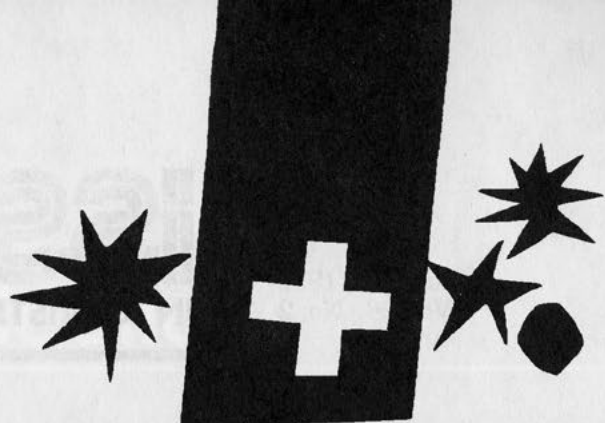


ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Summer 1992

Vol. 26, No. 2



SPECIAL EDUCATION

ARE
WE
READY?



ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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editorials

Special Education: Are Congregations Ready? A Viewpoint from Public School Administrators

"1, 2, 3, 4, . . . 18, 19, 20. Ready or not, here I come!" Sound familiar? Certainly. The call from a child who is "it" in the age-old game of Hide 'N' Seek.

This edition of *ISSUES* is devoted to the commitment of Lutheran schools and congregations to serve students with special learning needs. From our viewpoint, it is clearly a case of ". . . ready or not, here I come!"

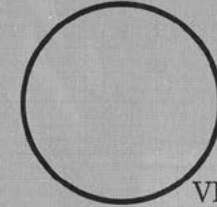
We say this simply because we can remember when mainstream special education fully arrived on the scene in the public schools. After spending much of our early administrative life facilitating the development of specialized, self-contained programs for handicapped students and doing what we thought the public and the parents of the special education students desired, we discovered the game was changing. It was changing from highly concentrated special programs, often housed in separate buildings and even schools, to classrooms within the regular schools. When possible and with resource support, the student was mainstreamed into the regular education classrooms. There is no question that this new direction which special education was taking presented a positive and beneficial change to the student. The problem was that while our fellow educators were attempting to understand the changes we needed to make, change itself merely announced: ". . . ready or not, here I come!"

It seems to us that a national commitment on the part of the Lutheran educational system and its congregations to serve those with special learning needs has a direct parallel to the mainstream change we experienced. Some will say it is a long overdue concept. Some will claim it is errant thinking and will wonder how they can be asked to do more when their budgets and resources are already struggling simply to keep a school open. We presume that serving special needs students in the Lutheran schools will generate much discussion and speculation, as it has in public education.

Regardless, it is necessary to note that as society generally endorses the right of a handicapped child to receive an education in the

Continued on page 4

Reflections



VER THIRTY YEARS AGO, as a neophyte Lutheran elementary school principal, I arrived in a parish to begin my ministry only days before the school year was to begin. The Board of Christian Education had arranged for registration on the last Friday in August, with classes scheduled to begin on the following Tuesday after Labor Day.

Registration went well. At the conclusion of the registration process, every family in the congregation which the Board of Education expected to enroll sons and daughters in the school was accounted for except one family. When I mentioned this to our pastor, he asked which family had not registered their children. When I mentioned the name, a broad grin appeared on the pastor's face. "Oh, don't worry," he said. "They are a family with special children. In fact, if their children are not enrolled, they are probably doing you a favor."

Surprise! The children arrived on Tuesday morning, with all of those who had registered on the previous Friday. A bigger surprise was that the children did well in our Christian day school. Never blessed with academic prowess, they did their work. One became very active in a leadership role in the congregation's worship life, and the children grew in the knowledge of Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. The biggest surprise came fifteen years later when one of the children wrote me a lengthy "Thank you" letter, pointing out that she and her husband were so thankful, now that they were raising their children, for their own marvelous experience in a Lutheran Christian school.

This edition of *Issues in Christian Education* is special; it deals with special education. In God's sight all of us are special, specially redeemed children of the Heavenly Father, saved from eternity in hell, and destined, instead, for an eternity in that special place, heaven. Heaven is ours because God loved us, loved us so much He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior. The Christian church must be inclusive, regardless of the manner in which each individual is special. As Roger DeMeyere says in his article, "The unifying factor, the common bond, is that each (of us) is a member of the body of Christ."

Orville C. Walz, President

"least restrictive environment," those who profess the need for a Christian education environment should include handicapped students as the rule, not the exception in their programs. We commend leaders and members of the Lutheran congregations who are willing to embark on such a commitment.

As you study the concept of serving special needs children in your congregations and schools, we believe you will become acquainted with two truths. The first is that you can serve more needs with relatively little cost than you initially thought possible. The second is that if the attitudes of teachers, principals, pastors, and congregations are based mainly on a "ride-the-wave" commitment, the effort surely will fail.

If, on the other hand, each congregation, however large or small, deems the merits of such an undertaking as a profession of faith and Christian commitment, then the level of outcome will be the highest possible.

In short, you can **seek** opportunity or **hide** from the challenge. "1, 2, 3, . . . ready or not, here I come!"

Robert Saf, Special Education Director,
Marshall Adams, Superintendent of
Schools, School District of Seward,
Seward, Nebraska.

"Let Our Children Come": Parent Perspectives on Special Education in the Church

As the parent of a little girl with Down's Syndrome, I attended the Special Education Symposium held last spring at Seward, Nebraska. Before going, I asked several Lutheran mothers of children with developmental disabilities to share how they felt their churches were able to serve the religious needs of their children. Here are some of their responses:

"I expected support from my church family. It was not there."

"What I'd like to see from the church is a commitment to educate **all** children; to choose to teach some and exclude others destroys the church's credibility. **All** children should be welcome."

A major concern was that programs of religious education be made available to all children in a congregation, whether they have a disability or not. While some churches provide religious instruction for children with disabilities, others do not.

Churches need to recruit and train teachers of special education students just as they do teachers of regular classes of religious instruction. All too often no one but the parent is willing to teach older children with disabilities.

Another concern was that children with disabilities be included as much as possible with other children in the regular educational programs of the church. As one mother put it, "The advantage of including the handicapped into normal classes with an aid is that the kids at church get to know them as people and end up being more sensitive."

As mainstreaming and inclusion become more common in the public school system, there is concern that Lutheran schools do not automatically rule out such programs for those for whom they may be appropriate.

Our daughter Miriam was one of the lucky ones. Last year she was a part of a regular Lutheran preschool class. Her teacher wanted to teach the other children to be more understanding of those who are handicapped. We wanted Miriam to learn social skills as well as more about Jesus and his love. The result was positive.

Others have not been so fortunate. The mother of a three-year-old child reported that her request to have her little boy attend a church day care center was denied because: "We're afraid your child will cause the other children to regress into diapers." This mother writes, "As Christian parents we all want our children to know and love God, serving Jesus who calls them to Himself. As a Christian body, we would all benefit from Lutheran schools offering handicapped children and adults a place in their programs. Including people of various abilities and skills is what Jesus did and continues to do today. As followers of Jesus, we are called to do likewise." One of the baptismal liturgies used in many of our churches has members of the congregation pledge their support for the religious education of the child to be baptized. Jesus wants all children, handicapped or not, to come to him. May God help all of us to do what we can within our individual congregations to fulfill this baptismal promise to all the children within our church family.

Anita Reith Stohs, Shawnee, Kansas

Helping Families with Special Needs Children

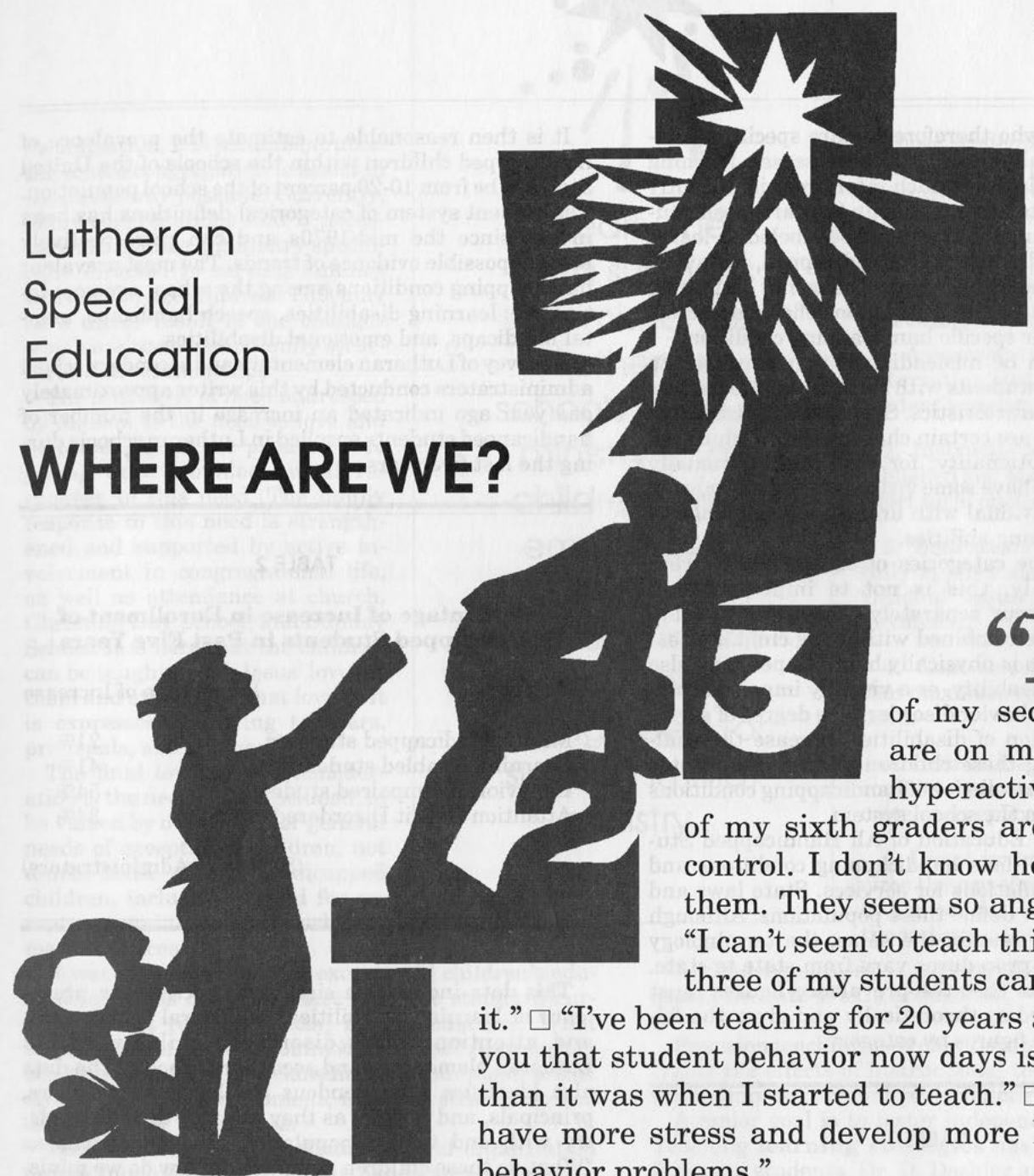
The number of children and families in our society and church with special needs is increasing. Look at your own congregation, whether small, medium or large, and think of how many special-need families you can identify who have a child, and in some cases children, with a disability or several impairments. Having identified those families and children in your congregation with special needs, consider then the host of decisions their parents must come to grips with concerning medical treatment and/or early intervention programs. If you empathize with these parents, do you perhaps sense their intense feelings of losing their dreams for their children? Do you sense uncertainty or a lack of self-confidence? Since their children do not meet the developmental milestones as prescribed by our cultural script, do you sense how these families often find themselves out of phase with social organizations? Like other families, however, these families must have the support of social institutions in order to function reasonably well. Unfortunately, the social organizations that provide support and help to most families are closed to families with special needs. Does this include your congregation and/or school where you are doing your ministry? Families in the church who have children with special needs are in need, first of all, of information and emotional support. It is important for professional workers and congregational leaders to know community resources and who and where to call in order to help a family tap the human service system. Families with special needs are to be included, not excluded, in the normal life of the parish. Congregational leaders can consider such questions as: How can the child and his or her family be mainstreamed into the life of the community of faith and/or the school? Can the congregation provide sensitive emotional support? Are these special-need families included in marriage enrichment retreats, parenting classes, family camping, family night programs, and family clusters? Are there support groups for parents of children with impairments? What about the siblings in these families? Is there support for them, too?

The inclusive nature of our Lord's ministry is challenging, exciting, and filled with wonderful opportunities for redemptive love. It is paradoxical, but we need to be reminded that it is precisely in our need and vulnerability that God's power and service are effective.

Paul Vasconcellos, Professor of Theology,
Concordia-Seward

Lutheran Special Education

WHERE ARE WE?



by Judy Preuss

"Four

of my second graders are on medication for hyperactivity." □ "Two

of my sixth graders are beyond my control. I don't know how to handle them. They seem so angry inside." □

"I can't seem to teach this material so three of my students can understand

it." □ "I've been teaching for 20 years and I can tell you that student behavior now days is much worse than it was when I started to teach." □ "These kids have more stress and develop more learning and behavior problems."

Judy Preuss is a Professor of Education at Concordia-Seward and serves as the Director of the Special Education Program.

These and similar comments are often heard at Lutheran teachers conferences. They reflect the frustrations frequently felt by teachers as they attempt to deal effectively with mainstreamed mildly handicapped students in the regular classroom.

Who are the children that present such challenges to present day teachers? These students are described as *exceptional*, which is intended to include all those whose educational needs cannot be met effectively through the standard

curriculum, and who therefore require special accommodations. Typically these children possess a learning and/or behavior disorder which interferes significantly with their ability to learn, although they are intellectually capable of doing so. They may be labeled as learning disabled, mildly mentally handicapped, behaviorally impaired, visually impaired, hearing impaired, physically handicapped, and attention deficit disorder, depending on their specific handicapping condition.

Such labels can be misleading if they are used to imply that all the students with a particular label share all of the same characteristics. Such a generalization is inaccurate. There are certain characteristics which apply to each exceptionality; for example, all visually impaired children have some vision loss. However, each student is an individual with unique personal characteristics and learning abilities.

Even though the categories of exceptionality were listed individually, this is not to imply that all exceptionalities occur separately. They often overlap and frequently are combined within one child. For example, a child who is physically handicapped may also have a learning disability, or a visually impaired child may also have a behavior disorder. The degree of severity and combination of disabilities increase the challenge of educating these children. It also complicates the tabulation of prevalence of handicapping conditions for children within the school system.

PL 94-142, The Education of All Handicapped Students Act of 1975, lists handicapping conditions and targets these populations for services. State laws and regulations further define these populations. Although the target groups remain the same, the terminology and classification procedures vary from state to state. Gearheart suggests that the prevalence figures must therefore be looked at theoretically and gives the following prevalence figures by category.

TABLE 1

Prevalence of Exceptional Children in U.S. Schools

Exceptionality	Percentage of Population
Learning Disabilities	2.0-4.0
Speech handicapped	2.0-4.0
Mentally handicapped	2.0-3.0
Emotionally disturbed	2.0-3.0
Hearing impaired (includes deaf)	0.5-0.7
Multihandicapped	0.5-0.7
Orthopedically/health impaired	0.4-0.6
Visually impaired (includes blind)	0.08-0.12
Gifted and talented	2.0-3.0

(Gearheart, 1988)

It is then reasonable to estimate the prevalence of handicapped children within the schools of the United States to be from 10-20 percent of the school population. The present system of categorical definitions has been in use since the mid-1970s and can retrospectively provide possible evidence of trends. The most prevalent handicapping conditions among the school age population are: learning disabilities, speech handicaps, mental handicaps, and emotional disabilities.

A survey of Lutheran elementary and secondary school administrators conducted by this writer approximately one year ago indicated an increase in the number of handicapped students enrolled in Lutheran schools during the last five years.

TABLE 2

Percentage of Increase in Enrollment of Handicapped Students in Past Five Years

Category	Percentage of Increase
Mildly handicapped students	21%
Learning disabled students	41%
Behaviorally impaired students	54%
Attention Deficit Disordered students	34%

(Survey of Administrators)

This data indicates a significant increase in prevalence of learning disabilities, behavioral impairment, and attention deficit disordered children within Lutheran elementary and secondary schools. The data also identifies a tremendous challenge for teachers, principals, and pastors as they attempt to be in ministry with and to this population. Such questions as "What do these children need?" and "How do we minister effectively?" are frequent topics of discussion at faculty and school board meetings.

To answer the question, "What do these children need?", it is necessary first to look at some general basic needs of children and then at specific educational needs. Abraham Maslow, noted psychologist, theorized a hierarchy of human needs which is well known to psychologists and educators. In this list of needs Maslow indicates that all people experience survival needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, and self-esteem needs as they grow and develop. Where better to address these needs than within a Lutheran school/congregation?

The fulfillment of survival and self-esteem needs is frequently attributed to the primary care giving unit, the family. If, however, this unit is incapable of meeting

its obligation, it is incumbent upon the school/congregation to assist in whatever way possible. Currently, many congregations find it necessary to organize a ministry specifically directed to serving families with school age children. This may be a direct result of the changes which are occurring in family structures and relationships.

The next level of need addressed by Maslow is the need to love and be loved. Again the primary care giving unit provides initial responses to this need. The family response to this need is strengthened and supported by active involvement in congregational life, as well as attendance at church, Christian Day School, and Sunday School. It is here that the children can be taught about Jesus' love for them and experience that love as it is expressed by caring teachers, principals, and pastors.

The final level of our consideration is the need to feel included, to be valued by others. Other general needs of exceptional children, not unlike those of non-handicapped children, include the need for acceptance and the need for achievement or success.

It was stated earlier that exceptional children's educational needs cannot be met with the standard curriculum but require special accommodations. What might some of those accommodations be? Appropriate accommodations can be classified into four major areas: structure, skill development, learning strategies, and compensatory techniques.

Teachers who provide **structure** and organization are an immense help to mildly handicapped students. These students need detailed schedules and directions. Teachers must deliver directions in small amounts, being careful not to overload the student. Expressing expectations in simple concrete terms is also helpful. Providing adequate time to complete tasks is necessary as these students find it difficult to organize themselves to return to an uncompleted task once they have had to move on to something else. A checklist to help organize assignments and homework can prove helpful. It allows the student to be responsible, yet provides a list of the items necessary to be successful. The checklist would include items such as required textbooks, paper, pencils, pens, worksheets, and dictionary. Teachers who schedule more difficult and intense activities integrated with less difficult and taxing activities are thereby providing schedules which allow for a change of pace.



Clearly the data supports the mission of Lutheran schools to be in ministry to all children while emphasizing that teachers and administrators feel a strong need for support in that ministry.

These students also benefit from systematically planned **skill instruction**. There are basically two approaches to teaching skill deficit students: direct instruction and precision teaching. Direct instruction has seven components (Haring and Schiefelbusch, 1976):

1. Assessment of learner characteristics establishes the student's present level of skill.
2. Instructional goals are established and broken down into short term objectives.
3. Instruction is systematically applied along with motivational sequences and reinforcement.
4. Goal-directed materials that maximize time-on-task are used.
5. Instruction is clearly and completely described with discrete and replicable steps.
6. Direct instruction emphasizes the use of motivating consequences that are effective for the individual student.

7. Student success is continually monitored to assess the rate of skill acquisition.

Precision teaching uses planning, practicing, and analyzing the effects of instructional techniques or methods to improve student performance on specific skills.

A major goal is to foster independence in students. Teaching **learning strategies** has proved successful for many students. Dr. D. Deshler and other researchers at the University of Kansas have developed instructional strategies which can be used by students to help acquire, organize, and express information. Mnemonic devices and other cues are used to facilitate student memory of the appropriate strategy.

The decision to use **compensatory** rather than remedial techniques is always a difficult one for teachers. It is important to use these techniques only when necessary and not simply as an easy solution to a short-term problem.

Compensatory techniques are used when a teacher determines that the remediation of weak areas is impossible or would require so much time that the opportunity to work in other content areas is lost. Allowing a student who has difficulty in writing to take a test orally, or permitting the taping of lectures for students

who have great difficulty taking notes are examples of compensatory techniques. Some other compensatory techniques are:

1. Tape recorded textbooks are available from the Library for the Blind, or they can be recorded by volunteers. (This is a good way to get some retired persons involved with helping children in your school.)
2. Allowing students who do not write well to dictate and record assignments.
3. Schematic diagrams from textbooks reinforce written material for students who have difficulty reading and understanding their textbooks.
4. Notetaking generally proves a challenge to mildly handicapped students. Teacher-provided outlines of the lecture, with sections to be completed by the student, or a copy of notes taken by another student, also are effective support measures.

Compensatory techniques are reserved for use with the more severely handicapped students or with older handicapped students where a choice must be made regarding what they will and will not be able to learn in their remaining time in school. Teachers must exercise care so that they do not contribute unwittingly to a student's passive approach to learning.

The survey conducted by this writer in the spring of 1991 requested participants to react to a set of 15 belief statements regarding mainstreamed mildly handicapped students. The survey was designed to assess the prevalence of mildly handicapped students within Lutheran elementary and secondary schools and to determine how services for mainstreamed mildly handicapped students are provided.

The first survey item asked the respondents if they viewed the enrollment of mainstreamed handicapped students as a function of Lutheran schools. The response (3.6 on a 5.0 scale) indicates that the respondents definitely feel mainstreaming should occur within Lutheran schools. All the responding schools indicated a substantial increase in the number of identified handicapped students within the last five years. The category of students labeled as behaviorally impaired has grown the most rapidly (see Table 2). In light of the increase referred to above, it is not surprising that the respondents indicated a high need for additional time to plan for mainstreamed handicapped students (4.1 on a 5.0 scale). A score of 2.1 on a 5.0 scale was calculated for the item, "Teachers in your building have adequate resources to work with mildly handicapped students." These data indicate that more time, resources, and training are needed to increase teacher and administrator effectiveness with mainstreamed handicapped students. Fifty-three percent of the responding admin-

istrators indicated that their school has its own program for mainstreamed handicapped students, while 47 percent indicated the mainstreamed handicapped students within their buildings were serviced by public school personnel at a site other than the Lutheran school.

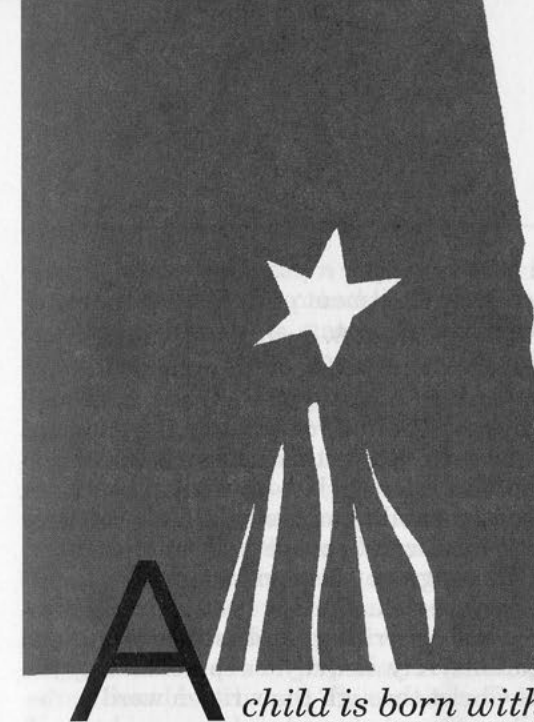
Clearly the data supports the mission of Lutheran schools to be in ministry to all children while emphasizing that teachers and administrators feel a strong need for support in that ministry. The support should be in terms of both time and human resources, as well as material resources.

The current college training system for pre-service teachers must be evaluated to assess the effectiveness of the system to prepare future teachers for the realities of the 21st century classroom. Once an awareness and an initial set of skills are acquired by the pre-service teacher trainee, it is essential that young teachers be committed to continuing education in the form of in-service education and/or more formal course work. Congregations must financially support beginning teachers in their efforts to acquire further education for effectively teaching children with special needs.

When congregations or schools accept the full responsibility of ministering with and to individuals with various types of handicapping conditions, they must learn how to work with the individual and his/her family. A recommendation of an excellent resource (*One Body—One Head—One Mission*) encourages congregational leaders to work directly with the family to determine the full extent of the needs, to plan the parish response to those needs, and then to gather resources. The main point of the recommendation is to do this together in order to assure that attention is given to making it possible for the handicapped individual to be involved in worship, teaching and learning God's Word, witness activities, service activities, as well as fellowship or support activities. Congregational or school leaders must grow in their awareness of the resources and helps that are available within the community, state and church-related organizations. There are more helps than most leaders may initially realize.

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by Roger DeMeyere

THE HANDICAPPED Opportunities for Ministry

A child is born with Down's Syndrome. A three-year-old child ingests the contents of an aspirin bottle, and although the doctors save her life, she suffers neurological damage and is profoundly deaf. A nine-year-old boy is once again sent to the principal's office for disrupting his classmates with constant noise and activity. A young father is in a horrible accident. He survives, but he will spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair.

What do these individuals have in common? Not age, gender, or circumstance. The unifying factor, the common bond, is that each is a member of the body of Christ. Each needs to be recognized first as a beloved child of God and welcomed into our church family. It is far too easy to see only the handicap and ignore the person. We are often unable to relate to the needs of those brothers and sisters who may differ from us. Yet, as Christians, professing to follow His example, we must turn from our personal blindness, see **all** of His children, and minister to those who do not meet our standards of physical,

Dr. Roger DeMeyere serves as the Executive Director of Lutheran Special Education Ministries, Detroit, Michigan



mental, or emotional health. While legal mandates have made society more responsive, within the church much work remains before handicaps are seen as opportunities for ministry.

It is difficult to do justice to this topic when the word "handicapped" itself has so many meanings. Even the experts disagree on its definition, not to mention diagnosis and treatment. Some people are offended by the use of the word, choosing to use terms like "disabled" or "challenged" instead. Yet, everyone forms a picture in one's mind when hearing the word, and every family and every congregation is (or should be) affected in some way by those who are handicapped.

We can look to *Webster's Dictionary* for a definition that will provide a common ground. **Handicap** (the third of eight definitions): "Any disadvantage that makes success more difficult." If we view success as growing in the personal knowledge and love of Jesus Christ as Savior, the definition can reflect a Christian perspective. This article is written within this context to provide information about handicaps, to discuss ministry issues of inclusion of those with handicaps, and to offer resources to help congregations open wider their doors in ministry to enable "success" for the handicapped.

Although there is disagreement on categorizing handicaps, four general types may be described: physical, mental, emotional, and educational.

PHYSICAL HANDICAPS. Such disadvantages may be caused by physical or health problems, such as hearing or visual impairment, paraplegia, stroke, or cerebral palsy. The type and severity of the physical handicap will determine what a congregation will need to do in order to lessen the disadvantage. For example, a moderately hearing impaired individual may only need hearing enhancement through an F.M. unit, whereas a profoundly deaf person may need manual communication through an interpreter.

MENTAL HANDICAPS. These disadvantages may be caused by limited ability in intelligence or capacity to function independently. The terms mental impairment, mental retardation, and developmentally disabled are also used interchangeably to describe this handicap. The severity of disadvantage may range from mild, those with ability to develop fundamental reading and writing skills, to those with profound impairments requiring custodial care.

EMOTIONAL HANDICAPS. These disadvantages may be caused by emotional disturbances such as fear/anxiety, depression, psychosomatic disorders, substance abuse, personality disorders, and more bizarre psychotic disorders. Some forms of emotional handicap are also referred to as mental illness. Emotional handicaps affect children and adults and may be acute (short term) or chronic (long term). It is safe to say that every family and every congregation at one time or another is affected by members with some form of emotional handicap, whether it be situational in response to a divorce

or death of a loved one, or a chronic mental illness requiring psychiatric treatment and inpatient care.

EDUCATIONAL HANDICAPS. Such disadvantages may be caused by a difficulty to learn, or, in some situations, an inability to learn by traditional methods. Although people with physical, mental, or emotional handicaps certainly may be included in this category, an educational handicap also refers to less obvious impairment such as a learning disability or dyslexia. This category is included as a handicap because it is so often overlooked within the congregation. A person with a learning disability may be reluctant at best or avoid altogether any reading or writing, and is disadvantaged since congregations rely heavily on proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through the written word.

Implementing Special Education in Congregations

A term currently in vogue for special education in public schools is the word "inclusion." One of the goals of special education is to include, in a meaningful way, the handicapped with non-handicapped. This concept is certainly appropriate in the congregational setting, for it is consistent with the pronouncements of Jesus Christ. A congregation's ministry to individuals with physical, mental, emotional or educational handicaps requires sensitivity and commitment by professional and lay leadership. With this as the foundation, caregivers with spiritual gifts of serving and helping will be able to identify needs, access resources, and develop and implement services.

Options for ministry may be individualized to meet the needs of just one person or, depending upon the number of people with similar handicaps, may include accommodations for a group of individuals. Opportunities for ministry may be as varied as the handicaps encountered. Interventions may be as extensive as making sure all buildings are accessible to those in wheelchairs, providing large print materials for visually impaired, or offering hearing enhancement devices for the hearing impaired. A mentally impaired or learning disabled youngster can be taught in an existing Sunday School class by using supplemental materials, or there may be a need within the congregation to develop a Sunday School class for a group of these children. Parish day schools can hire special education teachers and consultants to accommodate children with special learning needs. Congregational members confronting emotional stress may need to be referred to Christian counselors, or support groups could be established for those dealing with tension.

There is simply no single answer on how to minister to those with handicaps. But the opportunities are limitless. Congregational and school leaders only need to ask, "How can physically, mentally, emotionally, or educationally 'disadvantaged' know that Christ is alive in the congregation?" Christ is alive when the congrega-

tion accepts the basic principle that Christ died for all. And, if we accept this principle, we will then find willing workers, appropriate materials, and resources to try to accommodate all members as the body of Christ.

Key Needs

Key needs in ministering to those with handicaps involve a basic knowledge of the handicap, acceptance of the limitation and capacities of individuals with handicapping conditions, knowledge of Christian resources in the community, and the availability of congregational resources. The beginning of this article dealt with providing some very fundamental knowledge of the areas of physical, mental, emotional and educational handicaps. This basic knowledge is crucial. Needed is not only a knowledge of handicapping conditions, but also the knowledge of available resources. However, the most significant need in a congregation is acceptance. Just as parents and family members need to accept the handicap, so, too, does the congregation. And just as the family initially may be ignorant and fearful of the handicap, so, too, is the congregation. Let it be our prayer that we will all open our hearts and minds to God's leading. As a result, there is no doubt that our church doors will open wider, and those with handicaps will find the ultimate success that is theirs through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.



Resources

Bethesda Lutheran Home
National Christian Resource Center on Mental Retardation
700 Hoffman Drive
Watertown, Wisconsin 53094 (1-900-369-INFO)

Provides religious instructional materials for teaching the mentally impaired, various publications, and video cassettes to develop awareness and provide support for those caring for the mentally impaired.

Concordia Publishing House
3558 S. Jefferson Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63118-3975 (1-314-268-1000)

Publishes several religious education series and resource materials used in teaching individuals with special education needs.

Teacher Interaction, published monthly except July/August (bimonthly), has a column entitled "Special Education Teachers" for Sunday School

and Vacation Bible School personnel that provides information on how to work with children with special learning needs.

Concordia College
Special Education Department
800 N. Columbia Avenue
Seward, Nebraska 68434 (1-402-643-3651)

Offers special education teacher training, research in special education, and resources for inclusion.

Lutheran Braille Workers
13471 California Street
P. O. Box 5000
Yucaipa, California 92399-1450 (1-714-795-8977)

Sends Bible and devotional BRAILLE and LARGE PRINT materials "free" to certified blind and visually handicapped. Available upon request: English Braille Catalog, International Braille Catalog, Large Print Catalog, Quarterly Newsletter.

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
Board for Mission Services
Counselor for Deaf/Blind
1333 S. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, Missouri 63122 (1-314-965-9000)

Provides resources and consultation services regarding ministry to the deaf and/or blind.

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
Board for Parish Services
1333 S. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, Missouri 63122-7295 (1-314-965-9000)

Publishes parish resources for accommodating the handicapped.

District Education Offices
The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
(See pages 38-44 of 1992 *Lutheran Annual* for local district information.)

Provide information on Christian education, family life, and youth.

Lutheran Special Education Ministries
6861 East Nevada
Detroit, Michigan 48234 (1-313-368-1220)

In addition to sponsoring instructional programs in Michigan, Illinois, and New York, Lutheran Special Education Ministries provides resources for special students in Christian day schools, Sunday Schools, and confirmation classes through its Ephphatha Center. Services include student evaluation, consultation, inservice presentations and curriculum materials. *The Extended Special*

SPECIAL EDUCATION

A School/ Congregational Model

by Lorna Schmidt,
Susan Rogalski,
Janice Schrader,
Lee Schluckebier

Lorna Schmidt, Director of Special Education;
Susan Rogalski, PLUS classroom teacher;
Janice Schrader, Horizon instructor;
and Lee Schluckebier, principal, are members
of the staff of Christ The King Lutheran
School, Memphis, Tennessee.

Education Teacher's Guide for The Simplified Catechism which enhances *The Simplified Catechism* program published by Northwestern Publishing House is available free upon request.

Mill Neck Foundation
Box 100
Mill Neck, New York 11765 (1-516-922-3880)

Offers these resources for the deaf and hearing impaired:

1. John of Beverly series for religious education of the deaf and hearing impaired
2. *Deaf Ministry Resource Manual*

Silent Word Media Resources
7400 W. Augusta
River Forest, Illinois 60305 (1-708-209-3341)

Provides video captioning for hearing impaired and a lending library of captioned religious videos.

Social Ministry Organizations
(See pages 559-574 of the 1992 *Lutheran Annual* for local information.)

Depending on the locality and agency, resources are available for those with physical, mental or emotional handicaps and their families.

Stephens Ministries
8016 Dale
St. Louis, Missouri 63117-1449 (1-314-645-5511)

Sponsors lay training in supportive contact with congregational members.

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Special Ministries Board
2929 N. Mayfair Road
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222 (1-414-771-9357)

Offers resource materials and consultation regarding ministry to the hearing impaired, the mentally impaired, and the visually impaired. (Confirmation materials for the mentally impaired are published through Northwestern Publishing House.)



ONE IMPORTANT ASPECT of the Lutheran heritage is the education of its youth. This heritage dates back to the arrival of the first immigrants on this soil. In reality, that heritage includes the ability to see a need and then fill that need through education.

In the very beginning, a perceived need was the continuation of the language of the mother country. Hindsight shows us that need was not as important with the second and third generation of the immigrants' children. Yet, both the immigrants and their succeeding generations saw the need for the continuation of the nurturing of its youth in a religious environment.

Today, this continuing need is felt by the church. It continues the education of its children in a nurturing religious environment. This educational commitment is to the church as well as to the community.

Public Law 94-142 opened the doors of the public schools to children with special needs. The church had its doors open before Public Law 94-142 through such institutions as Bethesda, The Lutheran Special Education Ministries (formerly known as the Lutheran School for the Deaf), St. Louis Lutheran Special Education District and various other institutions and schools throughout the country. As the need for the special services moved from the institutions to the local level, Lutheran education has been there with various models for the delivery of services. Bethesda, with homes located nearer to the local area, and Lutheran Special Education Ministries changing from a deaf-oriented emphasis to an emphasis on special needs at the local level, are two examples of this change.

A Model

Within this framework of Lutheran education, there is another model. That model is based on the Christian day school and congregation providing special education services to the church and community. This effort is funded at the local level with funds paid for by the parents for services rendered to the students. Such a model is in operation at Christ The King Lutheran School, Memphis, Tennessee. The goal of the program is to allow the school to be of service to a wider variety of students within the area and provide Christian outreach to as large a population as possible. The model at Christ The King Lutheran School is nearly self-funding by the fees charged for the program. The program includes resource services for nearly 60 students, high impact services through a self-contained classroom with an emphasis on mainstreaming for 14 students, and a resource gifted program for over 50 qualifying students. The programs are designed to meet the needs of the learning disabled and those students with exceptional academic abilities.

The term "learning disabilities" covers a wide variety of learning problems within the educational field. A local school has to define and determine the services it can make available to the public.

The services of a specific special education program have to depend on personnel delivering the services. Therefore, the school should define the services it wants to deliver or determine what is needed in the church and community. Then the school should secure the expertise needed to deliver the services. The school's delivery system becomes the heart of the program. The planning for the delivery does not mean placing a teacher in a specific location or just working in the various classrooms. It includes all aspects from securing personnel to helping the classroom teacher with strategies for the classroom or individual teachers.

Scheduling becomes a prime concern for the imple-

mentation and the smooth working of the program. There is usually a school wide schedule into which the classroom schedule fits. The special education schedule becomes the third schedule following the previous two. The scheduling of special education services depends on the flexibility of the classroom teacher. An effective program has to depend on the mutual respect of teachers and the close working relationship and support of the total staff.

A sound special education system has to be based on the latest research and practice. Therefore, a major commitment has to include opportunities for staff inservice, workshops, latest publications and personal study. In reality, special education is a new commitment by this nation's mass educational community.

Special Education Research

Because of the mass availability of special education services, more monies are flowing into research. The research investigates a variety of areas; however, the research in the physiological area is generating valuable new information. This mass of information is helping the educator formulate educational practices which meet specific needs of handicapped individuals. Based on that specific information, the educator can develop delivery systems for the individual student.

A school or congregation entering this area of education specialty must define the service needed in the local school, congregation and community. A variety of methods may be used to make such a determination. On the basis of our experiences at Christ The King, we found that needs in the classroom, as well as requests from the public for specific services, were an indication of needed services.

A Local Effort

Christ The King Lutheran School can deliver services for the learning disabled, ADHD, and other general classifications affecting students needing special educational services. Educational services a school should deliver include several areas.

The first area is the diagnostic ability of the school. It is one thing to say the school serves the Learning Disabled, while it is another thing to say the school does the job. Before a child can be served, the school needs to know the specifics of the learning problems. To diagnose problems, the school needs the instruments to diagnose and the personnel to interpret the information developed by the instrument.

Second, the school should have the ability to develop a specific IEP (Individual Educational Plan) based on the diagnoses, other testing, and classroom observation for each of its students being served. The IEP becomes the specific plan of operation for the education of the student as well as the standard for assessing the results of the student's progress. The ability to produce and carry out an IEP is critical in the success of the school's special education program.

Third, there should be services available to help the classroom teacher work with a specific learning disability in the classroom. Special education teachers should always be aware of techniques needed by the classroom teacher to help a specific student. The strength of a special education program is how the student can function in the mainstream classroom. The lines of communication have to be open among the special education teacher, the classroom teacher and the parents. A strong special education program depends on all three working toward the same end, using the same techniques and having the same expectations.

Fourth, the school must provide support services for parents. When students are experiencing learning difficulties in school, parents need strategies to provide successful acquisition of basic skills. Through parent conferencing, sharing literature resources and providing parent training sessions, these techniques can be taught to parents so they can provide positive support for their child's learning.

Suffer the Little Children

"Suffer the little children to come unto me." These words of Jesus for mission and outreach to all of God's children filled the hearts and minds of the pastor, principal, teachers, board of education, and members of Christ The King Lutheran Church and School when a special education program was begun in 1976. Many students who were enrolled already in the school at that time had learning difficulties and needed different kinds of teaching strategies to learn successfully. Many of these students were children of congregation members who desired a sound education in a Christian environment. They wanted their children to develop a strong spiritual faith along with a supportive, academic curriculum.

The need for a program to challenge the gifted was also obvious to the Christian education staff, board members, and parents. Therefore, the goal was to establish not only a resource program for students with learning difficulties, but also a gifted resource program to challenge those students with a differentiated curriculum. Before such a program could begin, funding decisions had to be made. The special education program was to be self-funding wherever possible.

The planning and implementation began by hiring a special education resource teacher for students with learning disabilities in the areas of reading and math. Later that fall, a second teacher was hired to teach those students qualifying for the gifted program. With this mission in mind, a teacher was hired to develop a program for the school. In March of 1976, Mrs. Eva Westbrook was hired on a part-time basis to begin teaching a resource class for students with learning disabilities and learning difficulties. Due to the number of students, a second teacher was hired to work with younger resource students on a part-time basis. Using a variety of teaching strategies and behavior modifica-

tion techniques, the students exhibited excellent progress.

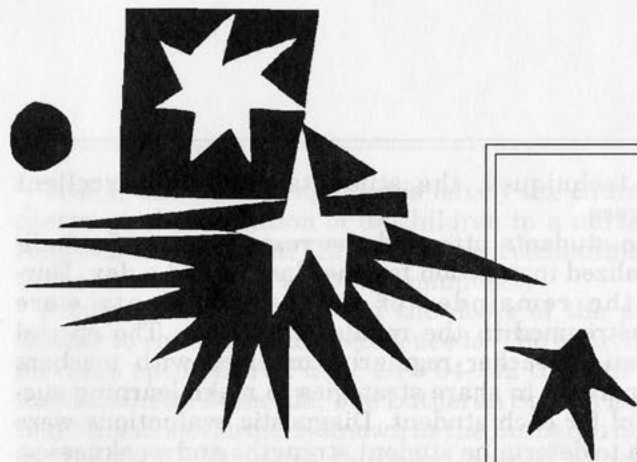
The students attended the resource class for individualized instruction for one class period a day. During the remainder of the day, students were mainstreamed in the regular classroom. The special education teacher regularly conferred with teachers and parents to share strategies to make learning successful for each student. Diagnostic evaluations were given to determine student strengths and weaknesses. Educational goals were established for each student with evaluations and assessments measuring academic growth. The continuing goal of the special education program has always been to provide a positive, supportive, nurturing, learning environment where the student can have successful learning experiences to develop self-esteem and learn to his/her full potential to serve God in His world. This was the beginning of the present Discoveries Resource Program.

While Christ The King Lutheran School was developing its program, the Tennessee State Special Education Guidelines were being expanded and developed. These guidelines were used for criteria for placement, curriculum development, number of students served, teacher certification and inservice. The instructional staff of Memphis State University also provided guidance in curriculum, resources and appropriate referrals for services.

Mid-South District Support

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a task force was developed in the Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to expand special education services. This was led by Dr. Jan Case under the sponsorship of AAL. This task force raised the awareness of schools and churches in the District for the need to expand special education to people with special needs. Through a Forward in Remembrance grant, this vision became a reality. Under the direction of the Mid-South District President, the Reverend Norman Groteluschen, a Special Education Committee was developed. The committee consisted of representatives from several Memphis Lutheran churches and schools as well as district officials. The Forward in Remembrance grant provided seed money to begin the construction of the first full-time resource classroom for students at Christ The King. This classroom and program was, and continues to be, a model for other schools and congregations as a resource model to assist in their future development. The model program began in 1984 with Lorna Schmidt as Special Education Director while also serving as the full-time teacher. Susan Rogalski was hired as a part-time teacher. The program was very successful and created a demand for Lutheran Christian special education in the Mid-south. Three years later, in 1987, a self-contained classroom for students with more severe learning disabilities was developed.

Any program's success is dependent on many factors.



THE
CLASSROOM
TEACHER AND
THE SPECIAL
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STRATEGIES."

At Christ The King Lutheran School, several important factors were included. First was the support of staff, board of education members, and parents in accepting the goals and strategies necessary to teach special students. The second factor was a commitment to the concept that God gives each of us an accepting attitude realizing that each child is a unique child of God who needs the message of salvation. A third need is a commitment to strong educational planning and curriculum development exhibiting a variety of ways for children to learn major concepts and basic skills. The fourth factor is creating an atmosphere of acceptance, nurturing and understanding for these children in the overall school setting.

The classroom teacher and the special education teacher have to accept the simple premise, "All children can learn if they are given the time and are taught using the correct teaching/learning strategies." Creativity, flexibility and patience are extremely necessary in successful teaching with special education students.

Finally, a successful program needs sound funding. In our metropolitan area, there is a great need for these services. Christ The King's program has been funded almost entirely by additional tuitions assessed parents for the services. Some gift and grant money has provided support to get the program started, but now it is a self-funding program.

Pupils Learning in Unique Styles (PLUS)

Christ The King Lutheran School offers a self-contained class for students in grades 1 through 6. The class was established to meet the needs of students with more severe learning disabilities who needed more intensive one-to-one instruction. These students have normal cognitive abilities but are very delayed in reading skills and have attending problems or cognitive processing problems that necessitate one-to-one directed instruction. The emphasis is on individuality leading to mainstreaming. The class is limited to 14 students who

have been tested and recommended for placement in such a program. Each student has an Individual Educational Plan developed stating educational, social and emotional goals to be attained. Individualized programs in math and reading are established, and small group activities are designed for spelling, language arts, and auditory and visual perceptual and motor activities. Bible stories, memory, and religion are taught using various manipulative and motor activities to help the students develop spiritually. The students are mainstreamed for subjects that will allow success. The subjects included are physical education, science, social studies, art and music as well as those subjects listed on the IEP. The students in this class have made excellent progress using teaching strategies that meet their learning style and academic level.

Family Involvement

Christ The King's approach to special education has always been a team approach that, by necessity, involves parents as a vital link in the total education of the special child. A formal parent conference is held when the student is initially accepted into the program. Teachers desire to keep communication lines open at all times. The initial conference includes the expectations the school holds for the parent and student.

At least one formal conference is scheduled during the first semester where the IEP is discussed as well as the general plan for the school year. A second formal conference is held at the beginning of the second semester to review the progress as it applies to the IEP. Finally, a formal year end conference is held to review the IEP and begin to develop the new IEP for the coming term.

During the year there are numerous telephone conversations exchanging necessary ideas, information, concerns, and counseling. Christ The King's program places a high value on open lines of communication.

Weekly newsletters are used to keep parents informed of events and general happenings in the classroom as well as daily homework sheets and notes about assignments. A handbook of ideas to help with homework strategies and other suggestions on topics such as discipline and reward system is also available.

Parents are invited to join the class for a variety of occasions including family chapel services, special luncheons, play performances, field trips, pet days and

special art projects. We also use the video camera to tape activities and projects done in the class. These are then sent home for parents to view.

Special parent meetings are held periodically with special speakers and programs on pertinent topics. These sessions have included such topics as visual perception problems, learning styles and homework helps, understanding the child with learning problems, and the ADHD child.

The school is always looking for outside resources. Information related to the various organizations that offer assistance such as the Learning Disabilities Association is available.

Each summer a summer school session targets specific skills. Summer packets are put together for each student. They contain review activities in the areas of reading and math skills. A family picnic is held at the end of the summer for all those who complete the packets. This provides us an opportunity to get together on an informal basis and strengthen the communications link.

Horizons (A Program for Gifted/Academically Talented Students)

Horizons, Christ The King's program for gifted and academically talented students, meets weekly for a two-hour session. The students are grouped by grade level for instruction.

The teacher provides a differentiated and extended curriculum which is organized around themes and relationships. Relevant interdisciplinary units promote higher level thinking skills, emphasize problem solving, foster creativity, develop leadership skills, strengthen research competency, and incorporate opportunities for spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social development. Students have input into the selection of unit topics and are given opportunities to pursue interests of their own choosing, create products which express their learning and evaluate themselves and their projects.

The Horizons classroom is viewed as a safe place to express and explore divergent and evaluative ideas. Students' intense curiosity and creative cognitive abilities are nurtured when they are allowed to probe interesting subjects at an earlier time and at a deeper level.

Benefits follow when students participate in a special program in which they learn to understand and value themselves as gifted/talented/blessed children of the Heavenly Father. They develop positive coping skills to help themselves deal with the frustration arising from challenging activities and working with others with different viewpoints. Good feelings come from having opportunities to share feelings, to better understand others and to express themselves more concisely. Students are enabled to maintain a positive attitude about learning and view themselves as being influential in their own education. After working with Horizons units, they are prepared to initiate self-motivated courses of

study and create products that demonstrate their findings. These children are more confident decision makers and problem solvers.

Aim High Counseling Program

In 1989, a counseling program was established to provide coping techniques and support for students with learning needs. In class, counseling strategies were taught to students to build inter-relationship skills and develop self-esteem and peer support. A trained state certified counselor provided group instruction to each classroom using high-interest materials and group techniques. Children with special needs were provided with strategies to deal with their learning disabilities and develop self-esteem. Individual counseling was done by the counselor as needed, and conferences were conducted with parents and teachers.

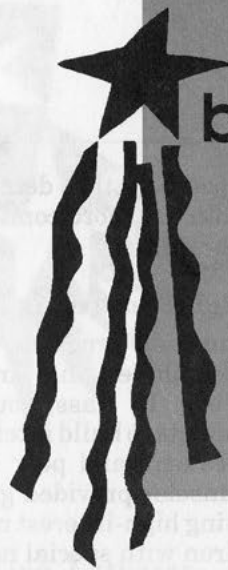
Results

Participation in the special education program at Christ The King has produced success. Students have gone on to colleges after high school. They have achieved acceptable scores on ACT tests and SAT tests to allow entrance into college which has led to college graduation. One student who had struggled with handwriting and math computation skills as a resource student at Christ The King recently graduated from college obtaining a degree in business. Another high school student excitedly reported he had scored a 20 on his ACT test and thanked the special education teachers for teaching him math. Benefits to the students' self-esteem and attitude about learning are obvious when strategies are used to help them learn successfully!

Parents benefit from the program through gaining a better understanding of their children and their needs. Through parent-teacher conferencing and resources explaining special learning needs, parents are more supportive of their children. Christ The King has conducted workshops on self-esteem by The Learning Disabilities Association and presentations by child psychologists on such topics as giving attention to deficit hyperactivity disorder and developing parenting skills. Parent involvement in writing a child's IEP which states educational goals and needed modifications provides input and understanding of what and how their child learns.

Competent leadership provided by a staff that is knowledgeable about special education is imperative. Their knowledge can be shared with staff, a congregation, and parents to develop and maintain the program. When teachers need support with a problem, strategies must be shared to help them teach a child. When a child is having behavior problems, ideas must be given to

Continued on page 20



book reviews

STRONG AT THE BROKEN PLACES: Persons with Disabilities and the Church by Stewart D. Govig. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989.

Dr. Govig, Professor of Religion at Pacific Lutheran University and a Lutheran minister, can speak from personal experience. As a child, he had polio that left him with an atrophied arm.

In a study published in 1986 for the International Center for the Disabled, a person was defined as disabled if he or she:

- had a disability or health problem that prevented him or her from participating fully in work, school, or other activities;
- said that he or she had a physical disability, a seeing, hearing, or speech impairment; an emotional or mental disability; or a learning disability; or
- considered himself or herself disabled, or said that other people would consider him or her disabled.

Fifteen percent of Americans aged sixteen or over, or some 27 million persons, did fit the criteria at that time.

While the law has mandated that public buildings must be free of barriers for persons with disabilities, there remain tremendous attitudinal barriers, even within the church, that are much more devastating to "the largest minority group in the world." Social acceptance lags far behind research and rehabilitation therapies, educational mainstreaming, and the removal of physical barriers.

The title of Govig's book comes from Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, in which Hemingway states, "The world breaks all of us; then some become strong at the broken places." In Part One, Govig introduces the reader to brokenness. Using brief but touching vignettes about real persons whom the world views as "crippled," the author shares how it feels to be stared at, to be labeled, to be considered lower or of less value than "whole" persons, to be pitied and even avoided by others. In Part Two, he celebrates strength and confidence, giving hope that this brokenness can be transformed through the fellowship, encouragement, and ministry of God's people, not just to but with one another.

Govig concentrates on those persons who live with conditions of long-term disability such as skeletal anomalies (parts of the body missing or disfigured), sensory loss, or mental-emotional disorders. Society views such individuals as victims, "less than," and threats, respectively. Some people stare at them, others back off from them, and many just try to ignore them, hoping that somehow they will just "go away."

In his many years of working with and for persons who have disabilities, Govig has found that most manage their condition quite well if they are given the opportunity for doing so, and that they prefer to meet others in terms of their abilities. He also found that many were eager to know what the Bible as a whole has to say about disabilities. This book is Govig's attempt to help "healthy people" gain a new perspective on persons with different abilities, and to give all an in-depth look at Biblical resources that can enlarge this perspective.

One does not find a "poor me" attitude among the disabled persons in Govig's book. Nor does the author intend to give the "healthy" reader a "guilt trip." He does see marvelous opportunities for the church in the areas of both evangelism and stewardship, however, as he notes, "The majority of those with disabilities are not attending church or even in contact; it is a field 'white unto harvest' (John 4:35). Moreover, the ones who are on the rolls represent an overlooked and emotionally rejected group whose gifts are seldom respected."

Jesus spent much of his time ministering to persons who were broken in mind or body. His church has the opportunity also to minister to persons with disabilities. Govig, however, proposes that the congregation go beyond actions to these persons, and also seek out their gifts so that all can be in ministry together. "We are, after all, interdependent members of the body of Christ, called as equal participants in the church's mission" (I Corinthians 12).

One reviewer has described Govig's book as follows: "A solid piece of writing. A thorough and careful use of Scriptures relative to the handicapped from a member of the handicapped community. I recommend this to church study groups, individuals, anyone concerned about a realistic and theologically consistent exploration of disability in the Bible and church." This reviewer agrees. With its excel-

lent bibliography, resource section, and its three-page Scriptural index, this small, eight-chapter book provides excellent study material for a Bible class in this final year of the International Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992). Perhaps more of God's people would then become strong in places that they had not even realized were broken!

Leah Serck
Professor of Education
Concordia College-Seward

SOCIAL MINISTRY, revised, by Dieter T. Hessel. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992.

Entitling Hessel's book *Social Ministry* is like calling a Colt 45 revolver a "peacemaker"; the title veils the power of the message. The book is a literary Trojan Horse; it can be welcomed into any pastor's study and sit benignly on the shelf, but if it is ever opened, the reader will be radically "liberated."

"My intention in this book," says Hessel, "is not to dwell on unhealthy forms but to foster a whole social ministry that takes more sustainable form than did the activism of the 1960s, and is more faithful to God's loving justice than were the inactionaries of the 1970s or the reactionaries of recent years. I envision a ministry that develops liberating linkages between spiritual meaning and social action, affirms cultural pluralism as well as minority rights, and is publicly expressed in just and reconciling ways." The process of reaching these goals is as radical as the beatitudes of Christ's Sermon on the Mount.

Hessel's message to us is remarkably similar to that of God's shepherd-prophet Amos. Seven hundred-fifty years before Christ, Amos was sent to the Israelites to speak harsh words against the lethargy of their affluence, to awaken them to the crisis of their contentment. Hessel reminds us that social ministry is not optional but rather a matter of justice. He seeks to yank pastor and parishioner from the comfort of pulpit and pew and lead them to the serious social problems facing Christ's earthly kingdom. And his challenge is the old yet ever new message of the Messiah.

Unfortunately Hessel's message is often obfuscated in oppressive sociological and theological jargon. He advocates a "community spirit" rather than "grim collectivism," leaving the reader to distinguish between the two. He wishes us to encourage "tendencies toward egalitarian income" and advocates "liberating pedagogy" and "reduced consumption oriented toward being more." I wonder how large an audience he will reach with this truly revolutionary message.

We live in an age that must hear his call to radical reform. We begrudge minimum wage earners their poverty-level income while fawning over the wealth of a Sam Walton. The military remains the largest budget item while we continue to have the worst infant mortality

rate among industrialized societies. We rape natural resources faster than any other country on the planet and then refuse to participate in collective discussions on better resource stewardship because of the possible impact on our productivity. In churches we hymn the immediate mission challenge of souls dying "while the Master calls for [us]" and then cut the mission budget in the after-church voters meeting. Hessel calls on the church to champion the causes of social ministry, reminding us that: "For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required."

Robert Hennig
Associate Professor of Sociology
Concordia College-Seward

ACTS OF COMPASSION: CARING FOR OTHERS AND HELPING OURSELVES by Robert Wuthnow. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Is compassion alive in the United States? Are we as a society basically a compassionate or selfish people? Will we as a country become more or less compassionate during the next twenty years? Are members of the Christian church more compassionate than those who are not members of the church? Is there a relationship between faith and the showing of compassion in one's life? What are the motives for engaging in acts of compassion? Are congregations today showing compassion beyond their memberships in the larger community? To what extent is compassion linked to hope for improvement in conditions relating to crime, homelessness, and inner-city problems? What are the roles of volunteers, smaller charities, big national charities, the church, corporations, and government bureaucracies in addressing such problems? Can compassion coexist with a society's craving for self-fulfillment?

These and other questions are discussed by a noted Princeton University sociologist on the basis of a national study involving some ten thousand subjects as well as a comprehensive review of national and international studies on compassion. The data present a paradox: while some 80 million Americans are now engaged in some kind of voluntary caring activity, giving about five hours of time per week, with 31 million people doing volunteer work for their churches, thousands of people in our country have no one to care for them. Large numbers of people fear that they cannot count on one person for help if they or a member of their family become seriously ill. Four out of ten feel that they could not count on their neighbors. One out of three says that it would not be possible to count on members of the church. Half the population thinks that it is not possible to depend on volunteers in their communities for help.

The basis of acts of caring and an uncertainty of its presence is explored in a study of motivation. A variety of motives for engaging

in compassion are identified, ranging from a desire to feel good about self to a selfless, sacrificial giving to others. As expected, the presence of faith and Biblical images relates positively to the demonstrating of compassion. Church members are more involved in caring for others and volunteer work than non-members. However, showing care to others in the larger community, such as helping people with emotional crises or drug problems, is not evident in many churches in our country.

The study presents a convincing case for investing more time and energy in an often neglected ministry in the church today, social ministry. The study shows the important linkage between caring and evangelism. Persons learn to become caring individuals; what can be learned can be taught. Individuals are drawn to the Gospel through persons and communities who care. Congregational leaders who reflect seriously on this study will be able to develop educational and evangelism paradigms that will lead to a more holistic perspective on ministry.

In one sense, much of what happens in a congregation's ministry during the next twenty years will depend on the quality of care. This gift awaits being tapped by congregations in more organized ways in a society worried about its seams coming apart, reflecting a need to care and pointing to unique opportunities for the church.

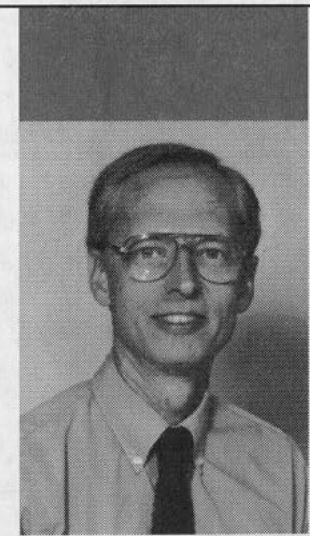
Marvin Bergman
Professor of Religion
Concordia College-Seward

A Tribute to Richard Wiegmann

Twenty-four years and seventy-four editions following his appointment as graphic designer of *Issues in Christian Education*, Richard Wiegmann has chosen to retire as the illustrator of *Issues*. His outstanding contributions to this journal are recognized by many readers and professionals in the field of art. A colleague characterized his work as "meticulous, with each stroke having significance, reflecting a persistent desire not to be satisfied with mediocrity, but thorough and complete."

Wiegmann's work has been seen in one-person shows, commissioned works, collections, and group exhibitions in galleries and churches throughout the country. He serves currently as a liturgical art consultant to the Standing Committee on Architecture, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and has held memberships in various church, state, and community organizations.

He was called as a teacher by Concordia College-Seward in 1964 after



earning a B. S. degree at the same institution and an M. F. A. degree at Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, California. A post-graduate fellowship was awarded for study in Paris in 1975.

Richard, your contributions to *Issues* are a legacy to the generations. We value your commitment to ministry and your many talents.

Continued from page 17

help the parent cope with this phase of development. Conducting inservice educational programs for teachers to enhance their teaching abilities is imperative. This type of education is needed by administrators and staff to gain knowledge about successful teaching strategies and new trends. The special education staff has attended workshops by LDA, TEA, Memphis State and clinical psychologists to improve teaching skills and knowledge.

The Lord has blessed the school, congregation, students, and parents in the development of this program. Many families and children have learned of Jesus as their Savior and have come to faith because of the "open educational door" for students with special learning needs.

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A LIST OF RESOURCES that may be helpful in establishing a similar program in a congregation includes:

- Your state's special education manual.
- The Pre-Referral and Intervention Manual*, Stephen B. McCarney. Published by Hawthorne Educational Service, 800 Gray Oak Drive, Columbia, Missouri 65201.

- The Parent's Guide*, Stephen B. McCarney.
- Diagnose and Correct Learning Difficulties in the Classroom*, Joan M. Harwell, Parker Publishing Company, Inc., New York, 1982.
- The Solution Book—A Guide to Classroom Discipline*, by Randall Sprick, Science Research Associates, Inc., Chicago, 1981.
- The Hyperactive Child, Adolescent, and Adult*, Paul H. Wender, M.D., Oxford University Press, New York, 1987.

THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES will be helpful in establishing a program for gifted and talented students:

- The Gifted Curriculum Guide*, Mariella Simons, Hawthorne Publishing Company.
- The Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids*, Sally Walker, Free Spirit Publishing Company, Minneapolis.
- The Gifted Child Today*, Periodical, P. O. Box 637, Holmes, Pennsylvania 1943-9937.
- The Good Apple Newspaper and Challenge Magazine*: Good Apple, 1204 Buchanan Street, P. O. Box 299, Carthage, Illinois 62321-0299.

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