simply said, “Yes, we are.”

Yet, I did not forget her question. Ms. Zhang (or Susan as she would later be called) shared with me some of her personal struggles the following week in her journal-writing. In my response, I told her that I was excited to hear her questions about our beliefs and hoped that we could get together soon to discuss our ideas at length.

Marty Schmidt is a 1990 graduate of Concordia-Seward who accepted a call to teach at the Hong Kong International School.

CHINA
WAS THE FARTHEST
THING FROM MY MIND
when my father and I
attended a missions
conference during a
Christmas break in
1984. I felt an
obligation to learn
more about world
missions, but I was in
no way desiring
or planning to get
personally involved...

Holistic Ministry in Beijing

Friendship Evangelism

On the following Friday, Susan, her close friend and fellow-student, Pan Ling, and I took a walk to the nearby Friendship Hotel. As we returned to school, Susan turned to me and asked, “Would you tell us about religion?” Inwardly my heart leaped for joy as I explained to them that God is personal, desiring relationships with His created people. To understand my life and my purposes, I said, you must understand that my life is founded upon the Word of God. I concluded by saying that while I am excited about my faith, I would not attempt to coerce them to believe.

The pattern of my summer was set. Susan and Pan served as my summer tour guides. The tours, however, were mainly an excuse for us to get to know each other. Susan, I discovered, was a 33-year-old mother, who longed for many things in her life—friendships and education being the deepest desires. She yearned to come to the States to pursue graduate work. Pan, a 26-year-old married woman, also longed for many things—personal relationships, and spiritual peace and joy in her life. Being a Buddhist, she at one time had considered living her life as a Buddhist nun in the mountains of China.

Our weekly tours took us all over the city of Beijing: the Forbidden City, the Summer Palaces, and, of course, the Great Wall. The most precious times, however, occurred as we sat in restaurants in the afternoon, sipping Cokes, and feeling free to share the events of our lives that summer.

I chose to commit myself to our relationship first, and to the sharing of the Gospel with them second. This choice was a new and helpful distinction for me that summer, as I realized that I wanted to develop friendships with them and care for them, whether or not they too would confess the faith. While my ultimate goal was their coming to faith, I was committed to a long-term writing relationship to accomplish this goal. The relationship, I felt, would be the essential link.

Gradually over the course of the summer my relation-

ships with these two young ladies grew. As they got to know me better, they also came to experience my faith. I did not often share with them directly through much of the summer. Instead, the Gospel message became soft, ever-present background music to all that we did and said together. They came to know me, and through our relationship they investigated my faith. Yet I do not say this with pride, because in coming to know me they came to know not only the “foreign expert,” as we were called, but also the person who had the same longings and hurts and fears that they had. It was not a particularly easy summer for me. My faith, then, did not promise a problem-free life. Through my weaknesses I prayed that God would somehow reach them with the Gospel.

Last Weeks in Beijing

The last weekend before classes ended, Susan and Pan invited a fellow teacher and me to a Sunday dinner at Pan’s apartment to celebrate our friendship. They wanted me to come over early in the morning, but I insisted that



I go to church first at an English-speaking service in downtown Beijing. To help me find the apartment in the maze of residential Beijing, Pan accompanied me to church and then to her apartment. The service was very uplifting as we worshiped with brothers and sisters from around the world, singing Scripture songs and listening to the proclamation of the Word. The sermon gave me an excellent opportunity to explain to Pan God's message in His Word.

The following day as Pan and I sipped our Cokes at the Friendship Hotel, we had the chance to talk about the church service. She said that it had touched her deeply. The service was "not of this world," she said. The following is my journal entry from that day, August 17:

Towards the beginning of the conversation she said something like, "I want to learn more about the Bible." I said, "What about it?" And with unusual enthusiasm, she leaned forward and replied with eyes wide: "Everything!" Oh, what joy! My precious Pan wants to know of our Lord's Word. . . . Then we went outside, and I asked her about what she wanted to know about God. "Everything." . . . Then we talked for the next 45 minutes at a street corner, discussing various questions about God and the Bible. Oh, you are a great God! To tell about You is exciting. What joy is in my heart!

The remaining week and a half of the summer took me sightseeing to various parts of China, yet it took me away from the very place I longed to be—with my two friends. The short time in Beijing between the two excursions was spent with Pan and Susan. Pan and I met in a quiet garden behind the Friendship Hotel, reading and talking and praying. And then it was back to our sightseeing. While away from Beijing, I bought a small notebook and wrote thirty or forty pages for Pan about essentials of the Christian faith and life.

As excited as I was about her spiritual growth, I decided that I would in no way coerce her into the faith, or prompt her to "pray the prayer" in order that she would make a confession of faith. I was leaving very soon to go back to the United States; if Pan were to acknowledge faith, she would have to live with the potential dangers of being a Christian within a non-Christian and threatening regime.

Saying Goodbye

My last day in Beijing brought both relief and sadness. Relief that the anxieties of teaching in a foreign and potentially oppressive country were ending; sadness that my two dear friends, one on the brink of faith, were now to be so far, far away from me. Susan and I headed to another Western hotel lobby for a final afternoon of talking. To my surprise, she asked me to talk to her about the Gospel of John. The next two hours as we slowly read through John 1, I saw in her face the life and

joy that I had seen in Pan's. I sensed for the first time in her a spiritual breakthrough. Her dancing eyes told me that the Gospel had made some sense to her. Yet soon our time was gone, and we rode the bus back to school. I felt like the sower in the parable of the "Sower and the Seed." The seed that I planted had sprung up with joy, yet I feared that as I left, the lack of any spiritual roots would result in suffocating the seed's growth. Saying goodbye on that crowded Beijing bus after such an encouraging conversation rent my heart.

Following a dinner for our teaching team at the Friendship Hotel, I met Pan for one final time together. After a lengthy conversation and a final Coke, Pan and I left the hotel. As we walked outside, I asked her, "Pan, do you think you have become a Christian? Do you believe?" She wasn't sure, but she thought she did. So we sat down and talked on a Beijing bench about what she had come to believe. As we talked I came to truly believe that she knew of her sin, that she knew of Jesus' death, and that, as she said, she now "knows God." The next hour and a half I told her all that I could think of about being a Christian. We then prayed together. As we slowly walked across the dimly-lit, nearly deserted Beijing intersection, we sang the one Christian song I had taught her, "I will Call Upon the Lord." Finally it was time to part. "Goodbye, sister." "Goodbye, brother." I walked back to my dormitory in profound peace and joy.

My final night in Beijing was the culmination of many things. My cross-cultural experience was very rich—Eastern ways had certainly captured my heart. I also learned that teaching, though difficult and challenging, was an arena where meaningful relationships could be initiated. I realized, however, that to make the type of impact I desired, relationships had to be nurtured also outside the classroom. The development of these relationships led to the satisfaction of my third goal—to share the good news of Christ with the Chinese. In the midst of a personally challenging summer, the Gospel slowly eased its way into the hearts and minds of Pan and Susan as well as other students.

"Come and See"

On one of our longer sightseeing ventures in China, I took time to read the first few chapters of the Book of John. A particular phrase struck me, labeling what I was attempting essentially to accomplish through my friendship with my two Chinese students. In John 1:35ff, two disciples of John were following Jesus. Jesus turned and spoke to them, "What do you seek?" The disciples returned his question with another, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" Jesus then responded to them, "Come and see." They then spent the night at Jesus' dwelling. One of the disciples, Andrew, then reported to Simon Peter, "We have found the Messiah."

This word about the Messiah's coming spread quickly. Later in John 1 Philip explained to Nathanael that they have "found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote." Nathanael skeptically remarked, "Can

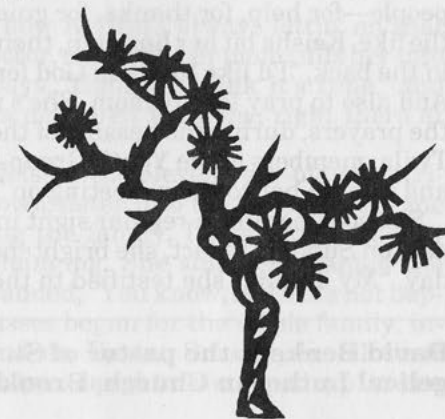
anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip answered him, "Come and see." After meeting Jesus, Nathanael was convinced: "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

In John 4 (an excellent example of friendship evangelism), Jesus presents the good news to the woman at the well. Having experienced the grace that Jesus gives, she left her water jar, went to the city, and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" Upon the Samaritans' request, Jesus stayed with them for two days. Their response was one of faith: "It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

As I read this phrase, "Come and see," I realized that this described my outreach to these two ladies that summer. By responding in relationship to them, I in effect was saying, "Come with me, and let us walk through this summer in Beijing as friends. You have questions about life—the same questions I have and have had. Let us go together and let me show you what I have seen. I will not attempt to force you to take it, but I offer it to you to investigate. You can see my life and my faith, and inquire about these matters. I will not hide my weaknesses from you because we are friends together on this journey. I hope and pray that you will see what I have seen in this God/man who is called Jesus."

On that bench at the deserted Beijing intersection in that last hour of our time together, I tried to explain to Pan the importance of sharing her faith with others. I told her of that simple evangelistic phrase that I had discovered in the book of John. "Pan," I said, "just like Jesus said to the disciples, 'Come and see,' that's what I have tried to say to you this summer. And you have come and have seen that Jesus is your Savior, too. Now this is what you should do to bring the same message to others. Remember, come and see."

I learned that summer that Chinese people, despite the great cultural differences, are similar to you and me and the students we are trying to reach. We as teachers need to invite students to come with us in this journey of life and offer them a view of what we have seen to be true. It is in the context of relationships, whether strong or weak, that God draws His people to Himself. May we let them come and see.



A Postscript

I would be remiss not to bring this story up to date. Two years ago, I wrote to Susan, asking if there was any way we could help her realize her dream of coming to America. Eight months later she stepped off the plane into our waiting arms, excited to continue her education at Concordia-Seward. From that first snowy February Sunday, Susan investigated the faith that marks those of the Concordia community. Slowly I began seeing changes in Susan's words and ideas. The Gospel and its message began to make a personal impact on her. One of our professors asked her during a summer class whether she was a Christian. With a joyful smile and a comment that summarized her spiritual growth that spring and early summer she said, "No, but I'm on the way!" By mid-summer I was convinced that she had indeed come to faith in Christ. Much was our joy on October 15, 1989, when Susan was baptized into the Christian faith.

Last summer, Pan, now attending school in Switzerland, visited Susan and me in Seward. It was a joyous reunion for the three of us. As Pan and I talked, I realized that the lack of solid Christian teaching in China and Switzerland has left her confused about some Christian teaching. There is much that she doesn't know or understand about her faith. Please pray that God will guide Pan into deeper spiritual growth.

Implementing Holistic Ministry in a Congregation

Keisha Adams bit her lower lip. She looked about nervously, then posed her question in the church hallway. She had just run in from the street. "Uh, I was wondering if maybe y'all don't have some food here I could take along. Do you? See, there's nothing much for the baby in the house, and, uh, there's no money either." A young woman named Patti encouraged Keisha to talk through her whole story.

Then they prayed together. Patti disappeared for a bit, returning from St. Peter's upstairs food pantry with a shopping bag full of groceries for a family of seven, including half a dozen containers of infant formula. "Thanks!" cried Keisha. "I mean it—thanks!" With a whirl and a skip, the eleven-year-old child was gone, skipping down the block, with her green eyes flashing.

That Sunday Keisha decided to attend church. Just to say thanks one more time—to God. During the worship service, as is the weekly custom at St. Peter's Lutheran in Brooklyn, I asked for special prayer requests from the people—for help, for thanks, for guidance, for jobs, and the like. Keisha bit her lip again, then piped up from way in the back, "I'd like to thank God for food in our house. And also to pray for my mom. She's not too well." After the prayers, during the passing of the peace, Andre and Twila, members of the Youth Group, gave Keisha a hug and invited her to their meeting on Tuesday evening.

She soon became a regular sight in church—on Tuesday, on Sunday; in fact, she brightened just about every day. "My dream," she testified to the youth and Clara,

David Benke is the pastor of St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Brooklyn, New York.

their leader, "is to be a doctor. And I am going to make it." Her spark and verve were infectious. But she wasn't content to come on down the block to church alone. Over the next three months, she began to bring her brothers, her sister, her mother, her aunts, her cousins and her neighbors to Sunday service, until several rows of worshipers could be identified as Keisha's clan!

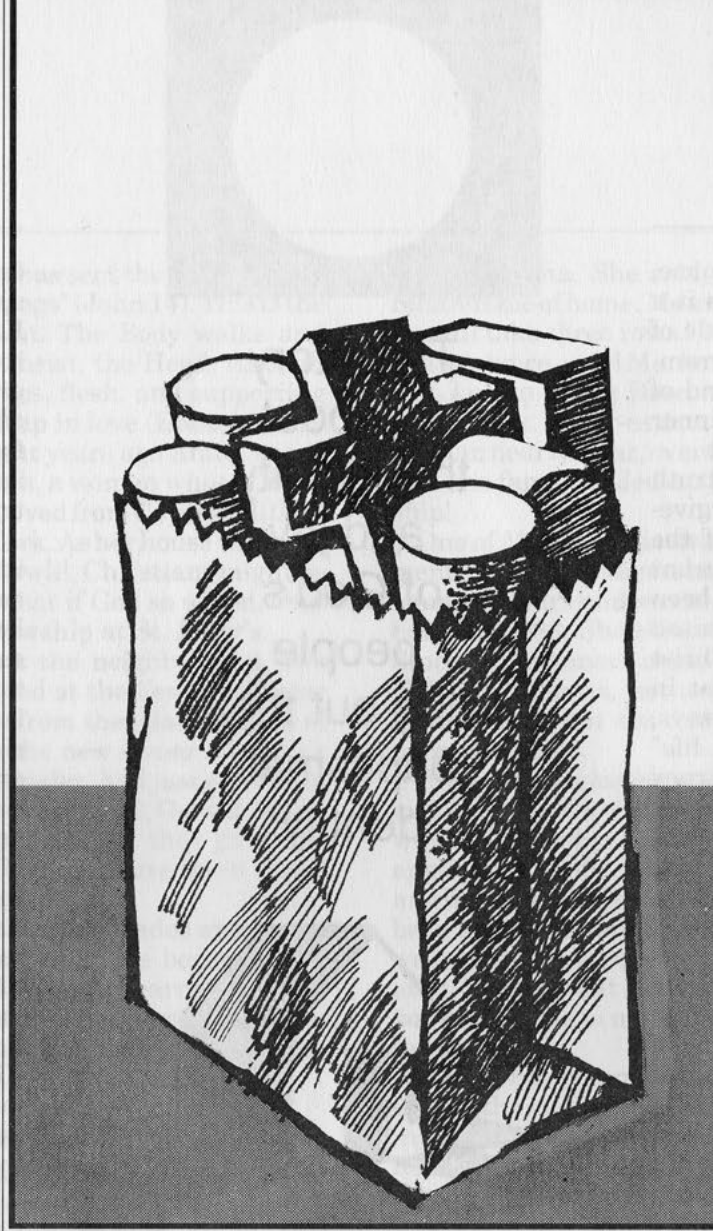
As relationships grew and deepened among church members and Keisha's family, it became apparent that Mrs. Adams was battling a serious drug problem, even through the advanced stages of pregnancy. She came to worship, seeking forgiveness and strength and the good counsel of the Word through new friends, but a battle is a battle. The battle against addiction is fiercely waged. There were ups and downs, bright victories and dark losses.

One afternoon several neighborhood kids burst into my office shouting breathlessly, "Did you hear what happened today? With Keisha and her mom?"

"No, I didn't," I replied hesitantly, concerned that there might have been a fight over drug use. "What's up?"

"Well, you know how Keisha's always lettin' on that she wants to be a doctor, right? So her mom calls her into the bedroom and says, 'Honey, I think it's time,' and guess what? Keisha delivered the baby, right there at home!"

The thought of Keisha, the eleven-year-old obstetrician, bringing her own sister into the world, swept me away. While visiting the family, I was struck by how Mrs. Adams was changing. She sincerely wanted the baby baptized, and added, "You know, Keisha's not baptized either." So classes began for the whole family, including Keisha. And on Easter Sunday, in all their finest, mother and two daughters stepped up to the



altar. And Keisha and her babysister Olivia entered the Kingdom of God in the waters of Holy Baptism. Andre, the Youth Group president, held the baby, his God-daughter.

Several months later, Mrs. Adams left home for a long-term drug rehabilitation program. As we worked through her grief at leaving the children, she said, "Listen, I never could have taken this step if it weren't for the Lord. And now I know my children are really taken care of, too, even as bad as I'm going to miss them. They have a church that cares. And God just is not going to let them go."

Over the summer, as plans were made for our evening Vacation Bible School, we asked for volunteers to teach and assist in working with 100+ kids from the streets of Brooklyn. No less than a half dozen of Keisha's clan—relatives and friends—stepped forward. They came up the block in parade every night, 20 or more adults and little ones, laughing and singing the songs of their Lord, overjoyed at the opportunity to serve, to be a part of the Body of Christ, engaged not in tearing down or hanging out, but in building up for the sake of the One who had claimed them.

As for Keisha, she has a new project these days. At the ripe old age of twelve she bounces over to church every Tuesday night to tutor eight- and nine-year olds in reading and arithmetic—and in prayer. Keisha came for food. She received the Bread of Life.

Walking in Newness of Life

I have been privileged to be Pastor of St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Cypress Hills/East New York section of Brooklyn, New York, for the past fifteen years. Keisha is a friend of mine. Coming to know her and others I have been amazed by the power of God working through Word and Sacraments in the lives of

David Benke

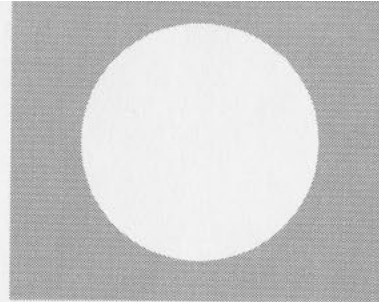
His people. Keisha's is not, to me, a "success" story. Neither is it a helping-hand story, nor a tale of well-managed church programming, nor a story of the kind of activism reserved for the inner city and far-off mission fields.

It is, rather, a story of the truth of God's promises; of the forgiveness of sins at the heart of the Gospel; of the reality of what happens to those who have been crucified, died, buried and raised again through Baptism in Christ Jesus. What happens is that in Christ, as the apostle Paul says, we "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). The shared journey of Christ's Body is undertaken by "faith in the Son of God." That journey is an exploration of "the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). As Cynthia, one of Keisha's cousins, wrote on the day of her reception into membership by affirmation of faith, "I am so happy to be part of St. Peter's because I am learning so much every day now about how the Lord loves me and what He has done for us all. And I enjoy helping in the Sunday School!"

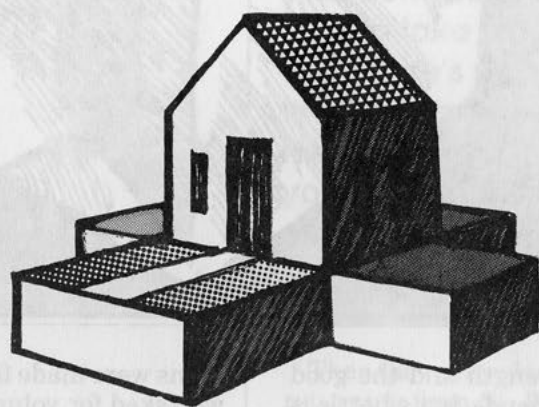
The dots which get connected in Keisha's story are woven by the fabric of interactions with people, overwhelmingly laypeople, people giving and receiving from the love they have received in Christ Jesus. Keisha is not, by story's end, merely a recipient of services, nor simply a client who has gained some measure of self-sufficiency. She is a minister of the living God, a sinner/saint engaged with others like her in "being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22). Her age, her sex, her race, her economic class, her circumstance do not disqualify her from this ministry. Far from it. I don't know anyone who couldn't learn valuable lessons from Keisha. But the focus of her story is not Keisha. It is rather the Means of Grace, in the Word proclaimed and the water poured. At the center of her story is the heart of a loving God.

Holistic Ministry Cannot Be Compartmentalized

This, to me, is "holistic" ministry. It flows like the waters of a living, bubbling stream. It cannot be easily compartmentalized. The spots where "service," "evangelism," "education," and "worship" start in and leave off



This story is about the dignity and joy of God's people living out their baptismal identity.



cannot be pinpointed. Who is responsible for "evangelizing" Keisha? When did she cease receiving "service" and begin giving the same? What segments of her life and the lives of her family at St. Peter's can be designated as "educational ministry"?

While every church is engaged in ministries in all of these areas, and while there are doubtless programmatic components called "evangelism," "education," "service" and "worship," it is my experience that to place rigid boundaries around each area is an artifice; in fact, it is an activity very much of this age and American culture and not of God. In truth, when Keisha received the service of that initial bag of groceries she was also receiving an educational Christian lesson concerning God's love in action, an evangelistic invitation to the banquet feast of the King, and a worshipful involvement in praise to the Giver of all gifts. The focus returns to God; the ministries belong to Him.

In my pastoral life through the years, I would say the greater the desire to quantify, to particularize and to compartmentalize, the less the opportunity to experience the glorious riches of the *mystery* of Christ in us,

and the less the desire to celebrate what is essentially and totally *God's* graceful activity in bringing salvation and life.

The Body of Christ Walks and Talks

At the same time, however, I would add that the joy of being part of the fellowship of saints at St. Peter's is that the Body of Christ walks and talks. It doesn't just sit and listen, then disassemble and wander off helter-skelter, a leg here and an arm there hanging useless. The walking and talking—the engagement of Christ's body with relatives and friends in the neighborhood, with those in need, with the principalities and powers—is not accomplished by the herky-jerky manipulations of the pastoral puppetmaster. It is done in the freedom of the Gospel under which Christ's Body discerns through mutual conversation and consolation that we **all** must be about that which Christ Himself accomplished as He taught, invited, fed, forgave, healed, confronted, and challenged the inhabitants of Galilee and Judea. As

promised by Jesus, the Father has sent the Spirit "in My Name. He will teach you all things" (John 14). This is the arena of spiritual discernment. The Body walks and talks under the direction of Christ, the Head, through God's Word and promise. Bones, flesh, and supporting ligaments grow and are built up in love (Ephesians 4).

Let me illustrate. About eight years ago Anita, one of our ace Sunday School teachers, a woman whose Christian service was exemplary, moved from Cypress Hills to a far country—upstate New York. As her house was sold, she prayed that if it were God's will, Christians might be the purchasers; and further, that if God so willed, they might become part of the fellowship at St. Peter's.

The Easter after Anita left the neighborhood, two women dressed in white arrived at the Festival Easter Holy Communion. Both were from the island nation of Barbados. One, Imelda, was the new owner of Anita's house. The other, her friend Ainsley, had just arrived in the U.S. and was waiting for her husband, Gerald. When I told the ladies about Anita's prayer, they gave one another a knowing look, as though there were something going on behind the scenes.

Soon after, Gerald arrived from Barbados and began attending Sunday worship services. He began to ask questions about the faith and to inquire earnestly about spiritual matters. Shortly he asked if he could be prepared to receive the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, at the age of fifty. And so he did.

A Nehemiah House

At about this time the people of St. Peter's were involved with other Christian and Lutheran congregations in a major initiative to rebuild the community through low-cost, owner-occupied, single-family housing. Rising from the ashes of destroyed inner-city neighborhoods, this initiative was called the Nehemiah Plan, after the biblical prophet who rebuilt the tumbledown walls of Jerusalem 2500 years ago. In a meeting held in St. Peter's basement, leaders of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod decided to allow the Synod to become the first denomination to publicly commit an interest-free construction loan of one million dollars toward the Nehemiah Plan. Thus it was born.

At the same time, Gerald and Ainsley began to envision a dream come true—home ownership in the United States. Gerald submitted application for a Nehemiah home. When construction began, his was one of the first homes built. We did celebrate then, the people of St. Peter's, in a house blessing which was really a neighborhood blessing, an inner-city blessing, a reclaiming of scarred land now healed.

Gerald and Ainsley, now secure in a brand new home in a brand new neighborhood, were not content with their blessings in the bank. They put them to use. Soon Gerald came to church with new friends, bringing them along from the neighborhoods surrounding Nehemiahland. One Sunday he introduced us during worship to a woman named Marlene from the South American coun-

try of Guyana. She said, "I like it here. This church reminds me of home. Me and my family will be back. And we will take three rows." No one could understand that last sentence, until Marlene began to bring the extended clan known as the Bascom family into St. Peter's. She had, in fact, *under-estimated* the totals. When rounded up from near and far, over sixty adults and children from this one family ended up joining the St. Peter's fellowship!

One of Marlene's sisters, Ann, living in a small apartment in a very dangerous neighborhood with her husband and four children, decided to apply for a Nehemiah home in 1986. She received application number 4563. Since city planners made land available for only 2000 Nehemiah homes, her application seemed like a long-shot at best. But she determined to wait, and to wait upon the Lord.

From the beginning of 1990, Ann prayed and saved and read the Word and prepared her heart in a special way. In November, four years after it had been received, application #4563 was accepted. In January, 1991, Ann and her family will move into a new home. For her, it has been entirely a spiritual experience. "The Sunday after we move in, Pastor," she told me, "I want to tell everyone at St. Peter's what God has done for me. I want to invite you all to come to my home for a blessing. I have a story to tell!"

Gerald has become an elder at St. Peter's. He teaches the truths of God's salvation to friends and neighbors invited to home care groups at his house. He and Ainsley have hosted hundreds of guests, many of them Lutheran, from around the country and around the world. The world has beat a path to Gerald's doorstep to see what God has accomplished through His people laboring together in the Nehemiah Plan. And Gerald couldn't be more pleased. "My door is always open, that people might praise the God who has helped me," states Gerald.

"Mights" Become "Dids"

Now what is this story all about? A series of responses risky for some Lutherans might be "answered prayer," "social ministry through housing," "testimony in worship," or "cross-cultural evangelistic outreach." My response is that this story is about the dignity and joy of God's people living out their Baptismal identity. It is about the mystery of grace and the hope of glory, which is Christ Jesus.

The women might not have come to church were it not for Anita's prayers. Gerald might not have remained in New York were it not for the opportunity of owning a Nehemiah home. He might not have been baptized had the educational process been less complete. The Bascoms might not have become part of St. Peter's were it a cold and loveless atmosphere. Ann might not have waited were it not for an intensification of her commitment to the Lord. The Nehemiah Plan might not have come about without Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod participation. Consider all the human interactions which

might or might not have come to pass, from Anita, Imelda, and Ainsley down through the greetings of the fellowship of believers to new worship attenders, to meetings with the New York mayor and bishops and builders, to mailed applications and the innermost intentions of the heart made manifest. All "mights." None done deeds.

Yet all of these "mights" became "dids." It is a mystery. Yet it has all come to pass, through the service and social change, evangelism, education and worship community gathered in Brooklyn, New York. Yet the true mystery at the heart of the mystery remains the grace of a loving God manifested to fallible, mortal human beings in water and the Word. So the Body of Christ walks and talks, communicating in word and deed that "newness of life."

Growing Up Into Him Who is the Head

"Holistic" ministry implies completion, totality, and, in a profound way, perfection. All Christians possess a fundamental and thoroughly penetrating perfection. It is the righteousness of Christ. By grace through faith believers are perfectly righteous in Christ. This is at the center of the most precious Lutheran article of faith, the doctrine of justification.

What is the result of Christ's righteousness? It is nothing less than the "whole measure of the fullness of Christ," who taught, proclaimed, fed, forgave, healed, confronted and challenged as He does until this very day through local assemblies of believers made whole and unified by God's grace through the daily baptismal rebirth in confession, repentance, absolution and walking in newness of life.

What does it mean to engage in "holistic ministry" in a Christian congregation? It means that "we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4).

Keisha, Patti, Twila, Andre, Clara, Mrs. Adams, Olivia, Anita, Imelda, Ainsley, Gerald, Marlene, Ann, the kids in the Youth Group, the children in VBS, the families from down the block, the Adams family, the Bascom family, the Holder family, the people of St. Peter's, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod leaders, East Brooklyn congregation leaders, and I are not "the whole body." But we have been made whole in Christ Jesus. We are joined and held together. And we are about something. It is not a hard thing. It is not impossible to observe. It leads in many directions. It has infinite possibilities. It is mysterious, because it is of God. What we are about is this: we are doing our work. We are growing up into Him who is the Head.

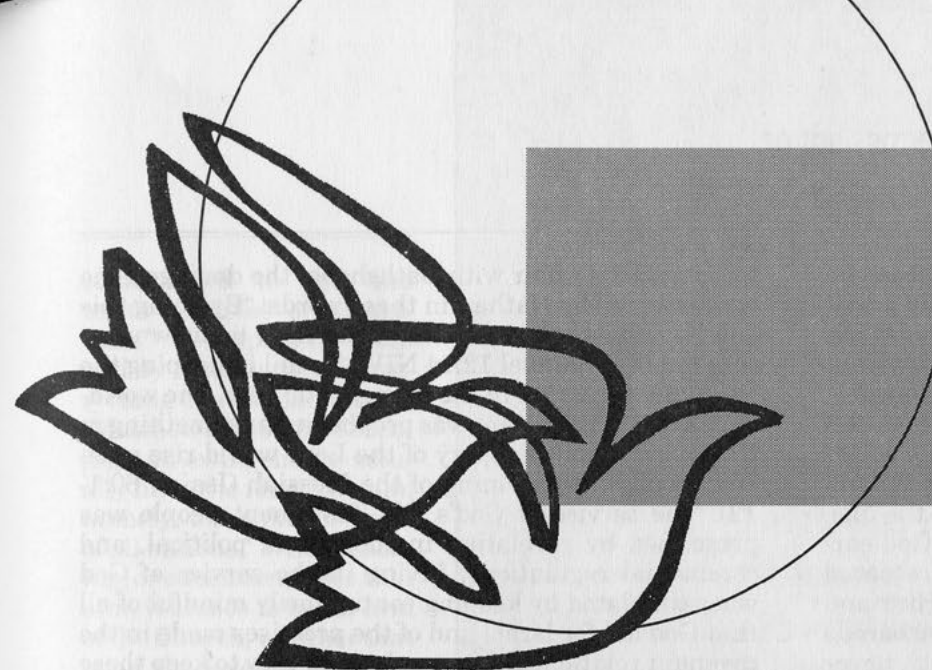
Herman A. Etzold

The aim of Holy Scripture from Genesis to Revelation is the salvation of sinners. We have the privilege of being co-workers with God and fellow-laborers with each other in this greatest of all missions. But when all is said and done, the mission remains God's work. The salvation of sinners is achieved through God's grace alone, and in no way through our worth, works, or merit. Yet God in His inscrutable wisdom uses us, the redeemed, the Holy Christian Church, as His co-workers to bring His salvation to a world that is alienated from Him by sin.

The Church's role in God's mission may be viewed from the dimensions of *Education*, *Evangelism*, and *Service*. Whether these three activities may actually be separated, except for academic consideration, is a good question. In the wholesome, healthy functioning of the Body of Christ, is it possible to have one without the other two, if we operate within the framework of what it means to serve, witness, or teach in Biblical terms? Or are we simply indulging in idle semantics when we divide the work as if it were three separate entities to be engaged in whimsically?

Yet, in the practical "nuts and bolts" operation of our congregations, we do separate and categorize the work into *Education*, *Social Ministry*, *Evangelism*, and a few other departments like Stewardship, Worship, and so forth. I personally have found this dissection of the

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It happens when the Church witnesses, teaches, loves, and keeps the door open wide to the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit

The Primary Mission of the Church

Church's mission into "bits and pieces" very deadening and dull, unless the aim is kept in sharp focus; namely, the reconciliation of lost and condemned sinners with the merciful heavenly Father through the Good News of salvation. And God does speak in His Word to us in terms of teaching and preaching the Word, being His witnesses to the ends of the earth and the end of the age, and serving one another in love.

So we forge ahead boldly in this study to explore the interrelationship of *Service*, *Education*, and *Evangelism* in the Church's mission from the broad perspective of the people of God in the Old Testament and the example of the Church depicted in the New Testament. It is hoped this effort will yield helpful implications for employing these three "arms" of the Church in such a way that they are linked together in one common, overarching mission and will be used effectively for the spiritual and numerical growth of the local congregation.

Old Testament Perspectives

Old Testament Israel had in prophecy what Zion of the New Testament has in fulfillment. The light which would dawn upon all people would arise out of Israel. King David's greater Son would reign upon David's throne and govern all nations. A Virgin would conceive and bear a Son whose name is "Immanuel," God with us. He comes as the sacrifice for our sins. Every facet of the Savior's life, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension was encapsulated in the prophetic utterances. Faith in the promises was counted for righteousness. The great concern was to keep Israel true to Yahweh, to keep the nation from being contaminated by the idola-

try of the heathen nations which surrounded it, and to prevent Israel's being swallowed up by mighty warring nations which cast a covetous eye on the tiny nation as a choice morsel to annex to the empire. God entered into a covenant with His people, promising that He would protect them and keep them safe in the land of Canaan. They in turn were to express good faith and loyalty to God by obedience to His Commandments.

Teaching the will of God was an *a priori* in this setting. Worship centered in the rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices prescribed by the Lord through Moses. Attendance at the tabernacle, and later at the temple, where the worship of Israel was centralized, was prescribed. A complete tribe, Levi, was consecrated to serve as Israel's priests and spiritual guides. Prophets arose and were anointed to proclaim God's will to the nation. Judges and kings were expected to administer their office and legislate in harmony with the will of the Lord. Parents were enjoined: "These words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise" (Deuteronomy 6:6,7). The emphasis was on careful education by passing on the tradition from one generation to the next.

Another pertinent example is Psalm 78. It refers to the record of God's mighty saving acts and the covenant statutes and reminds God's people to teach these to their children "that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His com-

mandments" (Psalm 78:1-8). Through this process Israel remembered the mighty works of God, His promises to the nation, His covenant with His people, His great loving-kindness, and their part in the covenant relationship; namely, "to keep His commandments."

But Israel forgot again and again and rebelled. Repeatedly God was compelled to use stronger measures to effect repentance. He sent national calamities, famine, defeat in battle, the sting of serpents, and the like. When the Israelites remembered and sought God earnestly, God healed them, forgave them, and prospered them. Finally, because of rebellion against Him and refusal to turn from evil, God allowed the barbarous Assyrians to carry the ten tribes off into captivity, never to return. He gave Judah into the hands of godless Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He fulfilled His promise that the Messiah would descend from the tribe of Judah by allowing the Jews to return after seventy years of captivity and by preserving the faithful remnant. With the birth of the Savior in Bethlehem of Judea a new era of salvation history was ushered in.

It may be debated whether the transmission of the covenant promises and the call to repentance by the Old Testament prophets and seers was education or evangelism (witness). One could say it was either. One could say the same about the responsibility of the Old Testament parent to tell the next generation what God has done. The purpose, whether we call it witness or education, was that the children and the children's children of generations to come should "know them" and that they should "set their hope in God." True, proselytes were won for the worship and service of Yahweh. But one does not find in the Old Testament extended efforts to go out to convert the nations for Israel's God. Rather, one finds a deep concern for safeguarding Israel against being turned from the worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to embrace the idolatry and shameful practices of the surrounding nations. The quintessence of covenant requirements was the keeping of God's commandments, motivated by love and gratitude to God for His mighty saving acts, with decisive effects for all generations (Deuteronomy 6-11). The perversity of Israel kept pulling the nation in the direction of worshipping other gods, and of forgetting the steadfast love of God who sustained them so wonderfully in seemingly hopeless situations, and who gave them Canaan for their inheritance. Their history was one of failure to fear and love the gracious God of Israel who entered a covenant relationship with them, of unfaithfulness to Yahweh's will, and of doing what was desirable to their own craven hearts.

In this Old Testament setting, teaching, or education, obviously received prominent emphasis. The knowledge of the Lord, which implied a living relationship of faith, love, and trust, was basic in the education of Israel. To do the Lord's will was basic in Israel's testimony to the heathen. When King David was admonished by the prophet Nathan for his murderous, adul-

terous, sordid affair with Bathsheba, the damage done was assessed by Nathan in these words: "By doing this you have made the enemies of the Lord to show utter contempt" (2 Samuel 12:14 NIV). To fail in keeping the covenant was to fail in the evangelistic task. The worldwide evangelistic event was prophesied as something in the future when the glory of the Lord would rise upon His people in the coming of the Messiah (Isaiah 60:1-12). The service of God's Old Testament people was prescribed by revelation in the moral, political, and ceremonial regulations. Living in the service of God was stimulated by keeping continuously mindful of all that God did for Israel and of the promises made in the covenant relationship. Not only were they to keep these in mind at all times, but they were to impress them on their children and others by speaking of them on all occasions and by their own response of fear, love, and trust in God (Deuteronomy 6).

It needs to be observed here that the chosen people of God in Old Testament times were not saved by their worship, service, or witnessing activities. Like their counterparts in the New Testament, they were saved by God's grace which they received by faith. In His loving-kindness, God blessed them despite their unworthiness with many acts of miraculous deliverance. The covenant commemorated and sealed their salvation by the mercy of God. Faith-filled remembrance and humble gratitude were now to be expressed in faithfulness and obedience to the covenant Lord.



New Testament Perspectives

The New Testament records the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. The Seed in which all the nations would be blessed was born of Mary. *Jesus*, the Savior, was born. He was the Son of the Most High as well as the Son of a lowly virgin. He ascended the throne of his father David, reigns over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will never end (Luke 1:31-33). The Old Testament promised that, if the nation is faithful and obedient to God, God will prosper and protect the nation and make it great. The promise of the New Covenant is that whoever believes in Jesus as the Son of God and the promised Deliverer will have eternal life in his Kingdom. The focus shifts from being the chosen nation among the nations to being the Church, called out from all the nations of the earth to be the eternal people of Christ, the Son of David.

While the Old Covenant people were commanded to enter the land of Canaan and drive out the heathen and possess the land as the chosen nation from which the Christ would be born, the New Covenant people are

commanded to "go and make disciples of all nations" by baptizing them and by *teaching* them everything Christ commanded (Matthew 28:18-20). Teaching and evangelizing actually have the identical aim; namely, to "make disciples of all nations." When teaching, or education, loses that aim, it ceases to be an arm of the Church, whether that is on the level of the Sunday school or the university classroom.

As the Church grew in numbers and the need for organized help for the poor became more demanding, deacons were selected to tend to this phase of the work. The reason given by the leaders was that "it would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the Word of God in order to wait on tables" (Acts 6:1-7). Social service was regarded as an important arm of the Church which needed special emphasis, but not at the expense of curtailing the teaching and witnessing functions. To substitute social action for teaching God's Word is self-defeating. It is important in itself, however, and should not be neglected, either. Nor should it become the domain of an "inferior" clergy. Stephen, one of the seven who was voted in to administer the relief program, was certainly no slouch as a theologian by any measure.

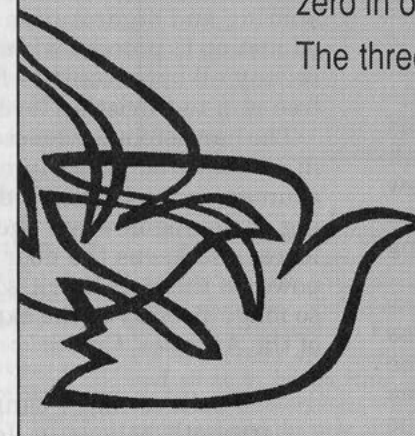
The program of the apostolic church is described in these words: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42). *The context in which teaching, evangelism, and service took place was worship.* The transforming power at work through the activities of teaching, witnessing, and serving in love was, of course, the Holy Spirit, who brought salvation by creating faith in those who heard, saw, and experienced the Church at work among them. Thus they, in turn, were drawn into the fellowship of Christ and became one in faith, hope, and love with "the followers of the Way."

St. Paul is fond of referring to the new people of God as "the Body of Christ" (Romans 12:3-8). The model is useful in tracing the interaction of teaching, witnessing, and servicing, and the relative importance of each activity to the total life and work of the Church.

Actually, evangelism is the invitation to all to come out of the world and to worship with the Church, the Body of Christ. Old timers and new converts need this

...so the "arms" of the Body of Christ are not to be manipulated by us at will as if to say, "This year we educate; next year we'll go out and evangelize; and maybe the following year, if we get around to it, we'll zero in on service."

The three go together.



invitation as much as those who are not yet believers. It is here that we meet Christ! Jesus said, "Where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20). We meet Christ in the worshiping community! Now does it not seem odd that we insist a person who wants to be a member must undergo a minimum of fifteen hours of instruction before we allow him to break bread with us at the Lord's Table, or even before we allow him to usher at a church service or take up the collection? What makes another one with us in the Body of Christ? Is it the intellectual consideration of selected religious topics in a pastor's class? Is it not

simply the miraculous change through baptism which proclaims that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Savior from all sin? Commenting on the story of the jailer at Philippi (Acts 16:25-34), who wanted to know, "Men, what must I do to be saved?", Dr. C. F. W. Walther observed: "They did not say: 'We have to take you through an extensive course of instruction and expound to you accurately and thoroughly all the articles of the Christian Creed. After that, we shall have to put you on probation to see whether you can become an approved Christian.' Nothing of the sort. The jailer asks to be baptized because he knows that is the means for receiving him in the kingdom of Christ; and they promptly administered Baptism to him."¹

The above point does not diminish the importance of the "knowledge of Christ." A distinction must be made, however, between an intellectual knowing and "knowing" in the sense of a relationship of fear, love, and trust as the Bible uses the word. Intellectually, the devils also know God, and they shudder. Knowing in the relational sense of faith and obedience is the creation of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the redeemed through the Word and Sacraments which the Church administers. In the Old Testament "knowledge of God meant, not thought about an eternal Being or Principle transcending man and the world, but recognition of and obedience to, one who acted purposefully in the world." In the New Testament, "it should be clear that the New Testament is trying to express the unique character of the believer's relation to Christ" with the concept of knowl-

edge.² Christian education which is worthy of that label does more than dispense intellectual data. Used by the Holy Spirit, it brings the sinner into a relationship of fear, love and trust with the God of our salvation. Such education is to go forward from the cradle to the grave until the child of God enters into eternal rest.

Evangelism, Education, and Service— Three Essential Emphases

We posited that evangelism is basically the call to come and worship Christ in the Church, the Body of Christ. The implication is that whoever accepts Jesus Christ by faith as Lord and Savior is one with us in the Holy Christian Church. When it happens, should that fact not be recognized with great joy and with thanksgiving to God? Should such a one not be heartily invited to serve according to the varying personal gifts with which God endows His people? Why should this new member of Christ's Body sit out a period of probation and fulfill specified entrance requirements before being incorporated into the Body of Christ?

Christian education from the cradle to the grave is as incumbent upon the New Testament Church as it was upon Old Testament Israel. However, it cannot be something separate from the evangelistic call to come and worship Christ as Lord and Savior. Nor can it be done in isolation from service, which is basically the knowledge of God translated into a life of love and faithfulness to God's will. Nor should a slice of it be considered as a prerequisite for admission into the Body of Christ. As we learn from Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, to advance anything as necessary to salvation, other than the free grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, is a dangerous confusion of Law and Gospel.

Having said all this, it must be granted that there are times and situations in which the Church places greatest emphasis on indoctrination (which, incidentally, is somewhat different from Christian education, "feeding," or nurturing). At other times the Church awakens to a greater consciousness of her mission responsibilities, and evangelism at home and abroad is fostered. Sometimes, too, in the intense preoccupation with orthodoxy, the Church fails in the responsibilities of love to the helpless, the hurting, and the needy. Then there may well occur a reaction of renewed emphasis on Christian service and social action.

In the wholesome, healthy functioning of the Christian congregation, however, the three essential emphases of the Body of Christ—Evangelism, Education, Service—will operate continuously, simultaneously, and in tandem. Evangelism will go forward as an *a priori* as the Church invites all who will listen to come and worship the Savior. Education will provide the essential training and spiritual nourishment to those who accept the invitation and are by faith incorporated into the Body of Christ. The new life in the Spirit will

manifest itself in service to God, to each other, and to the sin-cursed world, in accordance with the gifts which God gives to the Body of Christ in general and to individuals in particular (1 Corinthians 12).

And so the "arms" of the Body of Christ are not to be manipulated by us at will as if to say, "This year we educate; next year we'll go out and evangelize; and maybe the following year, if we get around to it, we'll zero in on service." The three go together. They serve one, over-arching aim; namely, the salvation and edification of sinners. Therefore, as the Church grows numerically, structural provision should be made for staffing and organization which will allow the work of education to proceed without curtailment, as well as for seizing all opportunities for evangelism and for giving free rein to Christian love in service to God and man.

The harmonious, wholesome functioning of the Church in these three areas is not the result of the pastor's acumen or the teacher's dedication to the art of teaching. It happens when the Church witnesses, teaches, loves, and keeps the door open wide to the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit which Martin Luther describes so magnificently in the explanation to the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed:

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers, and will at the Last Day raise up me and all the dead, and give unto me and all believers in Christ eternal life. This is most certainly true.

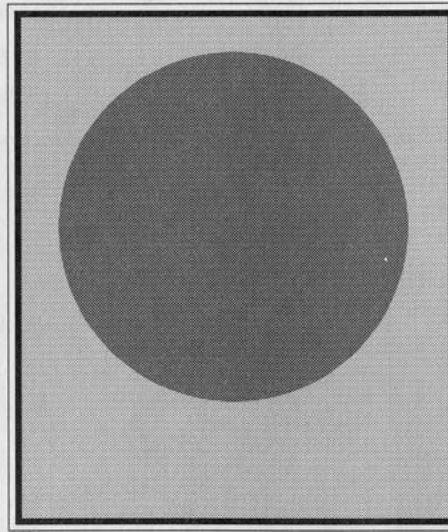
Footnotes

¹C. F. W. Walther. *God's No and God's Yes: The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*. Condensed by Walter C. Pieper. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973, p. 42.

²"Know, Knowledge." *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*. Edited by Alan Richardson. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960, pp. 121-122.



book reviews



FASHION ME A PEOPLE: CURRICULUM IN THE CHURCH by Maria Harris. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989.

When you think of the word "curriculum," what images come to mind? Traditionally, educators view curriculum as a resource material in booklet form, but Harris outlines the different fluid meanings of curriculum.

In her latest book, Harris explores the use of curriculum outside the traditional school setting. She stresses the use of curriculum as the focal point for lifestyle, activities, and personal development. The heart of the author's philosophy is explored in a lifestyle based on Acts 2:42, 44-47 in which the apostles continued teaching, prayer, and communion as vital components to community development. The author redefines, fashions, and shapes curriculum in light of Scripture. Harris sees five forms of church curriculum based on Acts: 1) Kerygma, proclaiming the word of Jesus' resurrection; 2) Didache, teaching; 3) Leiturgia, prayer, worship and communion; 4) Koinonia, community; and 5) Diakonia, service and care for those in need. These five areas are inexorably intertwined. All areas must be in operation together for a healthy curriculum in the church. Harris sees the church as an educational program!

The final chapter concentrates on curriculum facilitating. Harris challenges the educator to re-evaluate the five basic assumptions used to design most curricula. These assumptions are: 1) curriculum is based solely on didache or teaching; 2) curriculum is equal to academic resources; 3) curriculum is limited to schooling instead of the wider sense of education; 4) learning and understanding are the only measurable products and not processes; 5) education ends at a particular age, as opposed to being a life-long involvement.

All chapters end with facilitating questions concerning your church's current status with regard to the material covered in that chapter. The exploratory questions also lead to the brainstorming of ideas enabling the church to approach an ideal curriculum.

Harris' plan of curriculum involves rhythms, movement, and artistic design. She thinks differently about artistry than technicians or programmers. Reshaping, forming, and creating stem from a sculptor or other artist. The author outlines five steps in the plan of cur-

riculum: 1) Contemplation, being receptive to what addresses us (people, present ministries, purpose, etc.); 2) Engagement, active movement, discovery, and confronting what has been contemplated; 3) Formgiving, shaping the curriculum after deciding what to keep and what to let go (this is the fashioning element); 4) Emergence, when planning comes to an end and the new phase comes into existence; 5) Release, the curriculum expands into the wider community in the daily activities of parishioners (Living the Gospel).

This approach to curriculum is vastly different from traditional curriculum with regard to objectives, preparation, assimilation and generalization. The author has presented a holistic approach to curriculum based upon Scripture. This concept is challenging and stimulating and embodies a new paradigm for the 1990's in planning the educational life of the church.

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FAITH CARE, MINISTERING TO ALL GOD'S PEOPLE THROUGH THE AGES OF LIFE by Daniel O. Aleshire. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1988.

In light of a growing emphasis on the development of faith and meeting the needs of people at their particular "stage" of faith, this book purports to meet these concerns.

The author immediately catches the reader's attention by suggesting some very practical and useful ideas about attending to the people at church. He reviews the skills and benefits of paying attention to people and discusses the various complexities of people, ministry, and human perception. He stresses the sig-

nificance of paying attention to members' needs, family life, and the way one learns.

On the issue of faith, the author gives a rather abstract image of faith with no clear definition of what he is trying to project. The following questions regarding faith are then addressed:

Where is faith?
What is faith?
Why do people have faith?
Who has faith?
How does faith develop over time?

Aleshire then addresses the three basic components of faith—the ability to think, feel and act. The focus is summed up in these words, "The way in which faith is understood has a profound effect on ministry practice." (p. 48)

Chapters three and four deal with stages of learning, including affective, behavioral, and cognitive, and then continue with a discussion of developmental influences. This becomes a rather "heavy" section of the book, intended more for the trained educator specifically interested in these stages.

Part two of this resource attempts to deal with different age levels and their faith care. Chapter five is very insightful in looking at attitudes, practices and assumptions that adults in church have toward children. The remaining three chapters focus on child, youth, and adult issues with each chapter exploring the developmental stages and the influences in the environment surrounding each level. The author gives suggestions on working with people at each level in their worship life, spiritual life, moral life, education, and community.

This book will probably be most helpful to the church worker who is not looking for a "how-to" book, but rather for additional background, particularly in developmental issues, and some practical suggestions in working with people at various stages of faith. Many parts of this book are helpful, but each individual reader will need to "sift and sort" what one can use.

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Continued from page 19

SELF-PORTRAIT: MY CONCERNS, VALUES, AND BELIEFS—A Survey for Young People about Matters of Faith by Merton P. Strommen. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1990.

Using the survey approach, Merton Strommen has designed an excellent tool to assist pastors and youth leaders in conversing with youth regarding their concerns, values, and beliefs. The kit contains a thorough, written explanation of the entire program, an hour-long video which gives step-by-step instructions, survey and answer sheets, and a computer diskette for scoring purposes. The author proposes three objectives which will be accomplished through the use of the survey:

1. Understanding. We seek to see life from the other's perspective;
2. A sense of partnership. In order for youth to feel comfortable and be able to speak honestly, a sense of trust and mutual regard must be cultivated;
3. A sense of hope. As youth share needs, fears, painful memories, or felt inadequacies, hope is awakened as the Gospel message is brought directly into their situation.

A profile is formed for each youth, based upon how he or she answers the 125 questions on the survey form. Items are organized into fifteen clusters, for which standardized scores have been developed. These scores are then plotted on a grid. The scale descriptions are broken into two categories, each of which has several subcategories:

Category I: Concerns

- A. Family unity
- B. Parental understanding
- C. Lack of self-confidence
- D. Personal faults
- E. Classroom relationships
- F. National issues
- G. Relationship with God

Category II: Values and Beliefs

- A. Religious participation
- B. Moral responsibility
- C. Meaningful life
- D. Self-enhancement
- E. Self-regard
- F. Human relations
- G. Awareness of God
- H. Biblical concepts

Careful instructions are given for motivating youth and orientating parents prior to administration of the survey. After the survey is taken and scored, individual appointments are set up for one-to-one interpretation, with

a heavy emphasis on the conversation model of interaction. Once the relationship between youth and pastor/leader is established, youth will often return to discuss spiritual issues, creating the opportunity for a "spiritual mentor" relationship.

In the educational realm, students are constantly evaluated to assess their academic strengths and weaknesses, often for the purpose of remediation. Strommen's instrument is an excellent tool for assessing faith and moral development in young people. As church professionals, we are committed to making disciples; this survey allows us to converse one-on-one with those we are seeking to disciple, to discuss fears, misperceptions and questions surrounding faith and life. The assessment aspect of the tool shows us as Christian educators where our young people need further nurturing, encouragement, or knowledge. In essence, it assists us in being more effective disciples.

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