THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE EVANGELISM OF CHILDREN IN THE CHURCH

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To

My Prime Prodder

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem and Its Significance

Twenty-seven million children[1] in the United States, two out of every three, are not hearing the gospel today, nor are they receiving any kind of religious training. Many who are in the care of the church never commit their lives to Christ despite church school attendance. As many as eighty per cent[2] of the children who attend Sunday church schools are said to be unevangelized.

Ten million youth[3] in the United States today between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five have no relationship to religion in any form. In New York City, ninety-two per cent[4] of the one million in this age group have no religious affiliation. The Protestant Church is losing seventy-five out of every one hundred[5] between the ages of twelve and fifteen who have been in Sunday church schools. Since most conversions occur now between the eleventh and the twelfth years there cannot be a great expectation of

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1. International Child Evangelism Fellowship.
2. Ibid.
3. R. H. Mueller, General Secretary of the Board of Christian Education of the Evangelical Church: personal letter. Statistics from Athearn Survey of Indiana and from a project of the Evangelical Board.
4. Isaac K. Beckes, Director of Young People's Work, International Council of Religious Education: personal letter.
5. R. H. Mueller, op. cit.

the church's reclaiming many of the seventy-five lost. In fact it is known that only fifteen of them are won back to the church by the time they are twenty-five.

While we cannot strictly identify losses to Christ with losses to the church, these figures indicate that a discouragingly large proportion of our country's youth are not responding to the efforts of the church to evangelize even when the church reaches them, and that even a larger proportion are unreached.

> "The public schools, scientists, technicians, industrialists, motion picture houses, the radio, organized labor and current periodicals, not the Christian Churches, are the most effective agencies that are now determining the character of North American culture. The trends toward paganism are increasingly strong and pervasive. The further Christianization of large areas of our current culture awaits the recovery of evangelism and its reinterpretation in terms that are theologically valid and educationally sound."[1]

Those who love children and youth for the sake of Christ are burdened with the great need, and leaders are constantly working to effect changes. This century has witnessed many such efforts: weekday religious education, the improvement of church school curricula and methods by applying the findings in educational psychology, new types of teaching aids, teacher training, junior church, extended sessions, creative activities, etc. Extra-church agencies have arisen to supplement these efforts of the church to win the children and the youth of our land to Christ. Yet with

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1. Norman E. Richardson: The Teaching Evangelist, Unit I, p. 6.

all of the scientific equipment, with all of the zeal, and with the multiplied agencies, the harvest is alarmingly small. Consequently, the emphasis on evangelism has become evident in almost all quarters.

> "The evangelization of children has become in recent years one of the livest subjects of interest among Christian workers. It springs from a sane analysis of a paramount need in Protestant churches. These leaders know that commitment to Christ is likely to last longest when it comes early, and that children are impressionable. They are also distressed at the number of children who are untouched by any religious instruction and by those others who attend church schools but do not make Christian decisions."[1]

> "The new emphasis on evangelism is an integral part of the Christian education movement."[2]

> "The time has now come for a thorough rethinking of the educational program of evangelical churches. . . . this question needs to be faced: what is it that makes religious education Christian? . . . What has happened to the kerygma emphasis of the apostolic church?"[3]

Evidence that this emphasis is in progress within the field of Christian education can be seen in such things as the statement on the evangelism of children by the International Council of Religious Education and the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America,[4] the weekday children's Bible Class program of the Northern Baptists,[5] the Presbyterian guide for evangelization through the church school,[6] and others. Outside the field of Christian educa-

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1. The Editors, International Journal of Religious Education, January, 1945, p. 6.
2. Norman E. Richardson, op. cit., Unit I, p. 4.
3. Ibid., p. 8.
4. Committee on Religious Education of Children: Evangelism of Children.
5. International Journal of Religious Education, January, 1945, pp. 6,7.
6. Ralph N. Mould: Guiding Boys and Girls to Christ.

tion the International Child Evangelism Fellowship, the High School Evangelism Fellowship, the Young Life Campaign, and others are emphasizing evangelism in such a way as to point up the lack of it in recent religious education. These attacks on the problem from within and without and the variety of methods used indicate the existence of differing views on how to evangelize the young. The two main streams[1] of thought on the subject are characterized by a reliance on an educational process on the one hand, and on the other by a resort to the quicker, revivalistic method. Educators today feel the tension between the two and are seeking a solution. The educational evangelist feels that evangelism is present throughout his procedure, but

> ". . . there are many who feel that so-called 'educational evangelism' is not evangelism after all, but a form of education. Many churchmen, and some Christian educators, feel that, without going to the extremes of the older revivalism, there must be a greater distinction made between evangelism and education."[2]

The fact that the Christian church, now nearly two thousand years old, is still experimenting to find the proper method of accomplishing its central purpose in the lives of the children and young people, and the fact that extra-church agencies, based on particular philosophies of child evangelism, have developed with a very urgent sense of mission furnishes the motivation to discover what has been done

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1. Elmer G. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, pp. 121-123.
2. Elmer G. Homrighausen, loc. cit.

by the church to evangelize its children through the ages. Has there been a traditional method which the church in this century has repudiated? If so, why? Has the underlying philosophy changed because of changing times? Did the church never possess a fruitful method of leading boys and girls to commit their lives to Christ, or has the secret been lost? Or was its usefulness limited to a particular age? History may tell why the twentieth century problem exists and give us perspective for solving it.

B. Procedure and Sources

This study will give in a brief account a survey of the history of the evangelism of children beginning with the first century Christian Church, taking it through the successive church periods with an attempt to give not only the main stream, but also the developments of divergent movements, and bringing the record up to the present in the United States. Because the study is focusing on the present period in the United States the line of development in the Western Church will be followed. An attempt will be made to show, insofar as possible, not only the practice, but also the philosophy of method and the theology behind that practice.

Authoritative writers of the history of education, of religious education and of Christianity in general will be consulted, as well as some of the influential leaders of each period in their writings which express their principles and methods of the evangelism of children.

C. Definition of "Evangelism"

Before proceding to the historical survey of the evangelism of children in the church we shall define "evangelism" as it will be used in this study.

> "Evangelism is the process of leading an individual to accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior and as Lord of his entire life. It involves, as the test of its sincerity, the living of one's life in harmony with God's purpose, and in accordance with Christ's teaching."[1]

Evangelism means bringing the good news--sharing one's knowledge and experience of Christ in such a way as to get other individuals into real, living touch with Christ and to secure the integration of the personality around Him as a result of their conscious choice of Him and His way.

Evangelism of children, then, would include whatever is done to secure the commitment of their young lives to Christ. Evangelism is both the goal and the process, but methods of evangelizing may vary. Just as one may have the aim to teach and may accomplish the aim by teaching; so one may reach the aim to evangelize by evangelizing. This, however, does not prescribe one particular method or set of techniques. Teaching and evangelizing are processes which are carried on by various means and in various manners.

Historically "evangelism" is, perhaps, more limited in its meaning. As it is used in the New Testament in its

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1. Norman E. Richardson, op. cit., p. 4, quoting Evangelism and Church Membership Among Juniors, American Baptist Publication Society.

Greek form it means the announcement or proclamation of good news. "The gospel was preached in the early church as if it was glad tidings. The evangelist was like a herald, running eagerly to share with others new and joy-full information."[1] But very early the church found that proclamation of the good news (kerygma) was not enough. Those who received the news with willing hearts and minds needed teaching (didachē) in order to fully appropriate the good news for their lives. The kerygma, in a sense, preceded the didachē, and yet the two went hand in hand. Likewise, today we make a distinction between the two, but we also emphasize their mutual dependence. The proclamation has not truly been heard until it is effective in the life of the hearer, and he cannot live a Christian life without hearing the good news proclaimed and accepting it.

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1. Norman E. Richardson, op. cit., p. 4.

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST SIX CENTURIES OF CHILD EVANGELISM: THE TRANSITION FROM HOME TO CHURCH NURTURE

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THE FIRST SIX CENTURIES OF CHILD EVANGELISM: THE TRANSITION FROM HOME TO CHURCH NURTURE

A. Introduction

The church has always recognized its responsibility involved in the words of Jesus, "Suffer the little children to come unto me,"[1] and in theory, at least, it has always provided means of promoting their coming. Practice, however, has not always kept pace with theory and the methods have sometimes been mechanical and formal rather than creative and effective. At times the ultimate goal, that of bringing the children to Christ, has been obscured; and too often the energies of the church have been directed toward the adults largely neglecting the children until they arrived at the "age of discretion." However, as will be seen, there are many exceptions to these general trends.

In this first chapter the earliest child evangelism will be presented as it appears to have been carried on in the first century. It seems unfortunate that the records of this period pertaining to the subject are very meager. One would expect to find here a true pattern valuable for succeeding generations, but it is difficult to find the whole picture.

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1. Luke 18:16

B. The Nurture Evangelism of Children in the Apostolic Era

1. Mediums of Evangelism

a. The Home as the Paramount Means of Nurture

One question, among many others that were being asked in the Christian society in the period before the New Testament books were written and while they were being written and circulated, was: What was the place of children in the Christian community? In Judaism their position was clear--they were members of the covenant. But how were they to be regarded under Christianity?[1] The answer to this question would determine largely the type of religious training they would receive.

Facts about the teaching of children in this age are obscure as to details, but there is enough data to show the general developments. Early Christianity was intimately associated with households. We read in the New Testament of meetings in homes and of conversions of whole households. Christianity was a family affair, and in the Jewish-Christian households the parents assumed the same responsibility toward their children as in Judaism. The Hebrew Scriptures were read as before; and, in fact, as Harnack suggests, the use of the Scriptures undoubtedly increased.[2] Therefore, we can

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1. L. J. Sherrill: The Rise of Christian Education, p. 139.
2. Cf. Harnack: Bible Reading in the Early Church, chapter 1.

assume that children of Jewish converts heard the Scriptures read and, perhaps, discussed and explained in their own family circles. Family worship, according to the Jewish custom, but with the Jewish ritual dropping out, was continued by the Jewish Christians and copied by the Gentile converts who also adopted their family discipline.

As soon as churches were established outside of Palestine the responsibility of Christian parents to the religious training of their children is prominent. Colossians 3:20,21 is probably the earliest New Testament injunction to parents. Ephesians 6:1-4 is similar. Children are to obey parents, but parents are not to provoke them to wrath and, furthermore, they are to nurture them in the "chastening and admonition of the Lord." These injunctions do not refer to formal teaching, but to something from the heart of the Jewish parent-child relationship brought over into Christianity to constitute Paul's teaching as to the center of that relationship in Christ.[1] The word "chastening" is the Greek word paideia which means chastening with the idea of punishment, but more commonly was used to mean education in the sense of training or instruction in the Arts. It was Plato's word for education three centuries earlier and was used in that sense by the common people in the period of early Christianity. It included the ideals of a whole culture to be inculcated in the young. Therefore, we

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1. L. J. Sherrill: op. cit., p. 158.

can translate: "Nurture them in the education and admonition of the Lord." The same word (paideia) is used in II Timothy 3:16 and is translated "instruction." I Clement 21:6,8 uses it as "train up." The common use[1] was as "instruct" or "bring up."

Early in the first century various parts of the church were admonishing parents in respect to their duty to their children, stressing the importance of their religious education.

> "Let your children be partakers of true Christian training . . ."[2]
>
> " . . . let us teach, first of all, ourselves to walk in the commandments of the Lord. Next your wives to walk in the faith and to train up their children in the knowledge and fear of the Lord."[3]
>
> "Thou shalt not withdraw thy hand from thy son, or from thy daughter, but from their infancy thou shalt teach them the fear of the Lord."[4]

From these quotations we see that as soon as a Christian community had an established congregation into which children were born, it was recognized that those children must have Christian teaching in order to tie their lives to Christ and the home was the agent for that teaching under the guidance of the church. It appears, also, that the status of children in this earliest Christian period was sub-

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1. Moulton and Milligan: The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, p. 474.
2. I Clement 21:6, in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I.
3. Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians 4:2, in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I.
4. Epistle of Barnabas 19:5, in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I; also in Didache IV, 9.

stantially the same as in Judaism.

b. Christian Meetings as a Means of Nurture

Much of the earliest evangelism was informal, coming from the rich experiences of the Christian gatherings.[1] Here the content of gospel came alive and produced life in the members. There is nothing to indicate that children were excluded from these meetings, and, judging from the type of family and group life prevalent among first century Christians, it is very probable that children were present. On the basis of this probability the contribution of these early Christian meetings to the evangelism of children can be considered.

There were several kinds[2] of meetings in the Apostolic era. One was the meeting for the Word. The purpose of this meeting was to receive revelation from God directly by way of members of the group through whom the Holy Spirit spoke in various ways--prayer, psalms, hymns, teaching, prophecy and other ways. " . . . the whole tone of the gathering implies that its uppermost idea was the fresh and direct communication of the Spirit then and there."[3] Children in such an atmosphere must certainly have gained a consciousness of God, of their relation to Him through Christ and of His activity among them through the Holy Spirit which

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1. Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 14:26; Hebrews 10:24,25.
2. L. J. Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 153-155.
3. Ibid., p. 154.

they were observing first hand.

To the extent that children were participants in the meetings or observers of them, they were being evangelized in an actual life situation. Whether or not any formal teaching designed for children was given to supplement and interpret the experiences of the meetings is not known.

2. Characteristics of the Earliest Child Evangelism

In summary we can give the following points as the main ideas of the earliest child evangelism:

(1) It was to be "in the Lord." There is no indication of whether or not this was expressed in a formal relationship to the church, but it plainly indicates "a body of relationships characterized by love, kindness and mutual respect."[1]

(2) It emphasized moral conduct. Parents are told to keep their hands on their children to control conduct. One of the problems of the early church was the tendency to mistake liberty in Christ for moral license; and, undoubtedly, the church had seen some of the children of those "emancipated" Christians grow up without restraint.

> "But God is not angry with you on account of this, but that you may convert your house, which have committed iniquity against the Lord, and against you, their parents. And although you love your sons, yet did you not warn your house, but permitted them to be terribly corrupted. . . . be not easy-minded, but be of good courage and comfort your house. . . . Cease not to

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1. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 159.

> admonish your sons, for I know that if they will repent with all their heart, they shall be enrolled in the Books of Life with the saints."[1]

Similar ideas are expressed in I Timothy 3:4,5,12 and II John 4 showing that undisciplined liberty was not true paideia, and the fear of the Lord and chastisement were used as restraints.

(3) Instruction was an element. This is implied in many writings and the source of instruction is usually Christ or sacred writings. It is not clear as to which writings, but probably included were the Old Testament and parts or all of at least the first three gospels. It is not clear whether this instruction was to be given in households or in public meetings, but it probably was both.

C. The Nurture Evangelism of Children in the Early Church

1. The Influence of the Development of Creeds and of the Doctrine of Infant Baptism

In the history of the church of this period from Polycarp to Gregory the Great we note an increasing tension between faith and freedom. The need for a definitely stated, fixed faith was great because of the demand for security in this troubled age. On the other hand the need for freedom was great because the Christian teaching on individual liberty created a great desire to experience it fully.

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1. Pastor of Hermas--Vision I, 3, in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. II

> "There is, on the one hand, the search for the irreducible minimum of the Christian faith. This represents the determination to locate those eternal elements which will survive every threat from inside or outside the Church, and at the same time will serve to distinguish Christianity equally well from its nearest rivals or its most alien competitors. The result of this quest, of course, constituted the core of Christian teaching, and determined who should teach."[1]

The central message of the first century grew into a baptismal creed in the early church and candidates confessed this creed at their baptism. Faith in the first century was response to Christ as a Person, the Person about Whom the subject matter of their preaching spoke. By 200 A.D., faith had come to mean a body of propositions to which an individual pledged himself, being assured by the church that they were true. This development of creeds, necessary as a defensive measure in this period, has an important bearing on Christian education.

Early in the second century the catechumenal classes in the technical sense arose for the purpose of preparing individuals for church membership.

> "It is doubtful whether the term (catechumen) has the full technical meaning in the New Testament which it later came to have in the ancient church; but at least the word occurs in the New Testament (Galatians 6:6; Romans 2:18; Luke. 1:4; Acts 18:25) and instruction prior to baptism certainly was given in the primitive church; so that one may legitimately speak of catechumens within this earliest period of the church."[2]

These classes, in which instruction was given in the faith, were designed for adults, and no attempt was made to adapt

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1. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 176.
2. Ibid., p. 151.

them to the needs of children even after 472 A.D. when law ordered pagans to attend the catechumenate with their wives and children.

> " . . . it came to be expected that children should normally be baptized in infancy; for baptism was the goal toward which the catechumenate had moved, and the church came to assume that when infants had been baptized, the essential spiritual facts signified by baptism had taken place."[1]

Baptism grew in significance as a priestly act, and the importance and need of instruction beforehand dwindled. Consequently, of the two roads open to Christian education the church from Augustine to Luther chose the Sacraments and neglected the Word as a means of communicating God's grace to man. As a result the length of the period of instruction shortened until by the seventh century there was no instruction at all in the western church. In its place a series of liturgical acts were performed in behalf of the candidate on the day of baptism to "instruct" him in the four gospels, the creed and the Lord's prayer.

Many of these liturgical acts were transferred to infants who were baptized and given communion at dates which are vague, but in a time when the Christian community was still regarded as a family. Origen regarded the baptism of infants as part of the tradition of the church received from the Apostles. The first definite reference to the baptism of new-born babies is in 251 or 253 when the Synod of Carthage

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1. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 181.

approved of the act. These customs are a sacramental recognition of the fact that children of Christian parents are born into the Christian fellowship, and they display the faith that because of that birth children receive spiritual gifts before they consciously choose. Thus, it seems that the status of children has not changed from the Jewish and the early Jewish-Christian concept.

2. The Trend in Child Evangelism

a. In the Family

However, a change does occur in the attitude toward the training of growing children in this early church period (125-590). There is little information available about the education received in the family in this period. There are some examples of Church Orders and sermons urging parents to be faithful in the religious training of their children, but the general silence on this subject suggests that the church had settled down to dependence on the Sacraments to evangelize their children. The Apostolic Constitutions speak pointedly on the obligations of parents.

> "Ye fathers, educate your children in the Lord, bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
>
> "For your corrections will not kill them, but rather preserve them . . . He, therefore, that neglects to admonish and instruct his own son, hates his own child. Do you, therefore, teach your children the word of the Lord. Bring them under with cutting stripes, and make them subject from their infancy, teaching them the Holy Scriptures, . . . and delivering to them every sacred writing, not giving them such liberty that they

get the mastery and act against your opinion."[1]

But while such admonitions existed it is questionable that the church made them well known to their people in this period. Consequently, there was undoubtedly a tendency away from the thorough home evangelism of earlier days.

There are, of course, a number of notable exceptions to this drift in parental training. The story of Monica and her great son is familiar. The father of Origen taught his son Greek learning after he had started his education by "drilling his son in sacred studies, requiring him to learn and recite every day"[2] and explaining the words he learned.

> "And they say that often, standing by the boy when asleep, he uncovered his breast as if the divine Spirit were enshrined within it, and kissed it reverently."[3]

> "And he (Origen) had not studied them (the Scriptures) with indifference, for his father, besides giving him the usual liberal education, had made them a matter of no secondary importance."[4]

John Chrysostom who declared "every house a church" had such wonderful training from his mother, Anthusa, that his pagan teacher, Libanius, exclaimed, "Ye gods of Greece, how wonderful are the women of the Christians!"[5]

It is interesting to note John Chrysostom's theory

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1. "Apostolic Constitutions" IV, Sec. II, 11, in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol.VII.
2. "Church History of Eusebius" VI, 2, in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd series, Vol. I, p. 249f.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Eby and Arrowood: History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval, p. 561.

of education, and it is also significant because the ideas of this leader must have been influential in his day (347-407) and in his eastern area. (He was born in Syria and is known as the father of the Greek Church.) In his advice to parents he says:

> "I will never desist to beseech, to entreat, to beg of you, that before all things whatsoever, you would compose the manners of your children . . . Bring up a Champion for Christ, and whilst he remains in this world instruct him from his very cradle. If whilst he is yet young, thou imprint good principles in him, nobody shall be ever able to efface them . . . being as wax which hath received the impression."[1]

The senses are regarded by him as gateways to be guarded to prevent the entrance of evil, e.g. the hearing of profanity was to be prevented and attendance of children at the theaters prohibited. Stories from the Old Testament were to be told skilfully to develop moral and spiritual judgment. New centers of interest outside of self were to be developed through nature study; sacred poetry was to be memorized, and good judgment in practical affairs was to be developed. All teaching of the child and adolescent was to culminate in marriage. "Christian marriage is the denouement of the education of the adolescent and the starting point of a new cycle of life, which is to be trained with the same meticulous care."[2]

b. In the Church

With the decline of the catechumenate for adult

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1. Quoted in Eby and Arrowood: History and Philosophy of Education, pp. 603-604.
2. Chrysostom quoted in Eby and Arrowood, op. cit., p. 604.

converts untaught parents produced untaught generations and the early practice and ideal were lost. Furthermore, the development of a changed attitude toward marriage in this period (125-590) affected family life. There were two pressures exerting their influence, the one positive and the other negative. The trend against divorce made for stability of the home and resulting security for children. But the development of the concept of spiritual life on two planes discredited marriage as a hindrance to attaining the higher plane. This idea drew a sharp contrast with Judaism and first century Christianity in which the family was a religious society as carefully nurtured as the synagogue or church. The early church

> "missed its opportunity for a comparable line of development in which the actual face-to-face family group would stand out, honored and enriched, as a basic form of the Christian society. The primitive Christians symbolized the Christian community as a family of brothers and sought to make this community a Christian society."[1]

As the church grew in power and importance the family concept of society was lost, and as the ascetic life came to be regarded as the highest Christian life, marriage thus being a barrier to perfection, family life as a religious society was first overshadowed and then actually dishonored.

The church did not supply an adequate substitute to meet the needs of the children in the form of schools.

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1. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 202.

Boys were brought up in bishops' households and educated there for the service of God in the church. Mothers brought their boys and dedicated them as Hannah did, in many cases to escape the pagan schools of the day. The monasteries also received boys on this basis. In the fourth century Basil received young children into his monastery with the injunction: "They are to be carefully instructed in the Scriptures. They are not to be allowed to make profession till they come to years of discretion."[1] Church music schools were created to supply capable singers and readers for the liturgical service. In 381, the Council of Constantinople ordered schools for country towns to teach all children free of charge. There is little evidence that the bishops enforced this order. Wealthy Christian parents were in a predicament. They feared to send their children to the pagan schools where their faith would not be nurtured and even would be endangered, but they desired an education for their children. Even after Constantine the church did nothing to change the materials and methods of the schools. After the disintegration of the Empire all schools ended except the monastic leaving practically no provision for the education of the masses of children.

> "The sacramental conception of God's grace had made a place for children within the Christian fellowship which was a momentous step. Yet that same sacramental conception as it was developed . . . was instrumental

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1. Eby and Arrowood quoting from Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. VIII, p. 52.

in denying them instruction, an ominous step for the common life of the middle ages."[1]

D. Summary

As far as it can be determined from the historical accounts examined by the present writer, the method of child evangelism in the church up to 590 A.D. was nurture. However, the concept of nurture changed greatly as the church developed through the centuries.

In the Apostolic period there was practically no organized formal instruction for the purpose of evangelizing. "The gospel was propagated chiefly by living preaching and by personal intercourse; to a considerable extent also through the sacred Scriptures."[2] Children were included in this evangelizing for, as Celsus[3] scoffingly wrote, the uneducated, laboring people, who were most zealous in telling the "good news", brought it first to women and children.

The home was the basic evangelizing agency in the first century. The children of believers seem to have had the same status as similar children under the Old Covenant. The records show only a training or a nurturing; so it must have been assumed that children of believers were in a state to be nurtured. It is clear that the nurture was intended to be

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1. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 200.
2. Philip Schaff: History of the Christian Church, Vol. II, pp. 20,21.
3. Philip Schaff, loc. cit.

in the Lord, stressing belief in and relationship to the person of Christ. It was to be educational, both by formal instruction and by religious training. Children were educated morally and spiritually by precept and by example, the parents being their teachers through their lives and through "admonition" or instruction by word to give knowledge. In II Timothy 1:5 Paul sanctions three generations of such nurture by the home.

In addition to the home, the whole Christian community, through its meetings for hearing the gospel, for prayer, for exhortation of one another, and for other purposes, nurtured the children who must certainly have been present at these gatherings.

During the second through the sixth centuries the trend was away from nurture in the Lord by the home and toward nurture in the church and by the church as the church became an established institution and as various concepts of organized Christianity developed. The history of the evangelism of children in this period can best be summarized by listing the factors that contributed to the change.

(1) The change in the concept of faith. In the apostolic era the subject matter of faith was preached for the purpose of producing a response in the hearts of the hearers to Christ as a Person Whom they accepted as Lord over their persons. In the early church the individual pledged his belief in the credal statements on assurance by the church that they were true. Thus his faith, in the

first movement at least, was in the church. The clergy became more and more important as agents for communicating the grace of God and the necessity for instructing lay individuals decreased. The church was usurping the place of the Holy Spirit.

(2) The sacramental concept of the child's receiving God's grace and becoming a member of the body of Christ.

(3) The development of the ascetic ideal discrediting the family as a religious society.

(4) The lack of church emphasis on parental responsibility for nurturing their children after their entrance into the Christian fellowship by means of the Sacraments.

(5) The failure of the church to continue the catechumenate for adults, making adult converts unable to teach their children.

(6) The failure of the church to establish Christian schools for all children or to change the materials and methods of the pagan schools.

(7) The narrowing of the education the church did provide for some children to training for the institution of the church and molding their conduct in conformity with that institution.

(8) The decline in the education of the clergy resulting in the combination of an ignorant laity led by an ignorant clergy.

CHAPTER II

CHILD EVANGELISM IN THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH AND IN THE REFORMATION PERIOD: FROM DOGMA TO REALITY

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CHILD EVANGELISM IN THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH AND IN THE REFORMATION PERIOD: FROM DOGMA TO REALITY

A. Introduction

It will be the purpose of this chapter to trace the development of medieval child evangelism to its highly institutionalized and mechanical form, to note the demand for the reality behind the forms and dogmas, and to delineate the courses followed by the three main Reformation groups to restore reality to the evangelism of children.

B. The Sacramental Concept of Child Evangelism in the Medieval Church

1. Introduction

During the eight centuries following Gregory the Great (590 A.D.), western history is the account of the church's attempt to make all society Christian. In this attempt the church increased its authority[1] in directing all human affairs and sought, and largely succeeded in, controlling man's thoughts as well as his acts. Along with this changed concept of the church came a different concept of faith. In the apostolic church faith had been attached to the person of Christ; in the early church emphasis had

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1. Philip Schaff: History of the Christian Church, Vol. IV, p. 13.

shifted to faith in the credal statements guaranteed by the church; but in the medieval church it became implicit faith in the church and its ability to convey the grace necessary for salvation. " . . . dogma replaced reality, symbol replaced dogma, then symbol hardened into reality asserted to stand in its own right."[1]

It will be the purpose now to show in more detail what these changed concepts were and what their implications were for the evangelism of children in this period.

2. Medieval Concepts of the Church and the Sacraments

> "Medieval Christianity was intensely sacramental, sacerdotal, and hierarchical . . . The sacraments were regarded as the channels of all grace and the chief food of the soul. They accompanied human life from the cradle to the grave."[2]

The concept of the church changed from the early idea of a fellowship of believers who formed a Christian society to the idea of the church as a society of priests "who alone are competent to perform ecclesiastical acts and mediate between God and man."[3] Emphasis on the necessity of God's grace together with this concept of the church caused the development of the doctrine of the sacraments to the point where the sacrament became the physical means for actually conferring grace. Hence, faith alone was not enough to obtain grace; the sacraments were necessary for every

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1. L. J. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 301.
2. Philip Schaff, op. cit., p. 436.
3. L. J. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 214.

individual. Since the sacraments were to be administered only by priests, grace came through a priestly act and faith in that act was necessary on the part of the recipient.

3. The Sacrament of Baptism as the Chief Means of Child Evangelism

It is significant at this point to view the development of the sacrament of baptism because it reveals the place of children in the church of the middle ages. Infant baptism had already been practiced in the early church, where it had become universalized in the fifth century, and very likely had been practiced in the apostolic church by choice if not by rule. But the need for rationalizing infant baptism arose when creeds were being crystallized, and the explanations followed two general lines:[1] (1) in regard to the nature of the child and (2) in regard to the education of the child.

Baptism had always been connected with the forgiveness of sins and regeneration.

> "This ordinance was regarded in the ancient church as the sacrament of the new birth or regeneration, and as the solemn rite of initiation into the Christian Church, admitting to all her benefits and committing to all her obligations. . . Its effect consists in the forgiveness of sins and the communication of the Holy Spirit."[2]

The problem, then, was how it could be applicable to babies. The solution was found in the doctrine of orig-

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1. L. J. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 220ff.
2. Philip Schaff, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 253.

inal sin which made baptism of infants a necessity for their salvation. The effect of baptism was to change the original nature and to remove the guilt of original sin. As Gregory of Nyssa[1] put it, the child was instated in paradise whence Adam had been driven out. But the question arose: Could baptism effect this without the faith of the candidate, faith which the infant could not exercise? For adults baptism was supposed to have been preceded by instruction and conversion. Augustine answered this question to the satisfaction of the church: The child is regenerated through the Holy Spirit not by his own will, but by the will of parents or sponsors, and, fundamentally, through the will of the whole church as the mother of all.

> "Therefore an infant, although he is not yet a believer in the sense of having that faith which includes the consenting will of those who exercise it, nevertheless becomes a believer through the sacrament of that faith."[2]

This view of baptism concentrates on the objective rather than on the subjective element of a change of heart in that it deals almost exclusively with the objective relationship of the individual and transfers him from Satan's kingdom to Christ's. Sherrill, in evaluating this doctrine, says that it is great in that it recognizes the church as the mother in charge of the nurture of her children. Schaff also recognizes this.

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1. Philip Schaff, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 481.
2. Augustine, quoted by L. J. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 222.

> "As the mother nourishes her offspring in the womb before it can nourish itself, so in the bosom of the mother church infants are nourished, and they receive salvation through the act of the Church."[1]

But, on the other hand, Sherrill continues, this doctrine is open to abuse in that it holds that hereditary guilt can be canceled by a sacrificial act and that an inherited nature can be changed by a "sacramental imprint on the soul." It is true that it emphasizes the necessity of divine grace for salvation, but it reduces the importance of faith in the young, if not completely removing the necessity for it. The infant is counted as having faith because of the sacrament. According to Rabanus Maurus infants were considered as "being converted because of the 'sacrament of conversion'."[2] Baptism, then, was a guaranteed foundation for a life of faith.

This concept of baptism which the medieval church inherited made way for the concept of symbolical education through baptism. As the adult catechumenate died out, the term "catechumen" came to be associated with one baptized, and, thus, baptism made the infant a catechumen. Parents or sponsors answered for the infant catechumen in the baptismal ceremony and the baby was instructed symbolically. He remained a catechumen up to a certain point in the ceremony, after which he became a competens until actually baptized.

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1. David S. Schaff: History of the Christian Church, Vol V, Part I, p. 710.
2. L. J. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 223.

According to the Ordo Romanus of the seventh century, infants' names were enrolled and called out in church being addressed as catechumens. In the baptismal ceremony an acolyte took an infant, and, using the formula for adults, addressed the infant, "In what language is our Lord Jesus to be confessed?" He then held his hand above the infant's head and the priest recited the creed for the infant and gave him instruction on the meaning and value of the creed. So instruction and liturgical acts designed for adults and once taking three years were condensed to a single ceremony and used for infants.

> "Thus the catechumenate survived, but with the reality drained out of it. Infants were left to the liturgical fiction of being called catechumens and dealt with as such in the ceremony."[1]

4. The Home Replaced by the Church in Child Evangelism

Because of this emphasis[2] on transformation from above, regeneration through baptism, there was a tendency in the early church toward the idea of a magical operation of the baptismal rite, and a superstitious view became the popular opinion of the church, which view was later expressed in scholastic language as ex opere operato indicating an inherent power in the sacrament itself, and, in practice, if not entirely in theory, eliminating the need of faith in the candidate. This, undoubtedly, minimized the need for devel-

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1. L. J. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 226.
2. Philip Schaff, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 253, 261, 262; Vol. III, p. 475,476.

oping personal faith in the child in the home. In fact, evangelism of children in the home during this period was practically non-existent.

> "In principle, if not by explicit word, the theology denied the need for home instruction. Since God had already acted through the Sacrament, to liberate and to convert, instruction in the home or in the church was relatively unimportant. . . . the teaching of children . . . was a minor concern; for example, not approaching in importance the correct date of Easter."[1]

Yet, there is evidence that the church shared, in some degree, the conviction that infant baptism required the complement of a Christian education and some personal act of confession and commitment to Christ before membership in the church was complete. Baptism was the doorway, and the entrance through it was effected, in the case of infants, entirely by God, and it resulted in a momentous change in status. It seems that there was also some concept of the necessity of the child's becoming what he had been made. In the first place, the custom of requiring sponsors at the baptismal service who guaranteed the religious training of the child if the parents failed, indicated the realization of that need and some concept of growth in faith. Then, too, the practice of confirmation[2] recognized the need for completing baptism. Confirmation was at first closely associated with baptism as the means of communicating the Holy Spirit

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1. L. J. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 243.
2. Philip Schaff, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 471; Vol. II, p. 257; Vol. III, p. 488; Vol. IV, p. 437.
   David Schaff, op. cit., Vol. V, Part I, p. 710.

by the laying on of hands and annointing with oil. Later, especially in the case of infants, it was separated from baptism, and it came to be regarded as a distinct sacrament through which the baptized became full Christians. If confirmation was intended by the early and medieval church as a subjective complement to infant baptism, as it is conceived by the Lutherans and Anglicans, the concept was lost in the development of the sacrament of confirmation. The sacrament emphasized an objective change more than a subjective in that it was regarded as the means for granting the grace of God which would enable the candidate to continue in the spiritual warfare into which baptism had introduced him. There is no evidence to the writer's knowledge that either the home or the church prepared the child for confirmation.

There are, of course, some exceptions to this prevailing lack of home religious training, especially during Charlemagne's time. Jonas of Orlean in his Education of the Laity said that as soon as the baptized child came to the "age of understanding" his parents were to teach the Scriptures and the meaning of baptism. There is evidence that from the seventh to the tenth centuries parents were expected to teach at least the creed and the Lord's prayer. Sponsors were to do so if the parents failed. In the thirteenth century there was a fresh interest in adult education and brief teaching manuals and catechisms appeared, but at the same time complaints from the church on the lack of

knowledge of Christian doctrine were very common. Therefore, it is probable that most homes could not supply the teaching necessary for a faith in the reality behind the symbols of their faith.

5. The Inadequate Child Evangelism of the Church Schools

Popular Christian education in the middle ages was carried on through the use of symbols in worship and the observance of the sacraments, but concurrently there were attempts to "penetrate beneath the symbols and reach the reality for which the symbols stood."[1] One channel for this attempt was the school. It is true that the medieval schools existed primarily[2] for the in-service training of church personnel and for preparing a new generation of clergy, but, nevertheless, they kept some aspect of the gospel before the students. This, of course, was for the selected few, for, although various councils ordered schools for all parishes, and, although the monastic and cathedral schools began to hold outer schools for those not entering a church vocation, "the idea of universal education was not thought of,"[3] and parish schools were not common in spite of the canons of the councils. After Charlemagne there was a decline in formal education and even priests had to be reminded that they must learn to read the service correctly.

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1. L. J. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 248.
2. David S. Schaff, op. cit., Vol. V, Part I, p. 535.
3. Ibid., p. 537.

For many centuries it "remained only a pious ideal that the priest or his parish clerk should teach gratis any child who wished to learn."[1]

In the later middle ages under feudalism the castle or the manor house was the school in which the boys and girls of noble families were educated according to their needs. Religion was seen as one of the subjects making a contribution to the desired end and, accordingly, the essential articles of the Holy Roman faith were taught. The training in religion was mainly intellectual, although the young princes were not to be concerned with "distinctions in theology but were to learn the right and universal points of the Christian faith."[2] Fidelity to the church, obedience and chastity were inculcated as part of an education that was designed to produce men of "breeding, courage, loyalty, sound judgment and practical competence."[3] Under this system girls were also educated for a proper position in life either as a nun or as the mistress of a household. Instruction in the faith, morals and ritual of the church was an accepted part of such an education. To the extent that these children were being taught the articles of faith and certain religious virtues they were being evangelized, but there is no recorded evidence that the goal of such teaching was a personal faith in God. Hence, the goal and

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1. G. S. Coulton quoted in L. J. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 255.
2. Eby and Arrowood, History and Philosophy of Education, p. 715.
3. Ibid., p. 716.

the process were incomplete.

C. The Educational Concept of Child Evangelism in the Reformation Period -

1. Introduction

The medieval church with its sacramental and hierarchical system failed to present a satisfying answer to man's quest to know God, to come to Him and to be assured of his relationship with Him. Consequently, there were always attempts to get at the reality behind what had at first been intended merely to represent the truth, and therefore, had been intended to teach. When the symbol came to usurp the place of the reality, the quest to know God Himself was renewed. This quest had its effect on the evangelism of children, and it will be the purpose of this section to note, in general, the methods of pre-Reformation dissenting groups with their children, and then to note and compare the results of the Reformation in the evangelization of children in the three main lines of Protestantism, Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Anglicanism.

2. Characteristics of the Child Evangelism of Pre-Reformation Dissenters

Before the Reformation there were many thoughtful individuals and groups[1] who revolted against the narrow and sterile education of the monasteries and insisted on giving

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1. DeBlois and Gorham: Christian Religious Education, p. 35.

youth knowledge of the Bible by direct and deep study of the Scriptures. In contrast to the Latin learning given to boys in the monastic and cathedral schools and in the manor house where girls also were educated, the evangelical sects throughout central Europe taught all of their children to read and write in the vernacular.

> "Scriptures were given as copy for writing, and also learned by rote . . . Every member was taught the Gospel, especially, so that their inquisitors and priests were amazed."[1]

Many of these sects used the catechism of the Waldensians and possessed the Scriptures in their vernacular.

The Brethren of the Common Life had the moral and religious culture of youth as a chief duty. Conduct and character were emphasized rather than doctrine. The teachers were mystics who attached little importance to rites and ceremonies, and they taught "holiness of life, loyalty to Christ and devotion to the inner voice of the Spirit, rather than to external forms and rituals." " . . . True piety consists in discipleship to Christ, imitation of His life and character, and fellowship with His Spirit"[2]-this was the heart of the teaching of these schools. The influence of such schools was toward pure and effective Christian education.

Bible instruction was given to all and all teaching was done in the vernacular. The Scriptures were taught

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1. Eby and Arrowood; Development of Modern Education, p. 65.
2. DeBlois and Gorham, op. cit., p. 40.

for the sake of their message, for their central theme, the person and life of Christ.

> "'Let the root of thy study,' said Groote, 'and the mirror of thy life be primarily the Gospel, for therein is the life of Christ portrayed.'"[1]

Their purpose in education offers a strong contrast with the purposes of all other forms of education in the middle ages when children were trained formally for a particular station in life--real evangelization compared with formal religious education.

3. Child Evangelism in the Reformation Period

a. Demands on Education Made by Reformation Principles

The educational purpose of the pre-Reformation evangelicals was, of course, carried over into the reformers' plans. The basic principles of the Reformation were such that the culture of youth would require much more attention to religion and would also necessitate education. The universal priesthood, the right of private interpretation of the Scripture, calling in the use of reason with the Holy Spirit's guidance, and the justification by personal faith centered attention on evangelizing each individual and led to education as the means for evangelizing again in this era when religion was to be Scriptural, rational, personal and spiritual.

b. Lutheran Education for Salvation

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1. Philip Schaff, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 282.

Luther's position of justification by faith alone necessitated the ability to read the Scriptures, a factor not necessary in the middle ages. Consequently he advocated compulsory education for all children--rich, poor, noble, common, boys and girls. In the elementary schools "the chief and most common lesson should be the Scriptures."[1]

Witnessing the Peasants' War and the Anabaptist movement, both examples of people following out principles enunciated by Luther but going further than Luther expected, Luther lost his faith in the common man's ability to use those principles. As a result he turned to a "confessional, or institutional, religion, and away from a simple reliance upon that experimental faith which had made him the courageous reformer of a few years earlier."[2] This reaction caused significant changes in his views of education.

(1) Where he had formerly insisted on free use of the Scriptures in the vernacular by everyone, child and adult, he now concluded that the church must supplement with religious instruction in order to make sure that individuals arrived at the truth. In 1520 he had written:

> "Should not every Christian be expected by his ninth or tenth year to know all the Holy Gospels containing as they do his very name and life?"[3]
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> "Above all, in schools of all kinds the chief and most common lesson should be the Scriptures, and for young
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1. Luther quoted in Eby and Arrowood: Development of Modern Education, p. 83.
2. Ibid, p. 87.
3. Luther quoted in Eby and Arrowood, op. cit., p. 88.

> boys the Gospels. . . . Where the Holy Scriptures are not the rule, I advise no one to send his child. Everything must perish where God's Word is not studied unceasingly."[1]

Later he translated Aesop's fables for use in moral instruction, and these he considered next to the Scriptures in importance.

In 1528-1529 he wrote the Short Catechism and the Longer Catechism and announced: "The Catechism is the right Bible of the laity; wherein is contained the whole sum of Christian doctrine necessary to be known of every Christian to salvation."[2] From then on Luther required children to be taught the Catechism, memorizing it and accepting the teacher's explanation of its meaning. While he thus denied the child access to the Scriptures and his right of private interpretation, he, nevertheless, aimed to make the learning vital and practical. The teacher was to explain word by word all that the child memorized, and the answers in the Catechism were not to be the extent of the child's knowledge. However, interest in this type of teaching lagged after the first wave of enthusiasm and the Catechism came to be the whole body of religious subject matter. The leaders gave more attention to doctrinal controversies than to the instruction of the young and the "religious indifference and moral degeneracy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries"[3]

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1. Luther quoted in Eby and Arrowood, op. cit., p. 94.
2. Luther quoted in Eby and Arrowood, op. cit., p. 88.
3. Price: Introduction to Religious Education, p. 183.

resulted and the Jesuits were able to gain another generation of Roman Catholics through a better-organized system of education. "Religious education machinery"[1] was able to slow down the Reformation.

(2) Luther changed from his principle of the freedom of every man to the demand that every child was to be taught only the Lutheran confession. In this, child evangelism took a step back toward the policy of the church in the middle ages when the principle articles of the Holy Catholic faith constituted the child's religious education in the main.

(3) His attitude toward the study of the Bible in the vernacular also changed, so that boys attending schools to prepare them for religious vocations were forced to do their study of the Scriptures in Latin. This probably did not interfere with the evangelization of the children as much in this period as in the middle ages because the German translations could be used in the homes, and the religious instruction by the church was also done in the vernacular.

(4) Before his change Luther had favored education for every child; later he favored selecting for the Latin schools the most promising children to be educated for state and church leadership.

In a system where evangelism has an educational basis, to prevent some children from receiving education be-

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1. Price, op. cit., p. 183.

cause they have less promise or to prevent an education in the vernacular is to run the risk of preventing their complete evangelization or at least to reduce the richness of it. All children, of course, were to receive vernacular religious instruction, but it must necessarily have been of a formal type based on the catechism.

Luther's views of education were derived mainly from the Old Testament Scriptures, and, accordingly, home discipline had an important place in his philosophy. Like the early Christian writers he vigorously exhorted parents to train and control their children, yet he favored and exhibited in his own home a warm and happy relationship.

The education of girls was encouraged by Luther.

> "Would to God each town had also a girls' school, in which girls might be taught the Gospel for an hour daily, either in German or in Latin! In truth schools, monasteries and convents were founded for this purpose, and with good Christian intentions."[1]

Luther, of course, believed all girls of whatever station ought to be instructed religiously, while in the schools and convents of the middle ages only a few were.

Before the Reformation all church music was sung in Latin. Luther, seeing the educational value of music, made it possible for all, young and old, to participate in the church service by means of a hymnal in the vernacular. Luther himself contributed a number of hymns. In 1524 he had the first German hymnal printed. School children from

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1. Luther quoted by Eby and Arrowood, op. cit., p. 93.

then on had religious music as one of their main subjects.

c. Calvinistic Education for Piety and Submission

The philosophy of child evangelism according to Calvin springs from the influence of the "moral pessimism"[1] of St. Augustine. The child was thought to be inherently bad, totally depraved, with all of the elements of his nature--his emotions, reason and will—perverted. Therefore, all natural childish inclinations and interests would lead him astray. From a religious viewpoint, then, the only recourse was suppression and substitution of good habits and pious thoughts in preparation to being made willing to be saved by God's grace if elected to salvation.

Such a philosophy made a theocratic state the best environment in order to "subject youth to a single regimen, carefully supervised by an institutional conscience."[2] The home was to teach the catechism and Christian living supervised by the consistorium which also checked on parental conduct. The church gave catechetical instruction and worship. The Latin schools were favored for boys, and girls had no instruction outside of the home, although vernacular schools existed.

d. Anglican Education for Orthodoxy

The educational results of the transfer of the leadership of the church in England from the Pope to the King

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1. Eby and Arrowood, op. cit., p. 129.
2. Ibid., p. 129.

was felt almost entirely in the grammar schools and universities. The song, chantry and hospital schools were abolished, and anything like a system of elementary education did not exist before the last half of the nineteenth century. The English break with Rome made only superficial changes. The Lutheran idea of personal responsibility for salvation and therefore the need to learn to read made hardly any impression on England.

> "In England, perhaps more than in any other Protestant country, Christianity came to be identified with a strict conformity to the teachings and practices of the Established Church, and to teach that particular faith became one of the missions of all types of schools."[1]

Conformity was the watchword of religious education and the complete purpose of elementary education was to train to read the Catechism, the prayer book and the Bible. Education in sixteenth century England was for the ruling classes and its end was to fit for a particular position in life.

D. Summary

The trend in the medieval church was away from personal religion and toward a highly centralized institutional religion until eventually the church became the accepted authority in all spheres of life and was regarded as having the sole right and means to dispense God's grace to man. Every individual was dependent on and responsible to

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1. Ellwood P. Cubberley: History of Education, p. 324.

the church from his birth, and the church sought to develop the type of individual that would fit the form and purpose of the institution. This prevailing concept of the church is reflected in its attitude toward the religious status of children.

The sacramental development of infant baptism is an example of the symbolical thinking of the middle ages in which a sign having been adopted to represent a reality came to be taken for the reality itself. According to the sacramental concept of baptism the infant was converted by the sacrament, and, as a result, personal faith in Christ was wholly, or partially, obscured, if not entirely removed, as was also the need for nurture. Consequently, the Bible, the content for evangelism, was little used from 590 A.D. to the Reformation. Definite instruction of children in the Scriptures was neglected, the Bible rarely being taught as the Bible for the sake of its own message and as a means of coming to God through Christ. Personal experience of God was not developed; God was unapproachable except through the clergy. Symbolical rites, which soon became too complex even for mature minds, were used to interpret the faith--faith which centered in the ability of the church to insure salvation to the faithful.

The doctrine of the medieval church denied the need of home evangelism of children; the church took full responsibility. The way was completely mapped out; the child needed only to conform. His training in moral choice ex-

tended only to choosing to obey or disobey the church ordinances, knowing the consequences. Although there was some attention to the teaching of children after they reached the "age of reason" and to personal confession of faith at that time, baptismal regeneration caused such a change in the concept of the child as a growing individual that there was a decline in all types of instruction and religious training which had been the natural counterpart of proclaiming the gospel. "It was not by schools of learning, but by faith and ceremonial that the church educated and guided her children into the type she approved."[1] Other factors contributing to this decline in religious instruction were (1) the growing emphasis on unquestioned obedience to the church which obviated the need for a rational basis for faith, (2) the increase of asceticism which counted learning worldly, and (3) the vast ignorance of adults, including the clergy, which was, of course, a result of the foregoing factors. Instruction in the schools that did exist for the few chosen by the church or by heredity emphasized knowledge of and conformity to church doctrine and practice, rather than living faith in the Person of Christ.

Thus, to all practical purposes, the medieval church, with its emphasis on the grace of God and on ecclesiastical mediation of that grace, conceived of the accomplishment of its task of bringing the children to Christ

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1. Cubberley, op. cit., p. 121.

exclusively through the sacraments that bestowed grace and the practices which imposed an institutional discipline.

> The "sacramental theory, . . . substituted the mechanical efficiency of sacramental grace for the Saviour into whose immediate presence the soul has a right to approach through penitence of heart and prayer."[1]

But the demand for reality was never stifled, but rather increased in volume until it expressed itself in loud crescendo in the Reformation.

The aims and practices of pre-Reformation dissenting groups, such as the Brethren of the Common Life, were prophetic of the Reformation principles applied to the evangelism of children. The emphases of these groups were: direct study of the Scriptures by all children, for the sake of the message, an inner religious experience, and a life in compliance with the knowledge and the experience. Their method was creative teaching in contrast to the formal, transmissive teaching of the medieval church.

Ideally the Lutheran system resulting from the Reformation aimed to enlighten all through the ability to read the Scriptures so that each might come to God to receive salvation. In practice, education was limited and the free inquiry into the Scriptures was discouraged if not choked out by formal catechetical teaching. However, these limitations do not completely nullify the aims. Anglicanism got no conception at all of teaching every child to equip him to come

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1. David Schaff, op. cit., p. 708.

to God. A few were taught for positions of leadership, and conformity to church doctrine was the aim of religious instruction. In contrast to the Lutheran emphasis on the possibility for baptized children to grow up in Christ, the Calvinistic idea of child nature caused a negative approach; the child needed religious instruction in order to renounce his evil nature and accept God's grace for overcoming it. The theocratic state was needed to put restrictions on such natures prone to choose evil, and it would further serve the evangelization of children by permeating life with religion. In all three systems preference was given to a Latin education, but in England there was the least provision for education in the vernacular. Catechetical instruction was important in each system, and in each the learning of and subscribing to the doctrines of the church gained in importance over Bible study. Formal, and later, scientific methods were used on the whole rather than spiritual.

Thus, it is evident that child evangelism in the Reformation period was practically identical with education. The improvements made in education were for the sake of religion, and the result was universal training in a catechism. In the Lutheran sense education was for the purpose of nurturing a child whose sinful nature had been regenerated at baptism; so that he was capable of choosing for Christ as he was made aware of all that was involved in such a choice. In the Calvinistic sense, education was for the purpose of bringing a child to recognize himself as a sinful being, his

need of making a choice between that evil self and Christ, and of his inability to make that choice apart from a work of grace. Religious training aside from education for knowledge, according to the Lutheran concept, was intended for guiding and encouraging in the right way, for giving a Christ-like bent to a developing life already begun in Christ. According to Calvinism such training was for the purpose of repressing the evil nature of the child which could not choose the morally or spiritually good and which would not be willing to accept God's sovereign grace for salvation if and when it was extended to him. In Calvinism a second stream of child evangelism is seen emerging from a conception of the nature of the child which is different from that held by the church in any previous period.

CHAPTER III

THE MODERN CHURCH ERA: THE PROTESTANT SEARCH FOR EFFECTIVE CHILD EVANGELISM

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A. Introduction

It will not be possible to trace all the lines of development in the modern period; therefore, a selective procedure will be followed to show the experimental nature of child evangelism in the modern church era.

The first portion of the chapter will be devoted to a few of the European divergences from the pattern of child evangelism that resulted from the Reformation and the ensuing events. The first of those selected, Pietism, was a late seventeenth century movement within Lutheranism, and hence, the changes it effected in child evangelism were made from within the church, and yet not by the church. It was like the rise of a tributary powerful enough to change the course of the main stream.

Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, whose influence is the second chosen for consideration here, was a product of Pietistic Lutheranism in the first half of the eighteenth century. Zinzendorf in receiving the Moravian Brethren and establishing them wished them to remain within the Lutheran Church, retaining their own characteristics. It was only because the church was not willing that this influence became a new stream, cutting a bed of its own through

the arid fields of formal religious education.

As an example of an English divergence from the established state-church pattern of child evangelism, John Wesley's ideas and practices will be presented briefly.

The second portion of the chapter will be a survey of the developments in American child evangelism from colonial days up to, and including, the present. Emphasis will be placed on the philosophy and practice of Puritanism and on Horace Bushnell's Christian nurture reaction to New England revivalism. Brief sketches of E. Payson Hammond's mass child evangelism, of the development of the Sunday school, the religious education movement and the Christian education emphasis will follow. Finally, there will be a description of the two current schools of child evangelism as represented by the International Child Evangelism Fellowship and the International Council of Religious Education.

B. New Emphases in Child Evangelism in Europe Following the Reformation

1. Pietism's Emphasis on Experiential Knowledge

Pietism was, on the one hand, a reaction[1] against the barren religious formalism and reliance on orthodoxy which developed in post-Reformation Lutheranism as the result of attempts to fix a credal statement of the orthodox

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1. Eby and Arrowood, op. cit., pp. 323,324.

faith, and, on the other hand, a reaction against a general laxness in moral standards largely caused by the Thirty Years War. To combat these conditions the Pietists emphasized elements of former movements which seemed to offer the proper antidotes.

> "They united Luther's insistence upon the study of the Scriptures, prayer, and faith, with the Calvinistic insistence upon puritanism in conduct. But they went further than either of these in emphasizing the experience of new birth, the inner light, and a certain degree of mysticism."[1]

They felt that the established Protestant education supplied head knowledge at the expense of a heart experience of God and practical piety in living. In no sense did they disparage knowledge, but only sought to give it in such a way as to produce a Christian experience.

> "One dram of living faith is more to be valued than one hundred weight of mere historic knowledge; and one drop of true love, than a whole sea of learning in all mysteries."[2]

It was Francke who put this idea into practice in the education of children, and in the schools and orphanages which he established all practices were geared to the aim of producing lives that honored God. The children were made conscious of the fact that their education was solely for this purpose, not for their self-satisfaction, nor for preparation for a life work, but only to glorify God. Religion was the integrating element of the curriculum. Thus

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1. Eby and Arrowood, op. cit., pp. 324,325.
2. Henry Barnard: German Teachers and Educators, p. 413.

all of education was conceived of as contributing to the evangelism of the child. Specifically, Francke believed that the most essential means for training in piety are

> "good example and a living knowledge of Christ. Examples of piety, avoidance of evil, the catechism, prayer, and the constant study of the Scriptures for light and guidance in practical living--these are the daily means or instruments of Christian education."[1]

Because of the emphasis on vital religious experience on the part of the children a conversion experience involving struggle and followed by a sense of assurance of acceptance by God was made by Francke's successors the sine qua non for the genuine experience of salvation. Children were classified[2] in the schools as the "dead", the "awakened", and the "converted", and they progressed from one stage to the next as a result of their inner struggles and victories. Thus Pietism went to the opposite extreme, at least in one period of its history. In its attempt to balance the existing formal education for knowledge of God with outer piety and inner religious experience, the emotional element received undue stress.

The influence of Pietistic education aims and methods was particularly felt in Prussia, but it extended throughout Germany and even to America through the immigration of Pietist groups in the eighteenth century.

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1. Eby and Arrowood, op. cit., p. 330.
2. Henry H. Meyer: Child Nature and Nurture According to Zinzendorf, p. 155.

2. Zinzendorf's Child Nurture--the Provision of Favorable Conditions for the Work of the Holy Spirit

Zinzendorf's ministry to children was the result of his rebellion against the unproductive catechetical teaching into which Lutheran orthodoxy had so quickly settled, and against the stern and unloving discipline of children current in his day. Fired by the true religious experience resulting from his Pietistic background, inspired by the vital faith of the Moravian Brethren and intellectually assured by the doctrines of Lutheranism he developed his theory and practice of child nurture around the principle of free development of the individual.

According to this principle the child was not to be coerced into becoming a Christian, but by example and by loving guidance he was to be nurtured into the Christian life. This theory presumes that Christ has entered the child's heart and that the Holy Spirit, therefore, is directing the development. It implies that those in charge of the child must provide favorable conditions for the Holy Spirit's work.

> "The reason why we place the children in institutions is not that they shall by this means be converted, but rather that there may be place and room for the Saviour to approach the child's heart unhindered and to achieve his purpose in the individual life."[1]

Although Count Zinzendorf affirmed his belief in the Lutheran doctrines of original sin and baptismal regener-

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1. Moravian manuscript quoted by Henry H. Meyer, op. cit., p. 104.

ation, yet by practice and by express statement he proclaimed the original innocence of children by virtue of the universal efficacy of Christ's redemptive work. All children begin life as members of Christ; therefore, under proper conditions that state can be preserved and nurtured to maturity. His integration of this idea with the two aforementioned doctrines is not clear and at times contradictory. However, it is clear that while he regards baptism as a means of grace, he does not make it necessary to salvation nor a guarantee of it. Furthermore, he did not mean that the sinful nature did not exist in newborn infants, nor that it did not have implications for their development. He did mean that infants began life as children of God and were as capable of responding to the good as to the evil. The outcome was dependent on the human working with the divine to guide the development.

> "Our children, with all their grace and special benefits, are nevertheless nothing more than sinful human beings and remain such. They are to be baptized because they have been prepared by their parents for the grace of regeneration and have already actually participated in the regeneration wrought on the cross. They, therefore, receive baptism as a 'ticket of participation' in this regeneration.
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> "Children of God do not beget children of God, for what is born of the flesh is flesh, nevertheless, . . . our children have this distinction with the Saviour, that they are regarded as holy and pure and belong especially to him from birth. We, therefore, train them for him, without too severe a discipline or without preaching them to death, but, rather, explaining to them from time to time their great destiny and high privilege."[1]

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1. Moravian manuscript quoted by Henry H. Meyer, op. cit., p. 120.

The evangelism of children according to Zinzendorf is a matter of preserving the original innocent status of the child, maintaining him in his baptismal grace as a member of the Christian fellowship, and gradually bringing him into a consciousness of his status and to a voluntary commitment to Christ. In Zinzendorf's own words:

> "What, then, is child nurture? It is a sacred, priestly method whereby souls are brought up from infancy so as not to think otherwise than that they belong to Christ and so that blessedness for them shall consist in knowing and serving him, and their greatest misfortune in becoming separated from him in any way whatsoever."[1]

This method, however, did not always succeed, and Zinzendorf held conversion necessary in cases where preservation failed. Crisis conversion was to be regarded as the unusual and not the norm for children. The natural way was by growth in grace into which the children were born and which was to culminate in an awakening to the real meaning of their relationship to Christ.

The nurture and training necessary for this preservation, growth and spiritual awakening were the responsibility of the Christian home, the school and the congregation. The home takes the paramount position in Zinzendorf's plan. The child was to be nurtured by the very atmosphere of the home, by the example of the parents and by direct instruction suited to his age.

Zinzendorf's ideal was that the nurture of children

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1. Henry H. Meyer, op. cit., p. 123.

be cared for entirely by the home. At a conference in October, 1758 he said:

> "The segregation of children in institutions for religious nurture and training (from infancy) . . . is really an abnormal arrangement and a mark of disgrace for the congregation, since it furnishes the clear evidence that parents have not the disposition or the ability to train their children for the Saviour."[1]

Conditions, however, made it necessary for Zinzendorf to establish schools and orphanages. These institutions, although at first opened to all children who applied, were set up to meet the specific needs of the Moravian congregations, and in accordance with Zinzendorf's preference they were closed to outsiders. The main emphasis was on cultivating the religious life, and therefore religious instruction was mainly of a devotional character to stimulate and enrich the religious experience. Zinzendorf believed that experience must precede intellectual understanding; so formal instruction in the catechism was secondary and was given only to children over six years of age, with attempts made to adapt the content to the different age levels.

The Scriptures furnished the material for reading lessons, and the teachers explained such passages as were considered suited to the particular age level. Hymns were also used for reading lessons; They were explained, memorized and sung until they became a real experience to the children.

Originally these schools followed the Pietistic

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1. Henry H. Meyer, op. cit., p. 142.

schools in their rigid classification of children as "dead", "awakened" and "converted", but "preservation" was always recognized equally with "conversion" as a valid means to a religious experience. But after the schools and orphanages were closed to outsiders preservation became almost the exclusive method, and consequently the religious training became mainly devotional with less and less emphasis on memory work and catechetical instruction.

As a second supplement to the home as the means of nurture, Zinzendorf organized the entire congregation into groups according to ages for religious training and active participation in the life of the congregation. Thus religion and Zinzendorf's system of nurture permeated the entire group, providing teaching and training for each age, including parents. The whole religious community was integrated around its main purpose--the nurture of its children.

(Data for all of the foregoing material on Zinzendorf may be found elaborated in Henry H. Meyer's Child Nature and Nurture According to Zinzendorf.)

Zinzendorf substituted loving guidance for the severe discipline of Calvinism because he started with the concept of the newborn infant's status in grace. He insisted on the child's experiencing his faith, not merely learning it through intellectual training in doctrine such as orthodox Lutheranism supplied because he did not place the same value on infant baptism. He gave much more attention to the growth principle, while Lutheran doctrine allowed for reliance on

baptismal regeneration plus an intellectual understanding of what had been done by God's grace. Zinzendorf believed that a child must reach a stage of spiritual awakening that resulted in conscious choice of Christ, but repentance was not a necessary part as in the Calvinistic conversion experience. His doctrine of moral innocence of children through the universal efficacy of Christ's atonement made repentance unnecessary. Conversion was not ruled out, however, and was considered necessary in cases where, for some reason, preservation had failed, but it was to be the exception and not the rule within the religious congregation for which his theory and practice were framed.

The statements in the foregoing paragraph make it appear that Zinzendorf's doctrine made his method possible. It is not clear which is basic, but in his attempts to harmonize his theory with orthodox Lutheran doctrine, which he claimed to hold, it is evident that his interpretation of the doctrines was very much influenced by his ideas of child nature and nurture. Therefore, the foregoing sentences ought, perhaps, to be stated in the reverse order. At any rate, Zinzendorf's ideas and practice represent a fusion of Lutheran orthodoxy, Pietism and Calvinism plus innovations of his own which were far ahead of his day.

3. John Wesley's Philosophy of Child Evangelism: Training and Conversion

John Wesley, English contemporary of Zinzendorf,

presents another example of a reaction against the formalized teaching of children by an established church. Here is a new combination of the elements found in all of the formulas for the evangelism of children.

Wesley was convinced from observation and from his theology that children were capable of deep religious experience characteristic of adulthood. He does not limit the Holy Spirit to any age level in producing a genuine religious consciousness and a holy life. Intellectual maturity is not a condition for understanding what God alone can reveal. However, in general he believed that older children of nine to fifteen years were able to experience more than those younger, and could, in fact, experience "every step in the process of salvation."[1] His theory of religious education was in accord with this belief.

> "The goal of all work with children at home, in the schools, and in the Methodist societies is to make them pious, to lead to personal religion, and to insure salvation. It is not merely to bring them up so that they do no harm and abstain from outward sin, nor to get them accustomed to the use of the means of grace, saying their prayers, reading good books, and the like, nor is it to train them in right opinions. The purpose of religious education is to instill in children true religion, holiness, and the love of God and mankind, and to train them in the image of God."[2]

Everything that was done for the child was to be for the purpose of attaining this religious end. It was the parents' first responsibility and preachers were to visit all homes to enforce family worship as well as to teach the

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1. John W. Prince: Wesley on Religious Education, p. 86.
2. Ibid., pp. 87,88.

children. In selecting schools and in establishing schools Wesley practiced this same principle of making everything else subordinate to religion. The first duty of a Christian school was to make Christians.

How was the goal of training children in the image of God to be accomplished? Wesley believed in infant baptism as the beginning of regeneration[1] to be followed by instruction and discipline. But he also believed in conversion, an experience of regeneration in years beyond infancy and "he labored as strenuously to bring children into the instantaneous experience of religion as he advised parents to train them up in religion."[2] It is possible to reconcile these two views in Wesley's belief that sin committed after baptism nullified regeneration and rebirth was again necessary. Thus, if the training and discipline following baptism failed, conversion would be necessary.

But in practice Wesley did not so resolve the problem according to J. W. Prince's interpretation[3] of the evidence that is available. In practice it seems that Wesley ignored baptism and made conversion a universal requirement. The training and discipline which he required for children were the process of converting. If the training were truly religious it would regenerate, curing the diseases of human nature. Since Wesley taught that this training ought to be-

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1. John W. Prince, op. cit., p. 95.
2. Ibid., p. 97.
3. Ibid., pp. 98-102.

gin when reason first dawns (and according to Wesley that occurs in infancy) there would be no chance for the nullification of the effects of baptism and, therefore, training would be a supplementary process of regeneration. This training would include the developmental process of Christian nurture which would be supplemented by the revivalistic process in order to speed the nurture. Thus, Wesley crosses the two types of evangelism, baptism and nurture, and training and crisis conversion and produces a new type.

C. American Child Evangelism

1. Introduction

In early America the general method of providing for children religiously was educational. All colonial schools were established for religious purposes; all learning was for the end of equipping a person to know God. The types of schools, their philosophies and methods were those of the mother countries.[1] In the middle colonies[2] the Lutheran parochial school predominated; the English Church system was "literally transplanted"[3] to Virginia, and high church Anglicanism prevailed throughout the southern colonies. In some sections, however, dissenting groups set the pattern. The Moravian and Pietistic[4] influences were felt in

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1. Abdel Ross Wentz: The Lutheran Church in American History, p.25.
2. Frank G. Lankard: A History of the American Sunday School Curriculum, p. 19
3. Clifton H. Brewer: A History of Religious Education in the Episcopal Church, p. 6.
4. Eby and Arrowood, op. cit., p. 339.

Pennsylvania and Georgia; and Puritanism dominated the New England colonies.

2. Puritanism: The Adult Conversion Pattern Applied to Children

Sandford Fleming, who is the authority for all of the statements made here in regard to Puritan child evangelism, states in his study[1] on the place of children in the New England churches from 1620 to 1847, that the general and doctrinal characteristics of these churches remained relatively constant throughout the two centuries and that the same constancy prevailed in that period in the attitude toward children. It was not until the nineteenth century that protesting voices were heard against this attitude, and they were weak and not widespread. Fleming's study deals with Congregational churches almost exclusively.

The Puritans and their descendants were a people much concerned with the religious development of their children, but "in reality the child as a child had no recognition."[2] Children were considered miniature adults in all phases of life and were, therefore, given adult treatment and adult religious diet. The characteristics of the period make this attitude natural.

> "Had we no positive evidence whatever, we could assume that a system which was marked so strongly by repression on the one hand, and emotional excess on the other;
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1. Sandford Fleming: Children and Puritanism.
2. Ibid., p. 59.

> which regarded conversion in such rigid fashion; and which stressed so strongly the doctrines of the sovereignty of God, human depravity and inability, and irresistible grace, would have no place for the child as a child, but would regard him merely as a subject of sin who must pass into an experience of grace under the stress of great emotion."[1]

The Puritan requirement for church membership was a public recounting of the candidate's conversion experience to prove he was in a regenerate state. Even children were required to give a description of each step in their conversion experiences. There is evidence that these New Englanders had a concept of a covenant relation of children of Christian parents, but in practice all were required to give evidence of their regeneration before they were admitted to full membership. Their emphasis on original sin and their reaction to the formal confessions of religion in the state-church of England are the causal factors.

Conversion consisted of three steps: (1) Conviction, or an overpowering sense of personal depravity, (2) unconditional submission to God's sovereign grace according to which He saved whom and when He would, and (3) a sense of peace and joy in God resulting from the surrender which made an individual willing even to be damned if it were for God's glory. Children were, thus, expected to have an adult experience and all were required to fit the same pattern. Fear was the most prominent motive for seeking conversion since children were considered by nature to be

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1. Sandford Fleming, op. cit., pp. 61,62.

heirs of hell. Fear remained prominent in the conversion experience because no one knew who were among the elect; so there could be no assurance of salvation.

Like the Protestant Reformers they regarded education as an implication of the doctrine of individual responsibility for salvation, and education was provided for all children. All education was for the sake of religion and all religious education was for one end, namely, conversion. "Growth in grace and knowledge" was almost entirely ignored.

The Puritan philosophy of child evangelism may be summarized in respect to conception of child nature, objective, and means. Doctrinally children were believed to be totally depraved; psychologically they were thought of as having the same mental faculties as adults. In neither case did they differ from adults, and so education could begin at the same point as for adults. The end to be reached was a complete change of the depraved nature, a renewal, for there was nothing to preserve. The first means for attaining this end was direct religious instruction to teach the existence and perfection of God and the inspiration of the Scriptures and to convict of sin. Persuasion was to be added to the teaching in order to arouse the emotions, that they might be moved in regard to the truths they were taught. Spiritual care and watchfulness, parental authority and restraint and prayer were further indispensable means.

There is abundant evidence that children responded in the same manner as adults and that emotional upheavals

even among young children were many and great. One example of such evidence is in Reverend James Janeway's book[1] called A Token for Children; being an exact account of The Conversion, Holy Lives, and Joyful Deaths of Several Young Children. In the introduction Janeway says:

> "Put your children upon learning their catechism, and the scriptures, and getting them to pray and weep by themselves after Christ; . . . Let them read this book over a hundred times . . . and ask them what they think of those children, and whether they would not be such."

3. E. Payson Hammond and Children's Revival Meetings

E. Payson Hammond, the outstanding child evangelist of the nineteenth century, was eager to counteract the idea gained from many written accounts of children's conversion experiences that converted children always die young, and he was eager to build up an optimistic attitude toward the possibility of converting children in large numbers. To this end he wrote an account[2] of his beliefs about child conversion and devoted his life to holding children's revival meetings. As a result of his visit to London in 1867-8, the Children's Special Service Mission[3] was organized to carry on revivalistic child evangelism in Great Britain and Europe.

Hammond believed that children are converted just as adults are. He reasoned that every child is old enough to sin, therefore, he is old enough to be conscious of sin,

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1. A. J. W. Myers: Horace Bushnell and Religious Education, pp. 125,126.
2. E. Payson Hammond: The Conversion of Children.
3. Ibid., p. 3.

and that consciousness prepares the way for accepting the Saviour. In contrast to Puritanism Hammond stressed love and assurance and the ability of children to be pious. His evangelism consisted of a few simple steps. First he told the children that Jesus died for them because He loved them. He put much stress on the sufferings of Jesus and on the idea of His substitution for them to arouse their feelings. Then he told of Jesus' finished work attested by the resurrection, and of His coming again to judge. Each step was illustrated by simple stories and vivid illustrations. Hammond held that any child could understand the gospel if it were presented simply enough. The work of the Holy Spirit was regarded as basic and prayer to that end was indispensable.

After he had addressed the entire group, he talked with individual children and found that many who had not been affected by the address were moved by the personal interview to accept Christ. Hammond believed that the converted children ought of necessity to be instructed week by week and that the churches ought to receive any converted child into membership regardless of age. Since Hammond was a travelling evangelist, follow-up depended on the churches in the community.

Like the Puritan example, this mass child evangelism was also the transfer of an adult method to children, although in this case there seems to be more regard for children as children.

4. Horace Bushnell's Christian Nurture: Reaction to Revivalism

In the period when conversion was still the predominant aim even in the Sunday School where educational evangelism was used, and when

> "revivalism was rampant and it was considered essential even for tiny children to have the conviction of sin, a mighty inner struggle, and a sense of conversion and assurance",[1]

Horace Bushnell developed and presented his thesis:

> "There is then some kind of a nurture which is of the Lord. The child should grow up a Christian and never know himself as being otherwise."[2]

This was not new; in fact it is as old as the Christian church, as Bushnell himself said, but in New England, where Bushnell lived,

> "this conception was full of dynamite threatening the very foundation of New England theology as expounded in the catechism, the New England Primer and such preaching as that of Jonathan Edwards."[3]

Bushnell, while he believed in original sin, was opposed to the doctrine of total depravity and, consequently, opposed to the revivalistic method for evangelizing children. He proposed nurture, on the basis of the organic unity of the family, in place of the total emphasis on conversion. His theory did not rule out crisis conversion but attempted to show that in Christian families it was not necessary if the proper nurture were given. In other words, conversion

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1. A. J. W. Myers, op. cit., p. 105.
2. Horace Bushnell: Christian Nurture, p. 5.
3. A. J. W. Myers, op. cit., p. 1.

could begin at birth and proceed with growth; it need not be postponed until a time of crisis. Thus, he put a heavy responsibility on parents to be spiritual Christians and to propagate their kind. He also put emphasis on the teaching ministry of the church as a supplementary nurture. He insisted on the child's having an experience of the knowledge he learned and that he demonstrate his experience in his living. Sunday Schools of his day were much taken up with formal memorization of creeds and Scripture and a rationalizing of the Christian faith.

Bushnell's principles are representative of creative education and of reactions against stereotyped forms of religious training. Appearing as they did in the middle of the nineteenth century, when the prevailing method of "propagating religious life (was) by emotional mass appeals and periodic revivals,"[1] they gave stimulus and direction to all following efforts to provide nurture evangelism for children. Bushnell restored children to their former place in the church and started the trend away from revivalism which either ignored the children or brought salvation to them only if they submitted to adult treatment and conformed to one particular pattern.

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1. Lotz and Crawford: Studies in Religious Education, p. 32.

5. The Development of an American Pattern of Educational Child Evangelism

Very little Sunday instruction in religion occurred in America before the Revolutionary War because of the religious character of weekday education. But in the following period up to the Civil War as the control of education passed from the church to the state and as the Bible and all definitely religious instruction were removed from the curriculum of secular education between 1750 and about 1850,[1] the Sunday school, begun in England by Robert Raikes, found a place in the United States. It spread rapidly to the frontiers and to the larger centers of population and much of the responsibility of the home and of secular education was transferred to it.

The aim of the Sunday schools was the

> "actual conversion of children to God. . . The ideal of training for effective Christian service in this life was not entirely forgotten, but it was overshadowed by the other purpose. . . The amount of attention given to preparing a child for death is bewildering to the student of today."[2]

The Bible and the catechism were the main materials, and memorization was the main method, with question books as a secondary method. In the latter eighteenth century and early nineteenth there was a shift[3] from catechism to a Bible-centered curriculum as a result of the influence of the

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1. Frank G. Lankard, op. cit., p. 49.
2. Arlo Ayres Brown: A History of Religious Education in Recent Times, p. 63.
3. Frank G. Lankard, op. cit., p. 136.

Wesleyan revivals in England which produced a strong tendency toward religious fervor and a trend away from formal intellectual religious teaching to the Bible. In the second decade of the nineteenth century there was emphasis on extensive memorization of Scripture. "Uniform Lesson Papers" came as a result of spasmodic protests against cramming the memory without understanding, but they did not gain much favor.

The years from 1860 to 1900 were a period of great progress begun as a result of the awakening to religious education needs brought by the Civil War. The first aim remained conversion,

> "the winning of new recruits for Jesus Christ. As a secondary aim he was to be won through Bible study, his faith was to be established through Bible study, and his growth in Christian character together with his usefulness as a Christian in the church and community was to be brought about essentially through Bible study."[1]

In this period dissatisfaction with unorganized study of Scripture caused improvement of curriculum by adapting material to the age of the pupils, by providing lesson helps and by increasing the range of subject matter. The criterion for all material came to be its usefulness for preparing the child for his place in social progress, or for his part in building the kingdom of God on earth.

> " . . . this period emphasized conversion and a particular program of Bible study rather than conversion and

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1. Arlo Ayres Brown, op. cit., p. 73.

> nurture in Christian faith and practice. The Bible study was clearly a great advance over the study of the catechism and Bible in the preceding period, but the ideals were not defined sharply enough and the curriculum was not broad enough to equip a student for the skillful performance of his Christian duties."[1]

Because of inadequacies in the Sunday school other organizations were formed to take care of the religious needs of childhood and youth. The youth societies, the vacation church school and the weekday church school have strengthened the teaching ministry of the church. The religious education movement of the twentieth century has fostered the emphasis on evangelism through nurture. This movement, however, minimized theology and over-emphasized method at the expense of a vital Christian message.

> "Education in religion and religion in education might be said to be the slogan of the Association (Religious Education Association). The spiritual forces in religion were minimized and the educational factors emphasized . . . While full credit must be given this Association for creating new interest in religious education and crystallizing the sentiment in favor of better methods, its efforts to modernize the content of the instruction accomplished more harm than good."[2]

Consequently, there has been in the last fifteen years a re-emphasis on the message of Christian education and an attempt to combine evangelism and education so that the emphasis on personal decision will be renewed while, at the same time, the values of educational procedure are not sacrificed. This tendency is reflected in the titles of recent books such as Homrighausen's Choose Ye This Day and

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1. Arlo Ayres Brown, op. cit., p. 140.
2. Clarence H. Benson: History of Christian Education, p. 327.

Richardson's The Teaching Evangelist.

6. Present Types of Child Evangelism

a. Renewal of the Revivalistic Emphasis as Seen in the International Child Evangelism Fellowship

In the following paragraphs on the International Child Evangelism Fellowship the writer is speaking from experience as a local director of Child Evangelism, and on the basis of the Fellowship's literature,[1] and partially on the basis of an evaluation made by Geraldine E. Vincent in a thesis written at Wheaton College.[2]

In the first quarter of this century, J. Irvin Overholtzer, in his adult Bible classes in California, was putting a strong emphasis on what he conceived as the scriptural basis for bringing children to a saving knowledge of Christ and upon the duty of adult Christians to engage in this work. He felt a great burden for the children who did not know Christ and who were not being reached by the church. In response to his call from God to act in this situation he started the organization of week-day, interdenominational Bible classes for unchurched children who met in Christian homes after school hours.

Since the classes were interdenominational and

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1. J. Irvin Overholtzer: A Handbook on Child Evangelism; Open Air Child Evangelism; The Children's Home Bible Class Movement.
2. Geraldine E. Vincent: A Study of the International Child Evangelism Fellowship.

since they had one purpose, that of confronting children with the gospel to secure their immediate conversion, a peculiar type of materials was necessary. Overholtzer prepared the first materials which seemed to bring the results intended.

Because it was necessary to use volunteer teachers, because of the interdenominational aspect, and because of their particular philosophy of child evangelism, it was necessary to provide training for teachers. In 1923 a school was established in San Francisco with a nine months course for that purpose. Similar schools were set up later in Seattle, Portland and Chicago. In 1945 a permanent training institute was set up in Dallas.

To supplement the work of the home Bible classes open-air child evangelism was started in Sacramento in 1924. This work consisted of speaking of Christ to children on the streets and asking them to accept Him. Follow-up work depended on chance meetings again and mainly on prayer that the Holy Spirit would perfect the work begun in the young hearts.

This movement, which has spread over the entire United States and into many foreign countries, arose as a reaction to the church's neglect of the children both inside and outside its fellowship.

> "Like every spiritual movement which has gained great momentum, it (Child Evangelism) has been built upon a prior neglect. The reason why Child Evangelism is sweeping through the world today is because there are hosts of children that could just as well have been won to Christ and were not and now they are being won,

praise God."[1]

The theory of the Child Evangelism Fellowship is that a child of any age can be taught to recognize his sinful nature and his need of Christ as his Savior and that he can easily be led to accept Christ. The appeal to accept is made largely on the basis of a desire for happiness and for going to heaven. Ideally the Fellowship plans to aid the new child converts in developing their lives in Christ, but in practice there seems to be insufficient follow-up work. Lesson materials deal exclusively with the first aim, conversion, and the climax of each lesson is the invitation to accept the Lord Jesus. Ideally, also, the Fellowship would lead all converts to Sunday schools of their choice. Insofar as this ideal is put into practice, follow-up work is being provided. The established church has opportunity to cooperate actively in this matter of incorporating the children recruited by the Child Evangelism workers.

The entire program of the Fellowship is undergirded by prayer and attention to the work of the Holy Spirit in evangelizing. The work is motivated by a true love for Christ and true compassion for the children who know Him not. However, evangelism is conceived in such a narrow sense that the tendency is to force arrival at a decision without regard for normal spiritual growth. Immediate results are the aim, and pre- and post-conversion growth are largely neglected.

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1. J. Irvin Overholtzer: personal letter to the writer.

Overholtzer says in the letter quoted earlier:

> "In regard to educational child evangelism, we are utterly opposed to the idea that a child has to have long training before it can accept Christ. A little teaching is needed, but very little. We feel that when that little is given, a child should be brought to Christ and regenerated, and then with the spiritual nature, spiritual instruction can be given and absorbed. Of course, this whole movement is educational from the standpoint that it is a teaching program(,) but that has to do with the training of the teachers and teaching the thoroughly born-again children, after they are saved, with a follow-up process."

Because of the aim at immediate conversion there is a tendency to require all children to pass through the same religious experience regardless of his past experience. Furthermore, the neglect of child psychology and teaching methods according to the growth principle has permitted the Child Evangelism Fellowship to require an adult religious experience of a child. Here are echoes of Puritan child evangelism.

One can easily understand why sincere Christians with the "love of God shed abroad in (their) hearts by the Holy Spirit" have reacted against the elaborate developments and refinements of method and program that have obviously done so little to affect the need. And it is easy to see why, in that reaction, they have gone to other excesses and other neglects. There is evidence that this work has truly evangelized many children, many whom the church would never have reached. Another major contribution of the Child Evangelism Fellowship is the arousal of the church to its obligations. Being impressed with the earnestness of these

people, being confronted with facts of the needs that exist outside its walls, and, for the most part, disagreeing with the Fellowship's methods and its extra-church nature, the church has answered the challenge to action. Some portions of the church have, indeed, responded favorably to the Fellowship and have either cooperated or initiated intra-church programs of a similar nature.

b. A Philosophy of Educational Evangelism as Seen by the International Council of Religious Education

While various denominations have begun their own programs of child evangelism or have published materials emphasizing the need, the rightful place, and suggestions for child evangelism in the educational program of the church, this study will be confined to the statements of a committee representing forty-six of these denominations, and, thus, a large body of Protestantism in America. In 1942 the Committee on Religious Education of Children of the International Council of Religious Education and the Department of Evangelism of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America published a pamphlet entitled Evangelism of Children. This pamphlet defines and interprets child evangelism, points out the obligations of the church toward its children and toward unreached children, and makes suggestions for a graded program of evangelism.

Evangelism is identified with the entire process of Christian education.

> "The evangelism of children is the goal of all that we do in home and church in the Christian nurture of

> children . . . No evangelist can be content with merely telling about the good news. He must be concerned with bringing others to experience it, to welcome it, to live in accordance with it."[1]

To do this it is necessary to know certain other facts besides the "good news." First, it is necessary to know the nature of the child. Jesus showed that "He was confident that the little children would come to Him joyously, would respond to Him gladly."[2] It is possible to hold this view of child nature and still recognize that there is

> "essential conflict between good and evil in human nature. . . Children are neither 'trailing clouds of glory' nor 'little animals.' They are persons . . . (with) capacities for both good and evil."[3]

And for their victory in the conflict between the two tendencies it is necessary that they be saved by grace.

The teacher-evangelists never save the souls of the children; that is God's work; however, they must know how to cooperate with God in aiding the child to respond to God. This implies their need of knowing how children learn. Teachers must also confront the children with the Gospel by being living embodiments of it and by bringing the children into fellowship with themselves.

The home is the primary place for evangelism through a natural process of absorption based on the organic unity of the family and also through formal and informal, consciously-directed teaching. For children whose homes are not Christian,

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1. International Council of Religious Education: Child Evangelism, p. 5.
2. Ibid., p. 7.
3. Ibid., p. 7.

or not Christian enough to evangelize them, the church must attempt to be a substitute.

> "The life of the church as a whole must also be so organized and so lived that it will 'confront' the child with the Gospel. Teaching and preaching will be helpful to persons in proportion to the degree that it is supported by a life within the church fellowship which shows forth in actual situations what one means by loving one another, by preferring one another, by Christian discipleship, by commitment to the will of God, by seeking first the Kingdom of God."[1]

Children when confronted with the Gospel must see themselves as they are and desire to become what God wants to make them.

> "This does not mean that children . . . should be urged to stir up within themselves a sense of despair over their spiritual state, their lack of perfection, their sin. Rather, it means that the truth of Paul's statement be recognized: 'When I am weak, then I am strong.' Only when children recognize their need for God's help can they receive it; but then they do receive it, and sin will be overcome with positive goodness."[2]

How can the church reach the unreached children? No specified devices, no short cuts will do. The church must learn to teach with power and conviction, following God's laws of growth--"first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear."

> "And so our program of evangelism will be a graded program, through which we interpret to growing boys and girls the meaning of sin and salvation, sonship to God and discipleship to Jesus."[3]

It will be necessary to bring to focus the children's experiences by "definite explication of the Christian

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1. I.C.R.E., op. cit., p. 14.
2. Ibid., p. 16.
3. Ibid., p. 23.

faith." Opportunities to make decisions in line with God's will must be given at all stages of the process and must culminate in the final decision to commit his life to God under the Lordship of Christ. In all of this the church must realize that there is a point beyond which the teachers cannot help. Ultimately it is God who saves the child.

The philosophy of evangelism set forth in this pamphlet may be summarized thus: Evangelism is the goal of all religious training; evangelism is arrived at by a process of growth; the evangelist must learn to work with that process which the Holy Spirit dominates.

D. Summary

The modern church era represents the Protestant search for the most effective evangelism of children. According to the Reformation spirit of freedom, individuals and groups have developed and experimented with their own ideas. In Europe this search was inaugurated by reaction to the formal religious education pattern into which the main groups of Protestantism settled in the first century after the Reformation events.

Pietism in Germany insisted on the child's experience of the religious knowledge which he gained, and, consequently, made a conversion experience involving inner struggle the necessary sine qua non for salvation. Evidence of the genuineness of the conversion was further required in the form

of piety of daily life. Zinzendorf, a product of Lutheran Pietism and the organizer of the persecuted Moravians, dropped the emphasis on crisis conversion and developed the idea of preservation of the child in his original state of grace. This idea was put into practice in the Moravian congregations by planning for favorable conditions in which the Holy Spirit could work to produce Christians by an unspectacular growth process. The system allowed for the failure of this nurture and made conversion necessary in such cases, as it was also in the case of children brought up in a non-Christian environment. In England the Wesleyan practice produced a new combination of nurture and crisis conversion. Christian nurture, beginning with infant baptism, was to be the process of converting, and this process was supplemented by revivals to speed the conversion.

In America the history of child evangelism begins with colonial patterns that were transplanted from the respective homelands, representing both the practices of the established church and that of dissenting groups. Puritan revivalism of New England required the child to have an adult crisis conversion experience which would fit one particular pattern. E. Payson Hammond used the revivalistic method in his nineteenth century children's meetings. The turning point in modern American evangelism of children came in the middle of the nineteenth century when Horace Bushnell brought back the Christian nurture emphasis on a continuous conversion from birth in contrast to the Puritan postponement of conversion to a time of revival.

During the New England revivalistic period educational evangelism was prominent elsewhere in America. All colonial education was religious in purpose, including the Puritan education, but other groups, such as the Lutherans and Anglicans used education as the sole means of evangelism. Before the Revolutionary War Sunday schools were not necessary, but as the secularization of the schools proceeded the Sunday school developed. In spite of great efforts to make the Sunday school efficient in converting children to Christ and in developing Christian character, it had many inadequacies and other organizations attempted to fill the gap. During the twentieth century the religious education movement has promoted the nurture method, but because of its emphasis on method at the expense of the Christian message, the Christian education emphasis has made itself felt in recent years. The object is to keep the advantages of scientific educational procedures without losing the emphasis on personal commitment of young lives to Christ. Another emphasis on commitment is seen in the renewal of the revivalistic emphasis by the International Child Evangelism Fellowship. The philosophy of Christian educational evangelism is expressed by the statements on child evangelism issued in 1942 by a committee of the International Council of Religious Education. Thus, we see the two main streams of child evangelism present in the contemporary scene in America.

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

During the first six centuries of the Christian era the church practiced nurture evangelism, although the form changed greatly within this period. In the Apostolic age, particularly, many children were undoubtedly evangelized by the preaching and personal accounts of conversions, but within the body of believers the means for propagating Christianity was nurture in the home, principally, but also in Christian meetings. Children seem to have had the same status in the Christian fellowship as they had under the Old Covenant. Their birth into Christian families made them eligible to nurture in the life in Christ. This nurture was "in the Lord," stressing relationship to the Person who was the embodiment of the gospel. There was emphasis on moral conduct and on instruction in the Scriptures.

When creeds developed and when the doctrine of baptism grew in significance as a priestly act from the second to the sixth centuries, more emphasis began to be placed on the acts of the church and more and more passivity on the part of the individual resulted. The development of the sacramental concept of infant baptism began to minimize the importance of training after baptism, and, consequently, the necessity for home nurture of children was greatly reduced. Furthermore, the ascetic trend discredited family life as the basic form of the Christian society. The tendency of the early church period was away from nurture in the Lord by

the home and toward nurture in the church and by the church. However, the church did not supply adequate substitutes for the home training; the public secular schools were not Christianized and only a few children were trained in monasteries and convents. There is no evidence that the catechumenate was used for children. Education on all levels declined until neither parents nor priests were able to nurture their children in the faith.

With the establishment of infant baptism as the sacrament of regeneration the medieval church, to all practical purposes, evangelized its children exclusively through the sacraments. A few were educated narrowly for the clergy. Faith in the church supplanted faith in Christ in the consciousness of the people. The church and its ceremonials and sacraments took the place of education and nurture as it had been known in the first century.

In the pre-Reformation and Reformation periods there was a return to home nurture and direct instruction of children in the Scriptures with the aim of having the child meet Christ. The child's salvation was regarded as a personal responsibility not to be mediated by the church. Because of this, education in the vernacular for all children was the ideal, but it was very inadequately realized in the sixteenth century. The free search of the Scriptures by children in the schools was soon hampered by formal instruction in the catechisms and indoctrination in a particular form of Protestantism. The personal contact with Christ, which was at first

intended, became obscured, but the emphases on the need for personal instruction in the Christian faith and for training in Christian conduct were passed on to the next period of church history.

Reaction to the formal Christian education of the Reformation era set in early in the modern period. Various groups in Europe realized that the reality which was the object of child evangelism was again being obscured as it had been in the middle ages. Education for knowledge of Christ was overshadowing or crowding out the experience. Consequently, Pietism in Germany insisted that the child should gain experiential knowledge of the faith and made a crisis conversion necessary. The Moravians dropped the Pietistic emphasis on conversion and developed the idea of preserving the child in his original state of grace and all the while creating a consciousness of the meaning of Christ as Savior and Lord. In England the Wesleyan practice was an attempt to combine the nurture and revivalistic methods for evangelizing children. They held that the education of a baptized child was a process of converting but that revivals were necessary to produce crises in the process.

The educational evangelism resulting from the Reformation was reproduced in colonial America according to the pattern of the home land, and colonial secular education had religious nurture as its prime objective. The dissenting groups also reproduced their European pattern which in all cases included education. In New England this meant

highly emotional, Puritan revivalism which required the same experience of every child and that an adult experience of personal depravity and submission to God's choice for or against one's salvation. This pattern continued unchanged for two centuries from 1620 to 1847. In the latter part of the nineteenth century the revival method was practiced in mass meetings of children by a traveling evangelist, E. Payson Hammond, who believed that children were converted by adult methods and by simplifying the content of the message.

Effective reaction to revivalism as the exclusive method of child evangelism came in Horace Bushnell's emphasis on nurture as a method of continuous conversion. Crisis conversion was not eliminated, but was regarded as unnecessary for children born into Christian homes that supplied the right nurture. The main trend in America since Bushnell's time has been toward nurture as the means of child evangelism. The Sunday School, which rose in importance as education became secularized, applied the nurture method in its education for conversion. Other agencies such as the vacation church school, youth organizations and weekday religious education sought to supplement that nurture. The emphasis on nurture through education increased until in the twentieth century the religious education movement, in its attempt to make method scientific according to educational and psychological advances, lost the heart of the Christian message and practically omitted commitment from its process. In recent years the Christian education emphasis has sought to remedy

this by keeping the advantages of scientific educational procedures and restoring the emphasis on personal commitment to Christ. Another emphasis on commitment has taken another channel for expression. The International Child Evangelism Fellowship has renewed the revivalistic method of simplifying the evangel and the appeal in order to produce a crisis conversion experience. On the other hand Christian educational child evangelism has been made more explicit by the statements of a committee of the International Council of Religious Education and of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America which emphasize growth in grace and commitment.

It has been the purpose of this thesis to survey the practice of the Christian church from the first century to the present, in evangelizing its children with a view to giving a basis for understanding the present day uncertainty and divided opinion on the question of how the central purpose of the Christian church is to be accomplished in respect to its children. As a result of this study the writer has arrived at certain conclusions.

Historically there have been two streams of child evangelism flowing from two theories of the nature of childhood religion. According to the one line of thought children are to grow in grace from the beginning of life if the proper nurture is provided, and then at the appropriate age they are to come to an understanding of the meaning of their growth and consciously commit themselves without an emotional crisis

to the object of that growth. The crisis is not ruled out, but it is not deemed necessary and, therefore, not fostered. According to the other theory children must grow up in sin until, by the grace of God, they have reached the point where they can experience conversion in the adult manner.

From the present study it appears that the nurture theory existed first as the original practice of the Christian church, and that the revivalistic theory has emerged each time in history when the nurture became barren. This study has pointed out that as the church became a more and more highly organized institution, Christian nurture, which had been a vital process of propagating faith, became a matter of dogma and symbol which at first obscured the reality of personal relationship with God and later in the middle ages actually took the place of that reality. The extreme reaction to this mechanical method of evangelism came in Calvinism which denied the possibility of nurture because of innate depravity which no ecclesiastical act could remove. Salvation of the child was, thus, postponed to such time when, by the grace of God, he could experience it, and in the meantime religious training was given for the purpose of repressing his evil nature. The next examples of theemergence of this stream of child evangelism occur after the Reformation when Pietism and Wesleyanism reacted against the spiritually unproductive nurture of the Christian education in the established Protestant churches. Again in the nineteenth century when the Sunday school had become an established

means of nurture through education men like E. Payson Hammond tried to establish the revivalistic method with children when they saw the religious fervor of the Sunday school waning and producing relatively few conversions. And in this twentieth century the Child Evangelism Fellowship has again introduced the revival principle to counteract the religious education movement's emasculation of Christian nurture.

There are examples, too, of nurture coming as a reaction to revivalism as was shown in the case of Bushnell and to some degree in Zinzendorf, but in each case there was a sense of returning to an older and more fundamental method. Bushnell, in particular, had much positive and presumptive proof for this idea. The group favoring crisis conversion cannot make this appeal to history. Certainly the New Testament and the other apostolic writings give no evidence that revivalism was the method used to propagate Christianity in the second generation. This study has shown how these early writings indicated the nurture method. However, as H. Shelton Smith points out, there would have been no need for the revivalistic method until after the first century, and, therefore, its absence is no indication of the apostolic evaluation of it.

> "The Church should remember that great periods of religious rebirth have not emerged as the result of child-nurture. Religion has always come alive in the adult consciousness, and has usually involved a break with the religion inherited in childhood. The Christian Church, for example, had its birth in a new type of re-

> ligious experience among those who revolted against conventional religion. So it has seemed to be ever since. Revolutionary waves of religious awakening come to a focus in a Saint Paul, a Saint Francis, a Luther, a Wesley, or an Edwards. Their experiences are then communicated to the young. But the insights and experiences of the awakeners tend to fade out in the experience of the second and third generations. Ideally, this should not be the case. For if the nurture of the young were sufficiently vital, religious values would presumably be retained and enriched in the succeeding generations. Such, however, has not seemed true in the past. On the contrary, the primary experiences of the prophets tend to become secondary experiences in their children, and especially in their children's children. In the course of time a new innovation of a radical sort has to take place if the fires of religious vitality are to be rekindled."[1]

It appears, then, from this study, that nurture in grace has been the fundamental method of child evangelism in the church, and that the revivalistic method has been the reactionary.

Both methods have used education, the one being a positive, guiding, affectionate and assuring process of helping the child to become what the grace of God has declared him to be; and the other being a negative, exhorting and more severe process of producing a crisis in which he recognizes that God has changed his status. Complementary drawbacks can be pointed out in each as evidenced by history. Whether the nurture method became sacramental or educational there was the tendency to regard its operation toward the desired goal as automatic since they were not working toward an outward crisis demonstration of it. On the other hand, it has been the tendency of the revival method to consider

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1. H. Shelton Smith: Faith and Nurture, pp. 102,103.

the goal reached when the crisis conversion appears and to neglect training afterward.

No system of nurture has guaranteed the production of Christians, unless the sacramental system of the medieval church is considered nurture. Revivalism, on the other hand, because of its impatience with the slower process of nurture, has tended to oversimplify the problem and guarantee that all who conform to a particular pattern have been evangelized.

In addition to the interaction between the two streams there have been reactions of one type of revivalism against another and of one system of nurture against another. The Child Evangelism Fellowship and the nineteenth century children's meetings, in contrast to Puritanism, have simplified the conversion pattern and have added assurance that every child may come confidently to Christ and be received. This emphasis is certainly not in contradistinction to any nurture theory. Zinzendorf's nurture theory, on the other hand, was a reaction against the orthodox educational nurture of his day.

Thus, to the extent that men have been sensitive to the Holy Spirit and cognizant of the trends in the church's attitude toward children, there have been these interactions throughout history. Each period has made its contribution: the apostolic era gave the emphasis on family nurture and commitment to the Person of the gospel; the early and medieval church emphasized God's activity in the evangelization of children and developed the idea (although it abused it) of

the church as the mother responsible for the nurture of her children; the emphasis on individual experience of salvation and on the Scriptures as the source of the evangel came in the Reformation period; and scientific educational advance in the modern church era. In general, the medieval church, the Child Evangelism Fellowship of today and the children's revival meetings of the nineteenth century oversimplified the evangelism of children; Calvinism in Europe and Puritanism in the United States made it too difficult; Lutheranism and Anglicanism held right principles but lacked in spiritual life to vitalize the principles; small dissenting groups, such as the Moravians, came nearer to the child evangelism of the first century Christian community; and twentieth century religious education became too concerned about perfecting man's part in the process.

There is left today the completion of tremendous tasks of rethinking theology in reference to the status of the child in order to know where evangelism may begin; the re-examination of Jesus' attitude toward the relationship of children to the Kingdom; and further study, as well as a restudy of present knowledge, of the child nature and how to work with it religiously. There are questions to be answered, such as: If commitment is real, is a crisis necessary? Must there be external evidence of a crisis? Must nurture always begin from the same assumptions or facts? What does the spirit of New Testament Christianity indicate about the evangelism of children? What is the content of the gospel?

What does that content imply concerning objectives and methods?

Many contributions to the re-thinking of child evangelism and its ramifications have been made in recent times. Notable examples are: Choose Ye This Day by Elmer G. Homrighausen, Faith and Nurture by H. Shelton Smith, and The Teaching Evangelist by Norman E. Richardson. Current periodicals also give evidence of the thinking that is being done in articles such as: "Wanted: The Recovery of the Christian Paideia,"[1] "Evangelism for Such a Day as This,"[2] "The Contemporary Meaning of Christian Education,"[3] and "The Evangelism Which the Times Need."[4]

The historical practices of child evangelism must be reviewed in the light of such studies with a view to evaluating them for present use. Basically, however, the church needs to recapture the plus that the first century nurture possessed through the fervor of the living faith of all its members. Then, and only then, with a spiritual understanding of the evangelism of children added to the necessary intellectual understanding, will the church truly bring its children to Christ.

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1. Elmer G. Homrighausen, in Religion in Life, Winter, 1945-1946, pp. 126-136.
2. Oliver deWolf Cummings, in International Journal of Religious Education, March, 1946, pp. 13-15.
3. Edwin E. Aubrey, in Religion in Life, Spring, 1946, pp. 225-235.
4. Aaron N. Meckel, in Theology Today, January, 1946, pp. 513-524.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

1424 Fourth Street
Santa Monica, Calif.
March 25, 1946

AIR MAIL

Miss Arlene E. Peters
235 E. 49th Street
New York 17, New York

Dear Miss Peters:

In replying to your letter of March 19th, I am afraid I can't go back very far in regard to the history of Child Evangelism but I can go back some distance.

I feel that the major reason for not evangelizing children is first, in making salvation by works and ceremonies, etc. has made it too difficult, and then the church was not ready to have the children serve in ceremonies so they simply didn't do anything about the children. The other was making coming to Christ too mysterious - that is, putting too much stress upon experience, and then it was felt that the child wasn't ready for that sort of thing.

The finest piece of work that has been done in recent years was in Moody's time when Rev. E. Payson Hammond carried on a great Child Evangelism program all over the English speaking world. He had the backing of all the spiritual pastors of that day. However, his evangelism consisted of children's meetings and he put them on in union with the church in each city, where hundreds and thousands of children would come together for a week or ten days meetings, and thousands professed conversion. The major difficulty was that there wasn't proper follow-up work.

Then following Hammond's work a lot of so-called child evangelists came into the field whose work was not thorough going but Hammond's was thorough going. They would ask the children to follow Jesus, etc and whether they loved Jesus and as a result of that, there were few genuine conversions and then reaction set in. That brought about a prejudice that prevailed until our time. It was this that was so difficult in beginning the child evangelism movement of today. To a certain extent, it exists even now, however, by the grace of God, it is being widely overcome.

Like every spiritual movement which has gained great momentum, it has been built upon a prior neglect. The reason

why Child Evangelism is sweeping through the world today is because there are hosts of children that could have just as well been won to Christ and were not and now they are being won, praise God.

It seemed necessary when the Lord called me to this that we begin to train teachers and workers and children's evangelists so that these difficulties would be overcome in the whole setup. Then since there were such hosts of children that seemed impossible for the churches, as churches, to reach, it seemed very necessary that the movement be interdenominational and wide in scope. Then by having a Bible Class in each little community, making it a community affair, we find that hosts of children can be won that the church cannot reach.

However, as the movement spreads and grows, the spiritual churches are all taking it up as a part of their own program which is the proper thing.

In regard to educational Child Evangelism, we are utterly opposed to the idea that a child has to have long training before it can accept Christ. A little teaching is needed, but very little. We feel that when that little is given, a child should be brought to Christ and regenerated, and then with the spiritual nature, spiritual instruction can be given and absorbed. Of course, this whole movement is educational from the standpoint that it is a teaching program but that has to do with the training of the teachers and teaching the thoroughly born again children, after they are saved, with a follow-up process.

I hope that this will be of some value to you.

Sincerely,

J. Irvin Overholtzer

International Director
(Child Evangelism Fellowship, Inc.)

JIOverholtzer
ln

1900 Superior Ave.
Cleveland 14, Ohio
December 26, 1945

Miss Arlene E. Peters
235 E. 49th Street
New York 17, N.Y.

Dear Miss Peters:

Your letter of December 19th was on my desk on my return from a field trip to Minnesota. I do not know that I can give you the accurate information that you need for your thesis. I suggest that you write to Dr. Isaac K. Beckes, Director of Young People's Work of the International Council of Religious Education, 203 N. Wabash Avenue, Chicago 1, Illinois. He is in a much better position to have to have this information or to get it for you.

I will try to answer your three questions on the basis of information I have.

1. There are 10,000,000 youth between the ages of 15 and 25 in the U.S. who have no relationship to religion in any form. This covers more than the high school span, but I do not know the break-down for the high school period.

2. Most conversions occur now between the ages of 11 and 12. In the last 15 years this has moved forward from the age of 15. This is due to better teaching in the church schools.

3. On losses of high school youth, I again do not have figures for this particular group. Most losses from our church schools occur during the Junior high school or intermediate years. Between the ages of 12 and 15 we lose 75 out of every 100 we have in these Sunday church schools, and then, by the time they are 25 years of age we have won back 15 of them.

The above statements are based on careful research, partially on the Athearn Survey of Indiana, and then on a specialized project carried on by our own Board.

Hoping that this will be of some service to you, I am,

Most cordially yours,

R. H. Mueller

General Secretary
(The Board of Christian Education of the Evangelical Church)

203 North Wabash Avenue
Chicago 1, Illinois
January 7, 1946

Miss Arlene Peters
235 East 49 Street
New York, 17 New York

Dear Miss Peters:

In response to your letter of December 19, I regret to have to say that I know of no authentic figures indicating how many high school young people in the United States are unchurched, nor has there been any quantitative study made concerning the ages at which most conversions occur.

In saying this I realize that there have been many estimates. In my own opinion approximately fifty per cent of the young people in the average community are not in close contact with the church. In New York City, for instance, we know that there are ninety-two per cent of the young people unchurched. According to a recent study in a city like Houston, Texas eighty per cent of the young people were unchurched. Dallas showed twenty per cent unchurched; Dayton, Ohio, forty per cent unchurched.

These estimates are reasonably valid, but they are the only figures we have which are anything like authentic. I am sorry not to be able to be of more help to you but if you are working on a dissertation you will have to have valid figures.

Very truly yours,

IKB:afr

Isaac K. Beckes
(Director of Young People's Work, The International Council of Religious Education)

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