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A STUDY OF THE CHURCH PROGRAM  
OF PARENT EDUCATION  
WITH AN INVESTIGATION OF SELECTED  
DENOMINATIONAL MATERIALS

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A STUDY OF THE CHURCH PROGRAM  
OF PARENT EDUCATION  
WITH AN INVESTIGATION OF SELECTED  
DENOMINATIONAL MATERIALS

CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject

1. The Subject Stated and Defined

The church has had many changing emphases through the years in its program of instruction in the Christian way of life. A current emphasis is the recognition of the place and importance of parents in Christian education. It is now a widely accepted fact that parents are teachers, and that the home is a school in which the children receive a large share of their education. Henry<sup>F</sup>. Cope says:

"Education is the orderly development of lives according to scientific principles, into the fulness of their powers, the realization of all their responsibilities, the joy of their world, the utmost rendering in efficiency of their service."<sup>1</sup>

This development or process does not stop; it is continuous, and the child is always growing. Christian education might be defined as the orderly development of lives according to

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1. Henry F. Cope: Religious Education in the Family, p. 47.

Christian principles, into the fulness of their power, and the realization of all their possibilities through Jesus Christ, into the joy of His world, and the utmost rendering in efficiency of their service for Him. Christianity is not a separate sphere of life; it cannot be isolated. Parents teach for Christianity or against it, whether they consciously do so, or whether they even desire to do so or not. As this is true, the church must awaken parents to their responsibility in this matter and help them so that they can teach effectively. It must have a program to educate parents so that they in turn may be able to teach and so educate their children. This study attempts to give the basic needs involved in a comprehensive program to educate parents, to suggest basic elements which make up such a program, and to investigate existing denominational materials in the light of these needs and elements.

## 2. The Subject Justified

This is a day of scientific method and research. Psychology has entered the fields of education and child study. Psychological approaches are now made to personality. Through these studies the importance of the early life and growth of the child has been learned. In his book, Social Psychology of Adolescence, Partridge states: "No other psychological field is as important as the family

in influencing the behavior of the individual."<sup>1</sup> Psychologists are not alone in recognizing this fact to be true.

J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, expresses a similar opinion in an article entitled, "A 'Third Front'--Against Juvenile Crime."

"Juvenile crime flourishes where the home ties have been weakened by divorce, separation, the desertion of a parent or the ignorance, carelessness or indifference of fathers and mothers. Our homes are not the sanctuaries of family life they once were.... All persons who bear the blessed title of "parent" have the personal responsibility to see that their children are growing up fully appreciative of the rights of God and their fellow-men."<sup>2</sup>

Christian leaders realize that their efforts are helped immeasurably or blocked completely by parents' teaching. As the church recognizes that through some of the most formative years parents are the only teachers and that their influence is felt through all of the childhood period, it can plan its program accordingly and so make a real contribution. It is advisable, therefore, to consider the position of the church in this matter, and to state clearly what the church should do, can do, and is doing. It is hoped that this investigation may be used as a basis for evaluating and enlarging an existing program in a local church,

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1. E. DeAlton Partridge: Social Psychology of Adolescence, p. 189.
2. J. Edgar Hoover, "A 'Third Front' Against Juvenile Crime," The New York Times Magazine, February 27, 1944.



CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND  
OF THE PARENT EDUCATION MOVEMENT .

## B. The Method of Procedure

To introduce this problem, an historical background of the subject of parent education will be given and an explanation made concerning the evolution and prominence of this emphasis. To build a program of parent education, the basic needs of parents must be considered. The first step in this investigation will be to determine and analyze these needs. The second step will be to discuss basic elements that should be included in a comprehensive program. The last step will be to investigate the materials in this field published by selected denominational boards.

## C. The Sources of Data

Sources will be certain well known works by authorities in the fields of Parent Education, Religious Education, and Psychology. The primary sources will be materials put out by five denominational boards: The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, The Methodist Church, The United Lutheran Church in America, The Protestant Episcopal Church, and The Northern Baptist Convention. These denominations were selected as being major denominations of the Protestant Church. Their material, therefore, would afford a representative view of the entire field.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PARENT EDUCATION MOVEMENT

#### A. Introduction

✓ Christian educators in the church have recognized the fact that their work is dependent upon parents' teaching. Therefore, they must educate parents to be effective teachers and be prepared to give them all the help and inspiration they can. The church has started work in this field.

✓ Blanche Carrier who wrote Church Education for Family Life, states that: "The protestant churches in America have launched an official movement for parent education which has vast possibilities for the spiritual improvement of home life and church life."<sup>1</sup> This movement is not the result of independent thinking on the part of Christian educators. It has evolved slowly as various influences, secular and religious, have been brought to bear on the subject. A review of the historical background of this movement will show to what extent the church is indebted to secular education for work in this field and what contributions have been made by religious leaders.

. . . . .

1. Blanche Carrier: Church Education for Family Life, p. 1.

## B. Roots of the Movement

There have been several influences which might be considered roots of the protestant movement for parent education. Changing conceptions of the religious growth of the child, recognition of the place of the family in education, social implications of the Christian faith, and the interest of secular groups in parent education have all contributed to the movement which is now growing rapidly in the churches.

### 1. Writings of Religious Leaders

By the opening years of the twentieth century certain writers had become well known as leaders in the field of Christian education. They are responsible to a large extent for "the church's gradually increasing understanding of how the child grows religiously."<sup>1</sup> Horace Bushnell, George Albert Coe, and Henry F. Cope are three of these who have contributed greatly to this understanding. Their writings have pointed to the necessity of a program of parent education.

a. Horace Bushnell. A new idea prevailed largely when the writings of Horace Bushnell became popularly accepted. In his book, Christian Nurture, he sets out to prove the following proposition: "That the child is to

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 3.

grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise."<sup>1</sup> He discards the older theory that the child grows up in sin and is converted after he comes to a mature age. He teaches that the child can exercise a right spirit before he can intellectually receive a doctrine and more than that:

"The operative truth necessary to a new life, may possibly be communicated through and from the parent, being revealed in his looks, manners, and ways of life, before they are of an age to understand the teaching of words; for the Christian scheme, the Gospel, is really wrapped up in the life of every Christian parent, and beams out from him as a living epistle, before it escapes from the lips, or is taught in words. Never is it too early for good to be communicated."<sup>2</sup>

His entire thesis is based on the acceptance of the fact that the parents are responsible for the Christian nurture of their children, and that the child's character is to a large extent the product of family life. He says:

"Understand that it is the family spirit, the organic life of the house, the silent power of a domestic godliness, working as it does, unconsciously and with sovereign effect--this it is which forms your children to God."<sup>3</sup>

b. George Albert Coe. George Albert Coe is one of the first religious leaders of this century to develop these views of the social sources of personality. He believes in the assumption that the child has a positive religious nature. For him this implies three things:

. . . . .

1. Horace Bushnell: Christian Nurture, p. 10.
2. Ibid., p. 22.
3. Ibid., p. 119.

- (1) "The child has more than a passive capacity for spiritual things.
- (2) That nothing short of union with God can really bring a human being to himself.
- (3) That the successive phases in the growth of the child personality may be, and normally are, so many phases of a growing consciousness of the divine meaning of life."<sup>1</sup>

His further contribution is the conception of the family as a community. He believes "that the parent educates just as the child is educated, simply by filling his place as a member of the family community."<sup>2</sup> Coe would feel then that the child's character grows as he exercises the functions of a member of the family community.

c. Henry F. Cope. Henry F. Cope was a second leader who developed these ideas of the family as a social group. In 1915 his book, Religious Education in the Family, was published. In it he states: "The family is the most important religious institution in the life of today. It ranks in influence before the church. It has always held this place."<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Social Implications of the Christian Faith

A second root is that liberal ministers are becoming increasingly concerned with the social implications of the Christian faith. Carrier observes:

"Church leaders have been prepared therefore, for the recognition that the home is both the product of the

. . . . .

1. George Albert Coe: Education in Religion and Morals, pp. 61-62.
2. Ibid., p. 272.
3. Henry F. Cope: Religious Education in the Family, p. 37.

social order and the agent for the continuous infusion of the social heritage into the habits of the next generation. They have come to see that the reconstruction of the environment toward a full respect for every individual involves an education of parents for the demands of family life and a re-education of the parents' own childhood habits of thought."<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Secular Movement for Parent Education

The third root is the development of the general movement for parent education. It has contributed to the thought of church leaders today. Its roots go back to 1890 when child study groups and child welfare organizations organized for specific purposes. At the opening of this century there were influences which later became current movements. They were: Child Study Groups, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, Kindergarten Movement, Service of Home Economics, Study of Child Health, and G. Stanley Hall's work to lay scientific foundations of the psychology of child development. In 1924 the vast modern movement really came into being and the term "Parent Education" began to be used. At that time the National Council of Parent Education was formed to be a national clearing house for all these numerous agencies. At the 1934 biennial conference of this council, a plea was made to supplement the scientific approach by the development of a philosophy of home life, and a philosophy of parent education. This broad movement has inevitably influenced

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1. Carrier, op. cit., p. 6.

church leaders in their conceptions and plans for parent education in the churches.

#### 4. Loss of Interest in the Church on the Part of Young Adults

Another factor led to the growth of the religious movement. Young adults were losing interest in the church. They sent their children but did not take them to church and remain themselves for classes. The church leaders saw that "the future spiritual vigor of both the church and the home was imperiled."<sup>1</sup>

#### C. Trends in the First Thirty Years of the Century

In the early part of this century religious organizations had paid some attention to the secular parent education movement, but it could not be said that a program for parents existed in the churches.

##### 1. War Crisis of 1918-1919

In her thesis, entitled, A Comparative Study of Religious Education in Periods of War Crisis, Elizabeth Johnson states that in the war period of 1918-1919 there were evidences seen of the extreme need felt for religious education. Therefore leaders in the field began to plan an extended and more effective program. The local churches at this time were continuing with their usual work. It is significant that in the long list of church activities reviewed there was not one mention of home or parent

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1. Ibid., p. 11.



training. There was a brief section devoted to the home and statements were made that "the home is the place where the most important training takes place"<sup>1</sup> and also "need for training of parents is shown by examples of parent-child relationships."<sup>2</sup> After suggesting several secular helps, the section on the home is concluded with the statement: "In these various ways the family and its individual members are brought to the attention of religious educators and church school workers."<sup>3</sup> By 1919 the church was still trying to handle the work of Christian Education entirely by itself and had not yet awakened to see the place of the parents.

## 2. Conditions in 1922

In commenting on conditions after the war Carrier says: "Even as late as 1922 in a book on the Adult Department written by the International Council's secretary for that work, parents are mentioned only as one group to be served by the Home and Extension Department."<sup>4</sup> No materials or specific plans were offered even then. During this time there were a number of books published for local parents' groups, but "there was no evidence in the literature of a national basis of organization of parental groups by either denominational or inter-denominational agencies."<sup>5</sup>

. . . . .

1. Elizabeth Johnson: A Comparative Study of Religious Education in Periods of War Crisis, p. 39.
2. Ibid., p. 40.
3. Ibid., p. 42.
4. Carrier, op. cit., p. 13.
5. Ibid., p. 14.

## D. The Present Comprehensive Movement

### 1. Initiated in 1931

The present comprehensive movement was initiated by the International Council of Religious Education in 1931. Its educational committee selected four themes to be given special emphasis during the four ensuing years. The theme for the year beginning 1934 was Education for Christian Family Life. The council was ready to make a new approach to this task and appointed a special committee to prepare the program. The joint committee for Parent Education was directly responsible to the committee on Adult Education but was comprised of representatives from work with children, youth, adults, leadership training, and church school administration.

### 2. The Work of the Committee for Parent Education

The joint committee for parent education formulated the step which religious leaders were ready to take by preparing the Curriculum Guide for Work with Parents. It is the fourth book in the Curriculum Guide Series and is composed of two parts. The first part deals with Christian Education of Adults and the second is entitled, Christian Education in Family Life and Parenthood. It gives a description of the total church program for Parent Education. The committee at this time also published two bulletins for the churches: The Church's Opportunity in Family and Parent

Education, and Home and Church Sharing in Christian Education.

3. The Work of Denominations and Other Agencies in This Field

The various denominational bodies developed their own programs of parent education for the year 1934-1935. Many felt that they were only continuing an emphasis which they had had for some time. Their magazines, materials and textbooks since this year have, however, given special attention to parent education. The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America founded a committee on Marriage and the Home and in 1932 employed L. Foster Wood as full-time secretary. The Religious Education Association has given continuous attention to home life in its conventions and monthly journal. "In the local churches, encouraged but not initiated nor recorded by the national boards, a multitude of efforts has been carried on."<sup>1</sup> Reports indicate that this work is organized under a variety of departments.

4. Recent Publications of the International Council

The International Council of Religious Education continues its work in this field by publishing from time to time new bulletins. Recent publications are: Home and Church Work Together, Christian Family Life Education, Preparing for Marriage and Home Life, You Are Teaching Your

. . . . .

1. Carrier, op. cit., p. 20.

Child Religion, a leaflet, and Family Life, Parenthood, and Young People's Relationships, a bibliography. In the Standard Leadership Curriculum, one first series course offered is, The Church's Opportunity in Family and Parent Education; a second series course is, The Home and Church Working Together in the Religious Nurture of Children; and yet a third course is Developing a Program of Parent Education in the Church.

5. Comparison of Activities in the Religious and Secular Fields

Carrier concludes her description of the current movement by comparing the activities carried on in the religious and secular fields.

"...it is interesting to compare the types of activities which are developing in the church field with those which are characteristic of modern effort in the secular field. The National Council of Parent Education has recently listed five main types of effort: lectures, classes and literature for the parents themselves; the education of children and youth for family life; marriage and family counselling services; the professional education of leaders for work in this field; and research in the field of objectives, method, materials, organization and outcomes."<sup>1</sup>

It has been found that the church's program includes only the first three of these types of work. Little has been done concerning professional preparation, and there are only a few persons professionally engaged in family education in the church field. It is being increasingly

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1. Ibid., p. 21.

realized that workers need special training for this type of work. The field of research in parent education still needs to be developed.

#### E. Summary

In summarizing the historical background of the parent education movement, it is seen that there were four influences which formed roots of the movement. They were: the writings of certain religious leaders who gave a new conception of the way in which the child grows religiously, social implications of the Christian faith, the secular movement for parent education, and the loss of interest in the church on the part of young adults. In the first thirty years of the century, trends toward parent education were growing; but it was not until 1931 that the present comprehensive movement was initiated. The International Council of Religious Education started the program and has been active in the work ever since.

CHAPTER III

BASIC NEEDS INVOLVED IN A PROGRAM OF PARENT EDUCATION

## CHAPTER III

### BASIC NEEDS INVOLVED IN A PROGRAM OF PARENT EDUCATION

#### A. Introduction

To build a comprehensive program of parent education, certain basic needs of parents must be recognized. The relationship of the parents to God is of great importance. Indeed, it is fundamental to all other considerations. A second relationship which must be considered is that of the parents and the child. The part which the parents play in the child's education is also of significance. The educational possibilities of the home, the relation of the church, and its facilities to aid the home should all be carefully evaluated. The church's program must be built upon a consideration of these basic needs of parents.

#### B. Recognition of Necessity of a Vital Experience with God

Parents as the founders and leaders of the home, and the teachers in the school, must be well equipped for their task. The primary essential in the Christian home is that the parents themselves have a vital relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

##### 1. Growth Essential to a Vital Experience

Parents need a religious experience of their own, and this experience must be constantly growing and enlarging

if it is to be vital. There are no platforms in the Christian walk where one may wait until he desires to continue further. If he thinks he is waiting, he will ultimately find that he has slipped back and that his faith has deteriorated. Stagnation is as tragic in adults as it is in childhood, and stagnation in parents has serious consequences. For the parent is constantly touching the life of the child, and his spiritual state is reflected in his child's experiences. Using a quotation from the International Curriculum Guide, we might state: True Christian education of adults [and especially parents]

"assumes therefore an adult [and parental] religious experience which is dynamic rather than static, forward looking rather than backward looking, and subject to a progressive development which involves continuously outgrowing or transcending earlier experiences."<sup>1</sup>

## 2. A Vital Experience Prerequisite to Effective Teaching

To become an effective teacher, a parent must have a vital experience of his own. In the book Religious Training in the School and Home there is an excellent statement which considers this point.

"To become a parent then is necessarily to assume the divine calling of the teacher. Willy nilly we must for a time, at least, become the chief educators of a child of God. In this education it will not be enough to tell him what to do, or to teach him why he ought to do it, or to govern him, to say nothing of wheedling and cajoling and bribing him until he does with weak or

. . . . .

1. International Curriculum Guide, Book IV, Part I, p. 7.



bad motives the good things that the parent wishes him to do. The most effective way to lead a child into the paths of righteousness is to travel those paths for oneself."<sup>1</sup>

Florence M. Taylor, expressing the same thought, says:

"Parents who are filled with the conviction that the Christian religion is a way of living and are concerned with living out in their own every day lives their Christian beliefs and principles will inevitably hand on to their children their rightful Christian heritage."<sup>2</sup>

Effective teaching does not consist in merely handing on a Christian heritage by means of living a Christian life oneself. It involves awakening a child's consciousness of God, explaining to him the relationship of Christ to God and to himself, guiding his prayer experiences, introducing him to the Bible, helping him to use it effectively, and helping him formulate a Christian philosophy of life. If the parent does not understand these things and has not made them an integral part of his own experience, he cannot possibly teach them to his children. As the child grows in Christian experience and comes to the parent with his problems, the parent often finds that his own experience of God needs clarifying or renewing. If this does not happen it may well be a case of the blind leading the blind. Continuous growth in personal experience will enable the parent to meet the child's need as each new occasion presents itself.

. . . . .

1. E. Hershey Sneath, George Hodges, Henry William Tweedy: Religious Training in the School and Home, p. 7.
2. Florence Mary Taylor: Their Rightful Heritage, p. 31.

### 3. Summary

To be a leader and a teacher in a Christian home then, parents themselves must have a vital Christian experience. The child's spiritual state is determined to a large extent by theirs. To be an effective teacher one must experience what he is trying to teach. For these reasons parents' own religious experience and growth are of major importance in their work of educating their children.

#### C. Recognition of the Home as the Foundation in Christian Growth

It is now a recognized fact that the family and the home are the strongest influences determining the child's personality, character, and growth. Certain basic means of control are inherent in the psychological set up of home and family life. The foundation in Christian growth is laid in the home.

##### 1. Provides a Sense of Security

One important factor provided for in the home is a sense of security or a "feeling of belonging." This feeling is essential to a child's physical and emotional well being. In their book, Consider the Children How They Grow, Elizabeth Manwell and Sophia Fahs stress the necessity of this "feeling of belonging."

"Its presence fosters self reliance and an outgoing interest toward other people and the events of the

world. Its lack leads to attitudes of fear, rage, hatred, inefficiency, and failure."<sup>1</sup>

It encourages spiritual growth. The faith of deeply religious men and women reveals "a basic and abiding sense of security equal to the greatest hazards of life."<sup>2</sup> This sense of security comes from the home because its influence is continuous from the cradle to the age of independence and often long beyond that. Teachers and friends come and go, but the family and the home remain. The love and protecting care of parents give a sense of security which can be found in no other place.

## 2. Provides for Personal Achievement

A second factor is the need for a sense of personal achievement. This need expresses itself when one by his own powers achieves success. Again consider a statement found in Consider the Children How They Grow:

"It may be the very essence of religious living. Formal religious training, unless it be woven through and through with wholesome childhood experiences, with success, social recognition, and more effort toward further achievement, does not build these attitudes into a personality."<sup>3</sup>

The family is a social unit where the child may find his place and have specific functions to perform. In this small group he may make his first achievements and know the satisfactions of success.

. . . . .

1. Elizabeth Manwell and Sophia Fahs: Consider the Children How They Grow, p. 6.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 7.

3. Provides Opportunity to Observe Character That is Worthy of Respect

A third factor found in the home is the opportunity to observe character that is worthy of respect. To teach the concepts of right and wrong in school may be a good thing, but they can only become a reality when seen or put into practice. The home affords the first opportunity for the child to see these concepts demonstrated. Sherrill in his book, The Opening Doors of Childhood, discusses this factor and states:

"...when the character of the parents can be respected, a child has a concrete ideal for character during his own earliest development as a moral being.... Wholesome respect for characters whom we dearly love gives a better basis for the understanding of those awesome qualities such as holiness, justice, and righteousness, which spiritual religion has always found in God."<sup>1</sup>

4. Provides Opportunity for Sharing Privileges

A fourth factor is the opportunity for sharing privileges. Christianity makes this a basic obligation in its program of brotherhood. The unselfish example of parents and of the members of the family and the atmosphere of love for each member of the family group will stimulate the desire to share. To follow the conclusions of Manwell and Fahs it is seen that: "Mental hygiene and spiritual hygiene, then, seem...to grow out of the same roots and seem

. . . . .

1. Lewis Joseph Sherrill: The Opening Doors of Childhood, pp. 10-11.

to be fostered by processes which should be regarded as fundamentally alike."<sup>1</sup> These factors of security, love, achievement, sharing, and respect for character are integral parts of the Christian religion and should be exemplified in every home and consciously worked for by all parents.

#### D. Recognition of the Home as a School

The home is a school because it provides, through family relationships, basic educational influences which determine growth.<sup>2</sup>

##### 1. Experiment

The first influence is experiment. In family life the child uses a "trial and error method" to meet everyday situations. If his responses are attended by satisfaction he will tend to use the response as a behavior pattern in the future.

##### 2. Discipline

A second influence is discipline. Every member of a family is subject to discipline. A statement in the bulletin, "Christian Family Life Education," claims that: "Discipline results from the spontaneous reaction of members of the family to the action of one another, as well as from planned guidance of the more mature for the sake of the growth of the less mature."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Manwell and Fahs, op. cit., p. 10.
2. Cf. International Council of Religious Education: Christian Family Life, pp. 9-11.
3. Ibid., p. 11.

### 3. Thinking

A third influence is thinking. This may involve comparison and evaluation of ways of meeting a situation. Growth is likely to result from any real attempt to solve a problem.

### 4. Appreciation and Aspiration

A fourth influence is appreciation and aspiration. This is an outcome of reflection on a situation; it may be forming an ideal and putting forth effort to attain it.

### 5. Conflict

The fifth influence is conflict. This may be an effort to overcome obstacles encountered in an attempt to meet a situation involved in the pursuit of different ideals.

### 6. Cooperative Activity

The last influence is cooperative activity. This is achieved by voluntarily sharing in the life of family routine and the acceptance of responsibility for the performance of duties necessary for social well-being and from participation in pleasures and activities of family life.

### E. Recognition of Parents as Teachers

If the word teaching is mentioned, many persons will immediately picture a school room where a teacher faces rows of pupils. Or if the parents are mentioned as being teachers, one will visualize a father or mother seated in

a chair with his child as a pupil standing at his knee to await instruction. In both scenes one gets the impression that teaching takes place only in a classroom-like-atmosphere where one person imparts knowledge to one or more pupils. Unfortunately this conception is prevalent among parents. They do not realize the full implications of teaching. Modern educators insist that the child learns by doing, in other words that participation brings knowledge. It is well therefore to realize that, as parents and the child go through the daily routine of family life, teaching and learning are processes which are going on all the time.

#### 1. Teach by the Example of Their Own Lives

One of the most important yet seldom recognized methods of teaching for the parents is simply stating their own beliefs and putting them into practice. The young child accepts uncritically his parents' ideas and practices concerning religion. He will or should ultimately come to an age where he will think independently, but the fact remains that the young child accepts his parents' opinions and practices, and they become his authority. He has learned from them his opinions and practices. Ruth Perry in her book, Children Need Adults, states it this way:

"The attitudes expressed in daily living in the home give a bias to the attitudes which the child is developing. Two children were arguing together whether or not there is a God. A third child explained,

'You see, it's this way. If your Mommie and Daddy think there is a God, then there is one. If they think there isn't any, well, there just isn't!.... Many times each day the adult shares his religion with a child. The forthrightness expressed by the adult when confronted with a problem, the security engendered in the face of apprehension, or fear, the statement of one's beliefs in reply to a question--each situation registers with the child the kind of religion which the adult finds satisfying."<sup>1</sup>

This truth is recognized by the Child Study Association in their book, Parents' Questions. One question which they include was sent in by parents who stated that they did not accept a church or creed, had never sent their children to Sunday School or taught them to pray. Indeed they had always evaded questions concerning God. Now in the midst of an insecure world they wonder if they should have let the children have the convictions which the church offers even though they did not hold to them. The reply asks these parents if they wish to give their children a way of life other than their own and then adds that this would be impossible. "What you yourself most deeply feel you cannot, if you would, fail to give your children. If it is cynicism or faintheartedness, these things are bound to be your contribution."<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Teach Through Conversation

A second element in everyday living through which parents teach their children is conversation.

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1. Ruth Davis Perry: Children Need Adults, p. 114.
2. Child Study Association: Parents' Questions, p. 205.



Trent in a discussion of thinking about God says: "Sincere<sup>1</sup> speech is one of the paths to an awareness of God." She tells of a child who watched a painter reproduce a sunset on a canvas and then said, "'I didn't know how pretty it was until you showed me.' So it is with the thought of God. If children and adults are to become aware of His presence, someone must lead them to think and to speak of Him in connection with His handwork."<sup>2</sup> By means of conversation parents may interpret each experience in terms of religious consciousness. Conversation is also necessary to give the parent insight into the child's thoughts, conceptions, and actions. When he understands what the child thinks he can lead him further in his thinking or correct any wrong ideas.

Conversation may in some instances bring about a worship experience, in others, get a child to see the wrongness of an action, or lead him to take a definite step. Like any other method, to be effective, conversation must be done well. Trent suggests that there are three techniques which are helpful in bringing about good religious conversation. "Definite religious conviction on the part of the parents and daily living growing out of that conviction are necessary if there is to be real religious conversation in the home."<sup>3</sup> The second and third

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1. Robbie Trent: Your Child and God, p. 39.
2. Ibid., pp. 39-40.
3. Ibid., p. 40 Cf. pp. 40-44.

techniques are naturalness and sincerity. Conversation may be entirely one-sided and yet be a direct teaching situation. A child's responses are often influenced by reproof or condemnation of his acts as well as through casual conversation by family members regarding situations which may not even be demanding immediate response on his part.

### 3. Teach by Answering Questions

There is not a parent in the world who is not called upon a dozen times a day, at least, to answer the questions of his children. These questions may not be answered, but they must be met. If the parents desire they can use these times as a positive teaching situation. One way to meet questions is to tell the child not to be a bother, another is to answer with the first thought that enters the mind. No matter what the answer, it is a lesson. The lesson the child learns may be the correct solution to his problem, it may be the wrong solution, or it may merely be that there is no use in asking further questions. The wise parent will use a question as an invitation to teach. In order to use this method of teaching effectively a parent should analyze the questions his children ask and give not alone the reply which will be most helpful. Trent gives ten questions which parents could profitably ask themselves in analyzing the questions

of their children. These relate specifically to religious problems.

- "1. Out of what situation does the question come?
2. Out of what concept of God or Jesus does it come?
3. Does that concept need enrichment or correction?
4. What concept of God or Jesus do we want to share with our child?
5. Is there a positive answer we can give the child?
6. Is it desirable to give him a positive answer?
7. How can we lead the child to find his own solution to the question?
8. What Bible material will help us and him?
9. What shall we say?
10. Into what helpful experience can we lead the child that will provide opportunities for growth in further thinking and in answering his question?"<sup>1</sup>

In reviewing these questions one realizes the unlimited possibilities there are for real and meaningful teaching through answering the child's questions.

#### 4. Teach by Sharing Experiences

Still a fourth element in teaching the child is by sharing experiences with him. Before a child is capable of asking questions or discussing situations, he can have satisfying or unsatisfying reactions to an experience. If his parents share an experience and his reaction is a happy one, he will sense approval and unite himself with them. If his parents share and the reaction is unhappy, he will sense their sympathy and still feel drawn to them. If they refuse to share an experience, he may feel that something is wrong and may be guided to a more helpful reaction. There are many lessons which

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1. Ibid., pp. 139-140.

cannot be learned through formal means; they must be gained by experience. Mary Alice Jones says: "The little child's sense of the reality of God does not, then, come primarily from direct teaching about God, but primarily from sharing experiences of God."<sup>1</sup>

To be good teachers, parents should make many opportunities to share experiences with the child. Even after a child is old enough to discuss problems and analyze situations, he can learn much through sharing his deepest emotions--perhaps in silence--with his parents. If they are ever growing in their religious experience, they will be constantly teaching him through sharing this growing experience with him. Family life provides opportunities for sharing experiences in every area of life. Not only are the members of a family together in the daily routine of living, but they may share times of recreation, celebrate holidays, and spend vacations together. They will also share experiences of a distinctively religious nature such as public or family worship, missionary activities, or social and community service.

#### 5. Teach by Imparting Factual Knowledge

The last method to be included in this study is teaching by imparting factual knowledge. This comes about quite naturally in everyday living. Factual knowledge may

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1. Mary Alice Jones: The Faith of Our Children, p. 17.

be given as an answer to a question, as a source of authority in a discussion, or as general information which heightens an experience. Sherrill introduces this method of teaching by asserting that:

"Each great type of human activity accumulates its own distinctive resources, speaks its own peculiar language, and requires a school of its own devising more or less separate from the remainder of the vast mass of traditions and habits....The case is not dissimilar with religion."<sup>1</sup>

These elements require formal teaching. The church may assume responsibility at this point, but it cannot be solely responsible. The parents must be prepared to contribute by this means of teaching. In formal religious teaching there is danger that religion will be considered as a separate phase of life. This is true when the child is taught only in Sunday School, when he considers the Bible as a book separate from all other books, and when he hears theological terminology only upon specific occasions such as in Sunday School. The parents may integrate formal religious teaching, Bible study, learning catechism, creeds, or hymns, with all of life's experiences.

This method of teaching though widely recognized is often poorly effected. Facts cannot be poured wholesale into the child's mind and left to grow unattended. They may be likened to food which is given, first at the time when the body requires it for growth, secondly in

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1. Lewis Joseph Sherrill: Family and Church, p. 140.

the amounts necessary to satisfy the demands, and thirdly, because it contains the elements needed for growth. So the parents must supply the facts at the time when the child begins to need them, in the language which the child is able to understand, and because the knowledge will guide him into habits of right conduct.

## 6. Summary

The new conception of how children learn opens parents' eyes to the vast possibilities for teaching found in the daily routine of family life. Personal example, conversation, answering questions, sharing experiences, and imparting factual knowledge all play a part in the teaching process. It is important that not one of these areas be neglected. None of these can be effective, however, if the personal example of the parents is not sincere and is not constantly enlarging and growing. Parents should realize these teaching elements and strive to use them for constructive growth.

### F. Recognition of the Needs of the Child

A fundamental principle has undergirded all the principles made so far concerning the responsibility of parents in rearing their children as Christians. Parents must understand the needs of their children before they can hope to be teachers or to establish a Christian home.

Ruth Perry suggests that:

"If one knows something of the how and why of the behavior of little children, it is not so difficult to maintain a happy, harmonious atmosphere in which both adults and children may thrive and be happy. Success depends upon the wisdom and maturity of the adults....Progress from infancy to adulthood is made through many stages of development, each step characterized by its own peculiar manner of behavior."<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious that means of teaching such as conversation, answering questions, and sharing experiences cannot bring a positive response if the parents do not understand what the child needs. The formal instruction in teaching factual knowledge as has been mentioned must be geared to an understanding of basic principles of growth. This growth is what Perry defines as steps in development of progress. That this principle is true is evidenced by the increasingly growing number of books which deal with the growth of children--physical, mental, and spiritual. As early as 1922 Anna Freelove Betts states:

"Parents are asking for religious materials suitable for use with their children from the earliest years. They are demanding the methods to be used in making these materials effective, and inquiring concerning the laws which govern the spiritual growth of childhood."<sup>2</sup>

Since this date the study of child psychology has been growing steadily. A person preparing to teach must study child psychology in preparation for his work. The parents cannot afford to know less than the teacher about the child for whom they are responsible. They must understand the needs of their children.

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1. Perry, op. cit., pp. xi-xii.
2. Anna Freelove Betts: The Mother-Teacher of Religion, p. 12.

G. Recognition of Relationship Between Home and Church  
and Use of Facilities of the Church

The role which the church plays in religious education has had to be re-evaluated as responsibility for training and teaching children has come to be recognized as the principle duty of the parents. In her book, Christian Education for Family Life, Blanche Carrier asserts:

"The older relationship assumed that the church rightly had purposes of its own to accomplish in the training of children and that, since parents were not properly prepared to give this training, the church must do so."<sup>1</sup>

This concept has been discarded as it is now apparent that children get their foundations and patterns for living from their parents.

1. The Church as a Partner of the Home

The new relationship is seen as the church becomes a partner sharing with the parents in their life-long enterprise of rearing children. Parents should assume responsibility for this task and carry on the major part of it, but they cannot do it unaided. The church has a vital part to play in this situation. First, because it has been fulfilling certain responsibilities, it can now teach the parents how to accept these responsibilities and fulfill them. Secondly, it provides a source of inspiration and help for parents. Thirdly, it offers the child religious experiences in groups of his own age. Fourthly, it

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1. Blanche Carrier: Church Education for Family Life, p. 178.



provides for families the same sources of integration and security which the home gives its members in a larger setting. Fifthly, as Carrier so well expresses it:

"...the church can stand firmly as a visible sign of the continuity of human experience, the authority of the actualities of human life, and the wonder of the endless resources of God discoverable in life and the universe."<sup>1</sup>

## 2. The Facilities of the Church are Aids to the Parents

The facilities of the church are all created for the purpose of the improvement of the family and its individual members. However, it cannot help unless the family and the members are aware of their needs and of the sources of help which may be secured and used. If the church builds its program with the idea of helping the family, it cannot be considered as the only institution for religious education of children, or as a rival institution of the home, or as an unnecessary institution. It gives the help which the home is unable to give. To receive the greatest benefit from the church, parents should accept its help in every area of living--social, mental, and spiritual. This will integrate church and home and make clear the fundamental fact that religion pervades all of life and cannot be confined to a section. It will also make clear that the ministry of the church is necessary in every phase of life, and that it does not exist only for the sake of formal teaching on Sundays.

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1. Ibid., p. 182.

#### H. Summary

The church desiring to evolve an adequate program of parent education, must see that its program includes elements which will take care of the six major needs of parents. The needs which have been examined in this study are: recognition of the necessity of a vital experience with God, recognition of the home as the foundation in Christian growth, recognition of the home as a school, recognition of the parents as teachers, recognition of the needs of the child, and recognition of the relationship between church and home and the use of church facilities.

CHAPTER IV

BASIC ELEMENTS INVOLVED IN THE  
CHURCH'S PROGRAM OF PARENT EDUCATION

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### BASIC ELEMENTS INVOLVED IN THE CHURCH'S PROGRAM OF PARENT EDUCATION

#### A. Introduction

Too often in the past parents have handed to the church the entire responsibility for the Christian education of the child. They have assumed that the Sunday School would give all the necessary instruction and guidance and that the atmosphere of the church would stimulate religious growth. This is not the case. The efforts of the Sunday School teacher may be entirely nullified by the parents' attitudes and the church atmosphere completely forgotten during the six days spent in the home. In the preceding chapter, the church and the home were seen as partners sharing the responsibility of Christian education. The home has the primary obligation, yet the church has certain functions which it is peculiarly fitted to perform. Its job is to supplement the work of the home. To do this, the church should provide a comprehensive program for the guidance of parents and for the preparation and enrichment of family life.

#### B. Work of the Pastor

The pastor is the leader of the church and probably has more influence than any other person in determining

its atmosphere. He should occupy a position of prestige in the church and should be held in esteem by the members of the congregation. He is a spiritual advisor; and if he is himself a parent, and considered an exemplary one, his advice and opinions in the field of parent relationships will be sought and followed. He has many opportunities to guide the parents' attitudes and actions.

#### 1. Sermons

A major way in which the pastor serves his congregation is, of course, through his sermons. In them he is expected to instruct, uplift, and help his people. It is his obligation to lead them into a vital and growing relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Since a congregation is made up of families and members of families, he will certainly be meeting a common need if he sometimes uses his sermons to recognize parents' privileges and problems and to give them spiritual help and instruction. In his book, Family and Church, Sherrill has a chapter on "Occasions of Public Address." In this he deals at length with "preaching." He says:

"Preaching may deal with relationships in the family, with situations which are common in family life, and with problems which tend to arise wherever there is a family. It also may deal with ideals, motives, and values." <sup>1</sup>

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1. Lewis J. Sherrill: Family and Church, p. 179.

After developing these two approaches he suggests that a third approach is to stimulate parents to recognize their responsibility as teachers of religion.<sup>1</sup> In their pamphlet, "How Can the Church Help the Home," Robert Raschy and Nevin C. Harner also stress the value of sermons.

"By an occasional sermon or even a series of sermons on home-life the minister can strengthen the weakening ties of the home, signify and sanctify parenthood in the eyes of the congregation, give definite help in the creation of a Christian home and the nurture of children, and undergird<sup>2</sup> all other parts of the program of parent education."

The pastor may serve parents in other ways than by delivering a single or a series of sermons on this particular subject. Sherrill suggests: "The interests of the family may be embedded in one's preaching so that they are never completely overlooked."<sup>3</sup> This emphasis on the family should certainly be found throughout all of the pastor's work.

## 2. The Midweek Service

The midweek service is a second time when the pastor may serve parents. Special addresses may be given on the specific subject of parenthood, yet any address should consider family interests. Roschy and Harner suggest: "Family life might be the subject of thought and prayer at the midweek service. Consecutive meetings over a period of time might well be given over to this subject."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 186.
2. Robert Roschy and Nevin C. Harner: How Can the Church Help the Home, p. 14.
3. Sherrill, Family and Church, p. 189.
4. Roschy and Harner, op. cit., p. 18.

In many instances the pastor uses the midweek service for Bible study. This is an excellent help for parents, but many of them do not realize this fact. It is obvious that study of the Bible will enrich one's life and be a means of growth in knowledge and experience of the Christian life, yet it does more than this for parents. It teaches them the conception of "Father," clarifies their ideas, and prepares them to be teachers of religion. It is the material which they will be teaching. The alert pastor will seize every opportunity in preaching and teaching to relate his material to the practical needs of parents. He will not need to strain a point or search for relationships if he uses the Bible to instruct or strengthen his people. This Book was written for the instruction of parents, and it assumes that they will in turn instruct their child in the way of eternal life.

### 3. Visitation and Counseling

Although the pastor's contribution in his group work is great, he may have as great or even greater a contribution to make in his work with individuals. If he is a man who is fitted to help parents and who avails himself of every opportunity to do so, it is quite likely that many parents will come to him with their problems. Ernest Groves analyses the situation by saying:

"Those who do ask the minister to act as a domestic counselor have three convictions that explain their

eagerness to look to the clergy for help. They believe the minister is in a position to understand human problems, especially those that originate in marriage or the family. They take it for granted that his training, as well as his contacts with people in trouble, has given him a penetration that make him especially qualified to act as counselor. They also assume that he is familiar with the resources that are needed to deal successfully with domestic difficulties."<sup>1</sup>

However, they will not come to him unless he has first made himself their friend. His best opportunity for doing this lies in his home visitation. Home visitation serves a number of purposes. As has been mentioned, it provides opportunities for making friendships, but it also provides opportunities to meet parents who send their child to Sunday School but who do not come themselves. A third purpose is that it provides an excellent opportunity for personal counseling. Too often the pastor has visited with a "church-centered objective"<sup>2</sup> and has used his visits to increase church membership. If he views the home as the primary unit of religious education and his visitation as a chance to make friends and help wherever he can, he will render the greater service and his membership will increase as a result. To be a good counselor the pastor must be informed concerning materials which would be helpful. At times his counseling may consist in bringing these materials to the attention of those who need his help. A third means

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1. Ernest R. Groves:: Christianity and the Family, pp. 128-29.
2. International Council of Religious Education: Home and Church Work Together, p. 16.



of counseling is through letters which he may write to those whom he cannot see personally.

#### 4. Special Events Pertaining to the Home

A pastor has the strongest contacts with the home and family life. The family seeks his aid upon many occasions of great importance. He comes to the home at times of sorrow or joy--a death, a sickness, a birth, a wedding, the establishment of a new home. He has the privilege of becoming a real friend and so has unlimited opportunities for service.

a. Marriage. It scarcely needs to be noted that:

"Customs which most of us follow bring church and home together at very important times, times when members of the family can easily be influenced by the ideals of the church....Marriage is the first of these, coming at that important time when the home is started."<sup>1</sup>

The pastor may take this opportunity to ask the engaged couple to meet him for one or more interviews before the wedding. It is his duty to make sure that the couple recognize the obligations which will be theirs if they become parents. He can try to "lead them into thinking their way through to the Christian meaning of marriage, and help them to determine that their goal shall be a truly Christian family."<sup>2</sup>

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1. International Council of Religious Education: Home and Church Work Together, p. 16.
2. Ibid.

b. A new home. When a newly married couple goes to their first home or when any family establishes a new home, the pastor may show his interest by calling upon them and by some means endeavoring to make the occasion of spiritual significance. He might take this time to point out the importance of the home, suggest that the church is a partner of the home, and offer its facilities for the family's use.

c. Birth. The birth of a child is the occasion when the church may begin its work with the adults as parents, but it would be a fine thing if the pastor could have some contact with the prospective parents. There are spiritual preparations to be made at this time as well as physical preparations. This is an opportune time to approach a couple, for when they are looking forward to the arrival of a baby they are interested in any helps which they may receive. When the child is born, the pastor again has an opportunity to call to show his interest and congratulate the parents. The child's name might be added to the Sunday School membership at this time, but far more important is to add the parents' names as members of a parents' class. They are ready to start their work as teachers, and they should be preparing themselves for the task.

d. Baptism. The pastor has an unusual opportunity to help parents when they come to him to have a child baptised. If the church is of a denomination which does not believe in infant baptism, they might institute a service of dedication. The church which does not have some service in which to recognize parental responsibility for the early life of the child is missing a great opportunity. The pastor may use this service to help parents by insisting that it be preceded by one or more interviews between himself and the parents. Indeed, it is not right to baptise or dedicate a child unless the parents realize the meaning of the service and unless they understand the personal responsibility which they assuming. It is at this time that the pastor may point out the nature of these responsibilities indicating how the home is a school and that the parents are teachers.<sup>1</sup>

e. Sickness and Death. When there is sickness or death in the family, the pastor has an opportunity to show his interest and concern for the welfare of the group. His visit, letter, or call may serve to emphasize the importance of family relationships. If a child is sick, his interest will awaken a responsive chord in the parents and may give him an entree into the home. If the parents are ill he may tactfully point them to their parental duties if

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1. Ibid., p. 17.

he shows concern that the child may miss instruction or guidance during the illness. When death comes to a family or a loved one, he may help parents interpret it to the child and so lead him into a truly Christian experience. Here he may offer the fellowship of the church in these times of need.

## 5. Summary

The pastor of the church by his position is able to meet many of the needs of the people of his congregation. His work is a vital part of the church's program for parent education. First, he is responsible for aiding the spiritual experience and growth of parents. Secondly, he has unlimited opportunities to show parents their responsibility in building a Christian home and in teaching religion. Thirdly, he can make clear the relationship of church and home and can offer the facilities of the church to those who need them.

### C. Work of the Sunday School Teacher

The Sunday School teacher is a person who is of invaluable aid to parents, as she makes a contribution to the home training of the child. She cannot assume full responsibility for this training. In addition to teaching the child, it is her obligation to help parents awake to their duties and to make them see that she is only supplementing their work. She may do this in several ways.

## 1. Home Visitation

The most important way to reach parents is through home visitation. The specific times for going may vary. A visit may be made to welcome new parents, to establish a friendship, or to visit because, as a teacher of a child in the home, she has a new relationship with the parents. The bulletin, "Home and Church Work Together," sums up the opportunities of the visiting teacher.

"The visiting teacher should consider the visit as a dual learning process. There is the opportunity to become acquainted with the home situation on one hand, the educational and cultural opportunities of the home, the possibilities for sympathetic understanding on the part of the parents, and for whole-hearted cooperation with the church school....It is equally important that the family know the major objectives of the church school, the purpose of activities, and the reasons for certain procedures."<sup>1</sup>

The teacher has a vital contact with parents because she enters the home in the interest of the child. There are few parents who reject an opportunity to talk about their child. Through conversation the teacher may see the situation and try to help in any way she can. She, like the pastor, should be well informed concerning materials and should give or recommend them wherever necessary. Home visitation is too vital a contact to be neglected. The Baptist church publishes a bulletin dealing with the home and the church and they advise that:

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1. Home and Church Work Together, p. 19.

"Church school leaders should be encouraged to visit in the home of each pupil once a quarter for the purpose of discussing the program and lesson materials and to secure the co-operation of the parents. The teachers should therefore help the parents know something of the child's progress."<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Lesson Materials

The Sunday School teacher may do much to develop the desired church-home relationship by "taking home life into account in the lesson courses."<sup>2</sup> Many lessons, particularly those planned for the child in the lower grades, contain letters, messages, and explanations for parents. These messages are put on the back of the weekly lesson leaflet or included in the work book which the child takes home. By this means the parents learn just what the child is doing and may build constructively upon the Sunday lesson. If the lessons used are not planned to include helps for parents, the teacher may keep the parents informed by other means. Sherrill gives an account of a plan which some church school used "whereby each month the school makes some definite contribution to the home education of the children. A message of some sort is sent monthly to the home of each child."<sup>3</sup> An outline for the Beginner's Department listed material to be sent to the parents. It included a church school calendar, names of the child's teachers, themes for the year, memory work for the year, lists of the child's books and

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1. The American Baptist Publication Society: Home and Church Working Together in Christian Education, pp. 11-12.
2. Home and Church Work Together, p. 47.
3. Sherrill, Family and Church, p. 220.

songs, and copies of games and prayers. The Sunday School teacher must in some way reach the parents and help them understand that they should teach and live all week the lesson which she teaches for an hour on Sunday. Only in this way will the teaching change attitudes and actions of the child.

### 3. Summary

The Sunday School teacher may, like the pastor, lead parents into a deeper Christian experience, as she shows them an example of a good teacher and as she makes them desire to be effective teachers themselves. She should also help them to see their responsibility in building a Christian home and to make them aware of the true relationship existing between church and home.

### D. Organizations

An emphasis in the program for parent education is the movement for the organization of parents' groups which may together form a parents' department of the church. These groups are sometimes composed of parents and teachers and sometimes consist of parents alone. They are organized for various purposes and meet as a part of the Sunday School or as an independent group.

#### 1. Parents' Groups

There are three types of groups being organized in the churches today which are for parents alone. A first

type is the Sunday School class for parents, the second is a club for parents, and the third is a parents' study group.<sup>1</sup>

a. Sunday School Class. The group meeting as a Sunday School class may be drawn together because they bring a child to Sunday School and remain for a period of study themselves. The purpose of this class is to enrich and enlarge the spiritual consciousness and to bring the members into a closer relationship with God. This group, having one great thing in common--parenthood--will be drawn together in such a way as to make worship natural and real and to make study vital.

b. Parents' Clubs. A second group of parents may recognize that they have certain problems and interests in common and so desire a chance to compare experiences, get new ideas, and enjoy the fellowship of other parents. The church has a contribution to make here if it organizes a group to meet this need. Certainly the church should be the unifying agent here, for its work is concerned with all phases of life. It is interested in problems of discipline, recreation, and social and educational attitudes. Here is a chance to see that parents realize the needs of their children, the factors which make the home a school, and the teaching elements in everyday living. In addition to

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1. Cf. George Gleason: Church Group Activities for Young Married People, pp. 51-56.  
Cf. Sherrill, Family and Church, pp. 210-222.  
Cf. Home and Church Work Together, pp. 22-26.



discussions, the group may sponsor projects or meet simply for fun and fellowship.

c. Study Groups. The third type of parents' group may be organized as a study group. The study group has much the same interests as the more informal parents' club. The chief difference is in the organizational form set up. Their approach is more scientific. They go to professional persons such as the doctor, lawyer, educator, pastor, or psychiatrist for information. They may make independent studies or use courses put out by various denominations.

Throughout local churches there are many groups of parents organized under different names. Most prominent of these are Mothers' Clubs. While they are in themselves extremely helpful, there is a danger that fathers will be neglected. Parents must share responsibility in the home just as the church and the home share. A mother can no more do the job alone than the church can. A Mothers' club is not sufficient in itself; there must either be an organization for fathers too or else a group for parents.

## 2. Parent-Teacher Groups

Parent-teacher groups have been well known in secular education for some time. Now the church is recognizing that this is an excellent place to start their program of home and church cooperation. Individual teachers may do much through visiting individual homes, yet there is

a great need for all of the parents to see the whole church program and for all of the teachers to know all of the parents. Parents and teachers both are engaged in the Christian education of the child, and they should be of much help to each other. Some parent-teacher meetings should be for the entire school, others would be most effective if parents and teachers of one department met together. At these meetings problems may be faced, suggestions given for improvement, the work of the church reviewed, responsibilities of parents clarified, and fellowship between parents and teachers strengthened.

In 1918, Cope made the statement: "Under our present educational organization there exists no formal provision for training parents for the real, the fundamental, and most difficult duties of home life."<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately this is still true to a large extent today. This emphasis on a parents' department of the church or the effort to organize parents' groups for the purpose of study, inspiration, and fellowship will be one means of training parents.

#### E. Holidays and Special Days

There are holidays and special days which could be used by the church to promote family unity, to get parents to undertake their rightful responsibility, and to draw the family to the church.<sup>2</sup> Certain distinctly religious

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1. Cope, op. cit., p. 215.

2. Cf. The American Baptist Publication Society, op. cit., pp. 12-14.

holidays such as Christmas and Easter should be celebrated in the home as well as in the church. The church may assume responsibility for these occasions, yet it defeats its own purpose if it does not see that the home is giving the same emphasis as it does. These two holidays too often are social holidays in the home and spiritual occasions only in the church. The teacher can accomplish little if a child's idea of Christmas concerns only presents and Santa Claus or if he thinks of Easter in terms of clothes or white bunnies. Through Sunday School lessons, messages, and letters sent home, parents can be informed as to the church's objectives for these times. Knowledge of the work of the church will not be enough in many cases; parents need material to use in the home. The church should supply suggestions for worship services, appropriate selections for Bible study, hymns, songs, stories, and any material which may be used to make the season more meaningful.

There are also special days such as Thanksgiving and Mother's Day which the church can use to draw the family together and to draw the whole family to the church for special worship services. Again emphasis should be put on family services at this time.

Christian Family Week which is held now every year may become a very special occasion and through it parents may receive much pleasure and benefit and families may draw closer together.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Cf. Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.: A Church Program for Promoting Christian Family Life, p. 21.

### F. Church Library

A church library is an invaluable aid to parents.<sup>1</sup> Many parents could not afford to buy new books; others would not know which books are helpful. There are many secular library facilities to be sure, but a church library should contain only the best and most helpful material. There should always be someone present when the library is open to give advice concerning books. To be a constructive help, some library organization must be set up to ascertain that books are available and known. In addition to books, the library should be well stocked with magazines, pamphlets, and any instructive material. The pastor or a teacher may suggest reading matter to parents, but if it is not easily accessible the chances are that it will not be read. The church library in providing material which is interesting, up-to-date, and helpful will be of great value in meeting parents' needs and will be an important element in the church's program for parent education.

### G. Summary

The church has many means by which to find, interest, and educate its parents. The pastor has a great responsibility for much of this work and so does the Sunday School teacher. In addition, there are several organizations which may be set up for this same purpose. Parents themselves

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1. Cf. The Methodist Book Concern: Planning for Home Co-Operation in Children's Work, p. 45.

need to gather into groups for instruction and fellowship. Teachers and parents must meet to keep informed about each other, as they are both engaged in the same task. To further home observance of holidays and special days is still another task of the church. Helps such as the church library and letters and materials sent into the home are other means of uniting home and church and of educating parents. The church cannot neglect this important area of Christian education if it desires its members to grow in the knowledge and love of God through His Son, Jesus Christ. It must organize a comprehensive program of parent education.

CHAPTER V

INVESTIGATION OF SELECTED DENOMINATIONAL MATERIALS  
FOR PARENT EDUCATION

## CHAPTER V

### INVESTIGATION OF SELECTED DENOMINATIONAL MATERIALS FOR PARENT EDUCATION

#### A. Introduction

This study so far has been concerned with the writings of various leaders in Christian education who have been interested in the field of parent education. Their findings and conclusions have been used as a basis for defining the needs of parents and for suggesting elements in a church program of parent education. It would now be valuable to turn to the denominations to see what approaches they are making in this field and to discover upon what needs they base their program.

It would be impossible to consider here all the elements which might be included in such a program, for they are so varied and in many cases so individual. Therefore, this study will be limited to an investigation of selected printed materials made available by denominational boards. In confining this inquiry to printed materials only, obviously the work of the pastor and the complete work of the Sunday School teacher will not be included. The choice of suitable books for a church library likewise will not be a part of this study.

In addition, it must be recognized that this study cannot be comprehensive. The emphasis on a program of

parent education is so new that the denominations are just starting work in this field. No completely organized program for parent education exists at the present time, although several boards are working toward this end. In some instances committees or boards have been set up to deal directly with this problem, in others, the approach is being made through other groups, such as the adult department or the Sunday School.

#### B. Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America has recognized the importance of parents' teaching and the significance of home life in the Christian education of the child and has organized a committee on Parent Education and Family Religion to care for this need. This committee is under the Board of Christian Education and functions as a "helping hand of the Board to the churches, and through the churches to the church's families."<sup>1</sup>

A study of the work of this committee reveals that they are publishing materials to be used for various aspects of the church's program. They have edited a number of educational leaflets and pamphlets which are to reach parents by means of a church leader or are to be made available through the church library. Sunday School lessons for the Nursery class and the Beginner's department contain messages to

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1. Adult Education News, Vol. X, No. 1, May, 1943.



parents and material for parents to use in the home. There is no material prepared for parents' groups as such, but there are study and discussion courses planned for adults. One group of these courses is on Christian Family Life. For church leaders there is a manual entitled: "A Church Program for Promoting Christian Family Life," and a pamphlet, "The Church and the Home." These contain a bibliography of materials for parent education and family religion. The committee is especially concerned with the observance of Christian Family Week. They use the paper, "Adult Education News," to advertise, stimulate interest, and give information concerning this project. The Presbyterian church designates October as the time for special emphasis on the family, and one Sunday in the month is known as Christian Home Sunday. For the year 1943 a service of worship was prepared for the use of churches, and each church was encouraged to buy and distribute to each family a copy of the leaflet, "Religion and the Home." To celebrate Christmas a Christmas Worship Service was planned for the family. In addition, to the service itself the leaflet contained suggestions for keeping Christmas at home.

These denominational materials indicate that the Presbyterian church is working for a comprehensive program in this field. The many activities which the church sponsors in its program of parent education have grown out of basic needs of parents. These needs were recognized, and

the activity started to meet the need. The materials mentioned as aids in carrying on these activities were prepared to meet certain of these needs.

There are three classifications into which this material falls. The first group, which includes the pamphlet, "The Church and the Home" and the manual, "A Church Program for Promoting Christian Family Life," is written to awaken church leaders to the fact that the home is the school of Christian education, that the parents are the real teachers, and that the church has a responsibility in aiding the parents. The manual mentioned gives a comprehensive view of the situation as can be seen by the titles of some of the chapters: "The Family in the Twentieth Century," "The Responsibility of the Church," "The Church's Objectives and Program for the Christian Education of the Family," and "Promoting the Program of Family Religion."

The second group of materials consists of leaflets written to awaken parents to their responsibilities and to point them to helpful materials. These are designed to catch the eye, to present the idea in brief but striking fashion, and to indicate where help may be found. These are in no sense exhaustive studies of the situation. A good illustration of this type of material is found in the leaflet, "It Isn't True." This leaflet emphasizes the importance of the home. The first statements are that it isn't true that certain institutions have the most influence

on the child. The truth is then given. "The strongest influence in determining your child's personality and character is...your home and your family."<sup>1</sup> A leaflet by George A. Buttrick points out another emphasis--a reason why parents should recognize their responsibilities. "Even in a nondescript home, loyalties and affections are kindled which give training a 'drive' and 'authority' not elsewhere easily found."<sup>2</sup> "Why We Baptize Our Children" is the title of a third leaflet which brings a third emphasis. "...in presenting a child for baptism, parents take upon themselves consciously and deliberately the obligation of their high privilege in training their children as God's children."<sup>3</sup>

Publications of the third group offer constructive helps to parents by pointing out the needs of the child and supplying material to meet these needs. The Sunday School lessons for the Nursery and Beginners departments take into consideration the fact that parents and teachers must teach the same things and so provision is made to inform parents of the work of the Sunday School and to suggest home activities. The Nursery department materials include a leaflet which is sent to the parents each week. This leaflet has one page for a story, one page for an illustration of the story, a third page of suggestions for activities in the home, and a fourth page which varies in its content. This

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1. Parent Education and Family Religion: "It Isn't True," p. 3.
2. Parent Education and Family Religion: "The Church and the Home," p. 3.
3. Parent Education and Family Religion: "Why We Baptize Our Children," p. 7.

last page deals with such topics as, "Answering the Child's Questions about Life," "Guiding the Child to Cooperate," and "The Need of Materials for Creative Activities." Accompanying these leaflets is a guidance pamphlet for parents. This pamphlet deals with such subjects as, "Discovering the Religious Needs of Little Children" and "The Use of the Bible in Guiding the Child in Christian Living."

The Beginners Sunday School weekly leaflets often include a message entitled: "Parents and Teachers Working Together." These messages may introduce the unit of work, explain a child's reaction to certain situations introduced in the lesson, or suggest home activities which relate to the Sunday School work.

One need of the child is for worship experiences in the family. A little booklet by Carl Kardatzke and Harold L. Phillips, "Ways of Worshipping in Our Homes" is an answer to this need. This booklet discusses values of family worship, ways in which families can worship, and aids to family worship. It also has a section telling how some Christian families worship. It is simply written and is very practical for parents who wish to institute this custom in the home.

Another practical help for parents is the printed worship service to be used in the home to observe a holiday or special day. The committee has made available a printed Christmas worship service. Beside the details of the

actual service it contains suggestions for a worship setting in the home, a preparation for worship, and ideas for keeping Christmas at home.

The study and discussion courses which the Presbyterian Board either publishes or recommends give the most inclusive help to parents. These are prepared for the adult program, but many are excellent for parents' groups. These courses cover a variety of topics such as living together in the family, preparation for marriage, education for parenthood, guiding children in personal and religious living and studies in the Bible. The course "Problems of Christian Family Life Today" has excellent material which is presented in an interesting way. The course deals with six different problems and treats them in the following way. The problem the chapter presents is analyzed and discussed in sections. There is a case study given, Biblical material recommended, questions and projects listed and source materials cited.

The materials of the Presbyterian church indicate that its leaders are awake to the necessity of a program of parent education and are approaching both parents and Church School leaders in an effort to build such a program.

### C. Baptist Church

The Baptist Church has organized a Parent Education Division under the Christian Education Department to do supervision work of parent education. An investigation of

available materials reveals that this division uses Sunday School lessons to reach parents. Messages to parents are prepared with the Sunday School lessons for children in the younger grades. Leaflets pertaining to lessons are also sent home. For parents who cannot attend the church services, a magazine containing International Uniform lessons is published. A booklet for daily devotions is also made available for home use. The committee on the American Home published a leaflet indicating a year's program for the home. There are no materials published for parents' groups, but courses recommended for the adult classes are suitable for parents. To help church leaders the Parent Education Board has prepared a booklet, "Home and Church Working Together in Christian Education,"

"This booklet is prepared to suggest ways in which the church can aid and encourage the home to provide such Christian experiences for children, young people, and adults as will enable them to meet victoriously the temptations and problems of modern life."

With the exception of this one booklet for church leaders, the rest of the material published by this board is designed to be put into the hands of parents. It is apparent that the leaders of this denomination assume that parents are teachers and that the home is a school where the child will learn Christian ways. The relationship of the church and the home is also recognized, and an effort is made to make this a working relationship.

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1. The American Baptist Publication Society: Home and Church Working Together in Christian Education.

To help parents in their work as teachers, leaflets entitled, "A Message to Parents" are sent home four times a year. These messages outline the work for the quarter, suggest possible activities for the home, and give brief statements designed to help the parents to a better understanding of the child. The leaflet, "Lessons and Parents," tells how one mother found out that she had to cooperate with the Sunday School and give religious instruction at home if her children were to have all the help they needed. "The Secret Place" is a book of daily devotions for individual and family use. While it is not written specifically for parents it recognizes that the members of the family need both a personal and family worship experience in the home.

Recognizing the fact that parents need help in Christian home-making and in the Christian training of the child, the magazine, "Home," is published. It has three sections of material, The Home, and the Home Department, The Child, and Bible Study. The Bible study is not prepared primarily for parents, but is intended for those who either cannot get to church or who desire to study at home.

In the booklet, "Materials for Church Work with Adults" there are courses listed for various classes. The ones suggested in the Christian Family Life section would be especially helpful to parents. Three courses listed, "Problems of Christian Family Life Today," "Youth and the Homes of Tomorrow," and "Christian Parenthood in a Changing

World" are also recommended by the Presbyterian church.

In order to put Christian ideals into practice, acquaint the family with the facilities of the church, and relate church and home activities, a series of practical suggestions are given in the pamphlet, "A Year's Program for the Christian Home." These suggestions include family activities which may be carried on in connection with the church such as visiting new neighbors and inviting them to church, attending a Thanksgiving service as a family, or inviting a lonely person to Christmas dinner.

A survey of these materials indicates that the leaders of the Baptist church recognize that parents need a great deal of help from the church in order to carry out their responsibilities in being Christian teachers and home-makers. Therefore, they are trying to supply material which will be educative and inspirational.

#### D. The Methodist Church

The Board of Education of the Methodist Church is so organized that the Departments of Christian Education of Children, Christian Education of Youth, Christian Education of Adults, and Leadership Education all give guidance in their aspect of parent education and family religion. There is a staff committee made up of representatives from each department which gives over-all attention to this field.

These committees publish materials for parents, and they use certain elements in the church program as



channels through which these materials may pass. Messages to parents are included in the Sunday School lessons for the younger grades. Helps for family devotions are given in the periodical prepared for home department members. The magazine, "The Christian Home," may be found in the church library or recommended to parents by the pastor or church worker.

This board has recognized that the home is an educational institution, and they realize the church's responsibility to help the parents who teach. "Planning the Church Program of Home Religion," is a publication which has been prepared to help churches meet this need. It stresses the facts that the home is the foundation for Christian growth, and that church and home need to work together. As the name indicates this pamphlet consists of suggestions for elements in the church program. A similar booklet is "Planning for Home Co-operation in Children's Work," a unit of study which is a part of Series One of the Standard Leadership Training Curriculum of the Board of Education of the Methodist Church. This unit studies such topics as: "Values of Co-operation Between Parents and Teachers," "Parents and Teachers Studying Together," "Parents' Classes," and "Parents' Meetings." A pamphlet for Primary Department workers is also published which lists helps for knowing parents.

All of the material surveyed with the exception of the last three booklets mentioned are designed to give

practical help to parents. The Nursery Department sends out letters to parents. One of these is to parents of children too young to attend nursery class. This letter explains the sacrament of Baptism and encourages parents to acknowledge their responsibility by this means. The Beginners and Primary Departments use lessons which contain messages to parents. These messages are printed in the leaflet which the child receives every week. They are sometimes in the form of a poem or a Bible verse, sometimes they are brief paragraphs which give information concerning the needs of the child, acquaint parents with the units of study, and suggest related home activities.

The "Home Quarterly" is a magazine published for members of the home department, but it contains guides to family worship. The magazine "The Christian Home," is a very practical help for parents. The material is classified into sections: articles, verse, a study course for parents, a study guide, "The Day's Devotions," and "First Steps in Christian Nurture." The articles contain stimulating facts and ideas which help parents to recognize the responsibilities which they must assume in rearing a child. There are many suggestions given to advise parents of constructive ways in which they may meet their problems. The experiences of other parents are related as helps.

The study courses on a variety of subjects provide excellent opportunities to increase knowledge and

enlarge the vision. The section on Christian Nurture is valuable as an aid in understanding the needs of the child, and suggesting ways to meet them. A last important emphasis is the section on the "Day's Devotions." An experience with God cannot be vital unless it is constantly growing and daily devotions are an excellent means of growth. The meditations given in these pages will help many parents in their personal and family worship experiences.

The Methodist Church has made a start in organizing work for parents. Most of the materials they publish are designed to be put into the hands of parents as aids from the church.

#### E. The Episcopal Church

The National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church has published a variety of literature which is to be used by parents and church leaders in a program of parent education. They issue leaflets containing suggestions or information which may be given to parents by the pastor or church worker. Another type of literature is designed for the leaders of the young child. This material is for parents and Sunday School teachers alike.

"In this program, parents will be regarded as leaders, who will work directly with the minister or with a leader appointed to take charge of the parish nursery department or with a nursery department committee."<sup>1</sup>

To suggest materials for parent-teacher organizations or for

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1. The National Council Protestant Episcopal Church: The Youngest Ones, p. 3.

the individual use of parents and teachers several bibliographies have been prepared. There is also a leaflet which discusses this relationship.

The Nineteenth Annual Episcopal Social Work Conference held in 1939 chose for its theme, The Church and the Family. The papers presented at this conference were published and might be used as a basis for work in parents' organizations.

A large proportion of the materials prepared by the Episcopal Board is directed to parents and leaders together.<sup>1</sup> This is indicative of their assumption that parents are leaders in the home and that they work with the leader in the church. There are few materials which are published for parents alone. One type of literature in this classification is a series of pictorial folders illustrating religious education activities. Two of these folders, "Better Parents" and "Their Early Years" suggest ways in which parents may teach the child, enrich his Christian experience, and relate activities of the church and home. A second type of material is printed prayers for parents to use in the home. Some of these are for parents' devotions; others are to be taught to the young child.

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1. The word "leader" is synonymous with the word "teacher" and is used when reference is made to a worker in the Sunday School.

The National Council publishes Christian Education units for the different departments of the church school and for the help of leaders. "The Youngest Ones" is the unit for the Nursery Department. In this denomination, the nursery class is not an established division of the Church School; the child comes to the Church School when he is ready to enter the Kindergarten department. Some individual parishes have organized a nursery class in the church, but the Nursery unit was not prepared for such a class.

"The function of the nursery department in the parish is to foster the Christian Education of the youngest children by keeping in touch with their homes and through a definite program for parents."<sup>1</sup> This approach shows that many of the basic needs of parents are recognized. Some examples are:

"Many parents today recognize that they have certain responsibilities in regard to the religious life of their own children. What they especially desire is help from the church in going about their task.... It is usually true that back of the help a parent desires for his child lies also the spiritual need of the parent."<sup>2</sup>

"It is important that parents and leaders understand that young children will inevitably gain their idea of God, of Jesus Christ, and of the church by living with people who are actually showing forth Christian attitudes in everyday behavior....It is through experiences which adults and children share...that learning takes place."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 4.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 15.

This unit suggests practical ways to meet these needs. A pamphlet, "The Nursery Department of the Church" gives in condensed form most of the material used in the unit.

For the Kindergarten age a unit has been prepared entitled: "Home and Parents." The aim here is to develop a picture of the Christian family in the mind of the child. There are suggestions given for counseling with parents. The work of home and church are related by the use of a progress sheet which is sent to parents. On this sheet they indicate progress made in the Kindergarten class and ask the parents to report the child's progress in the home. Another way in which guidance is given concerning church and home relationships is in the use of a leaflet, "The Parent-Teacher Relationship." This is intended to stimulate interest by its thought-provoking headings--"What Parents Have the Right to Expect of Teachers" and "What Teachers Have the Right to Expect of Parents."

A survey of this material indicates that the Episcopal Church is aware of the needs of parents and is starting to build a program for them. The materials available at present are designed for the parents of the young child.

#### F. The Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church is gradually building a program designed for parents. At the present time one of the secretaries of the Parish and Church School Board is

responsible for the development of the adult program, the Christian family program, and the co-operation with the home. The materials of this denomination include educational leaflets which may be distributed to parents by the pastor or church school worker; a nursery packet which the Sunday School teacher sends to parents; and leaflets for church workers. There is also a magazine which contains suggestions for parents.

The leaflets for church workers give suggestions for a church program of parent education. "The Church Educates for Family Life" is one leaflet which states the aims of parent education, suggests courses and textbooks to be used, and lists books and periodicals which will be of help. A second leaflet, "Let Church and Family be Partners," recognizes the relationship of the church and home and gives suggestions concerning things the pastor, the church, and families can do.

The materials for parents include promotional leaflets which are designed to catch the eye, give a brief message and stimulate thought. They are an attempt to get parents to realize their needs and to show how these needs may be met. There are several which concern the parents as teachers, several which recognize specific needs of the child, and several which explain the organization of the church and offer its facilities to the home.

The Lutheran Church recognizes that parents need the help of the church before the child is old enough to go to a Sunday School class. They have prepared the Nursery Packet which contains material to be sent to parents from the time a child is born until he is three years old. A bulletin advertising this packet states:

"This packet is used for three main purposes: (1) to give usable, reliable guidance to parents in the Christian education of their children; (2) to cultivate a cordial relationship between the home and the church; (2) to introduce parents and child to the church nursery class; and (4) to start parent education in the church."<sup>1</sup>

From a study of this material it is evident that the Lutheran church recognizes the basic needs of parents and is using material for church workers and for parents.

#### G. A Comparative Chart

In order to crystallize and bring together the findings of the investigation of selected denominational materials, a comparative chart has been included in this study. It indicates first the approaches being used by specific denominations. It is significant that the published materials of two denominations use all five approaches and meet all six needs. For another denomination four approaches are used and each need is recognized. Of the two remaining denominations, the materials of one involve three approaches and of another, two. Each of the last issues materials which meet five of the needs.

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1. The United Lutheran Publication House: First Steps in Christian Nurture.



The chart also indicates, through a study of the numbers, how many types of materials each denomination uses to meet a recognized need. Two denominations use as many as five types of material to meet one need, another uses four types, and the last two, use only three.

It must be recognized that this chart has many limitations because of the nature of the material and because new materials are continually being published in this field.

APPROACH	M	L	E	B	P
Materials for Parents in Sunday School Lessons	x	x	x	x	x
Materials for Organizations	x			x	x
Materials for Holidays and Special Days				x	x
Materials to Aid in Counseling and Visitation	x	x	x	x	x
Materials for Church Leaders	x		x	x	x
CONTENT					
A Vital Experience with God	3			2	1
Home as the Foundation of Christian Growth	1	1	1	1	2
Home as a School	3	1	1	1	3
Parents as Teachers	2	3	1	2	5
Needs of the Child	5	2	2	3	2
Relationship of Church and Home	4	2	3	4	4

M = Methodist  
 L = Lutheran  
 E = Episcopal  
 B = Baptist  
 P = Presbyterian

#### H. Summary

An investigation of materials from these five denominations reveals that they all approach the problem in a similar way. Four of them publish materials for church leaders. The purpose of these materials is to awaken the leaders to see the place of parents and of the home in Christian education and to suggest elements of a church program. Three denominations issue leaflets designed to awaken parents to their responsibilities. The largest proportion of material published by all five boards contains practical helps for parents and is to be used by them. The Episcopal church alone designs most of its material for parents and teachers together.

Much of the material may be used by the pastor or Sunday School teacher as helpful literature to take into the home. The pastor may find information for a sermon, a service, or for counseling in these materials.

Sunday School lessons are a major channel through which these materials pass. Three denominations provide materials for parents of Nursery children. Only one recognizes the child from birth until three years of age. Three use Beginners materials to give help to parents and one includes help through the lessons for Primary children.

Three of the denominations use study courses in the field of parent education. These are, however, only one series in a long list of courses prepared for adults.

One denomination publishes a magazine which is written especially for parents. Two others publish magazines for members of the Home department which include incidental helps for parents. Materials for the observance of special days and holidays are put out by one denomination, and one other lists suggestions for celebrating these days. This survey shows that no one denomination is preparing materials which may be used as aids in every element of the church's program.

All of the basic needs of parents are recognized by certain of these denominations and some material is prepared to meet each need. The most widely acknowledged need is the recognition of the relationship between the church and the home. Recognition that parents should understand the needs of the child and that parents are teachers is also receiving a good deal of attention. The fact that the home is a school is fairly well recognized. Bare recognition but no especial emphasis is laid on the necessity of realizing that parents need a vital experience with God and that the home is the foundation of Christian growth.

CHAPTER VI  
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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A. Restatement of the Problem

The church today has recognized that it cannot assume the entire responsibility for the Christian education of the child. Parents are the first and most important teachers. Therefore, the church must re-evaluate its position and make plans to provide a program of education for parents which will enable them to do their task more effectively. To plan a program the needs of parents must be recognized; then elements which meet these needs must be considered.

B. Summary

A survey of the historical background of the parent education movement revealed that there were four factors which might be considered as roots of the movement. These four factors were: (1) the writings of well-known religious leaders which introduced a new idea of how the child grows religiously and placed great emphasis on the place of the home in education; (2) the concern of ministers for the place of the home in society; (3) the secular movement of parent education which was rapidly growing; and (4) the recognition that the future vigor of the church was imperiled because of the loss of interest

on the part of young adults. There were various trends seen toward a parent education movement in the first thirty years of this century, but the present comprehensive movement was not initiated until 1931. The International Council of Religious Education started the movement and has been active in it ever since.

In studying the needs of parents six basic needs were recognized and investigated. The first was the recognition that parents must themselves have a vital experience with God. The second was that the home must be viewed as the foundation in Christian growth. It is a foundation, for it provides certain factors which are means of control of the child. These are a sense of security and opportunities for personal achievement, for observing character that is worthy of respect, and for sharing privileges. A third need was the necessity of recognizing that the home is a school in which growth takes place through experiment, discipline, thinking, appreciation and aspiration, conflict and cooperative activity. The fourth need is to recognize that parents are teachers. They teach in many ways such as, through the example of their own lives, through conversation, by answering questions, by sharing experiences, and by imparting factual knowledge. Recognition of the needs of the child is the fifth basic need of parents. The last need discussed was the recognition of the relationship which exists between the home and the church. The

church is a partner of the home and offers its facilities as aids to parents.

There are certain elements in the church's program which may be used to meet the needs of parents. The work of the pastor is a most important phase. He has many opportunities to help parents by his sermons, midweek services, visitation, and counseling. There are also special events pertaining to the home which give him additional chances to contact parents. The Sunday School teacher, likewise, has opportunities to aid parents through home visitation and lesson materials.

There are organizations which may be set up especially for parents such as the Sunday School class, parents' clubs, and study groups. There is also much value to be gained from parent-teacher groups. The celebration of holidays and special days should be observed in the home as well as in church, and the church may plan programs for home use in addition to services held in the church. The church library is another means of giving help to parents. It should provide current books, periodicals, and materials on a variety of subjects.

The investigation of denominational materials revealed that all five denominations are approaching the problem in a similar way. They publish materials for both parents and church leaders. The largest proportion of material contains practical helps for parents. Several



elements in the church program are used as channels through which the material reaches them. Materials are prepared for aids in counseling, Sunday School lessons, holidays and special days, and study groups. All of the basic needs of parents are recognized by certain of these denominations and some material is prepared to meet each need. The needs receiving the most emphasis are: (1) recognition of the relationship between the church and the home; (2) recognition of the needs of the child; and (3) recognition that parents are teachers.

#### C. Conclusions

The survey of the historical background of the parent education movement reveals that the modern secular movement came into being some time before religious leaders saw the necessity of such a program. Indeed this secular movement has contributed much to the thought of church leaders. Secular educators today are more fully awake to the necessity of a program of parent education than are church leaders and are doing more work in the field. The church program for parent education is not a copy of the secular program. The church is in a position to make a unique contribution because it is composed of parents and families. Lowered social, moral, and ethical standards in society today as well as war conditions make such a program imperative. The church will make a vital

contribution to society and revitalize itself if it turns its attention to this emphasis and makes comprehensive plans for a program of parent education. Most denominations have just started work in this field and the time is ripe for local churches to put into effect a complete and far-reaching program.

The investigation of denominational materials reveals that there is very little being done to use holidays and special days in the program of parent education. The church has a real opportunity at these times: first, to show parents that these occasions provide chances for sharing meaningful experiences in the home, second, to provide materials so that parents may receive help in planning for these occasions, and third, to relate the activities of the church and the home. This is too big an opportunity to be neglected and the local church should consider using this element in their programs.

To have a really strong and comprehensive program of parent education, each denomination could provide more materials that would be of practical help in meeting parents' needs. The available materials indicate that two needs are receiving very little attention. The first is the need for parents to have a vital experience with God. One reason for the lack of material on this subject is that the denominations recognize the spiritual needs of adults and include parents in this general heading. It is obvious that every

adult needs a vital experience with God before he can lead a truly Christian life. If parents, however, do not have this experience they cannot lead a Christian life themselves or lead their child into a Christian experience. Parents should recognize that they are not fitted to assume the responsibilities of parenthood until they have this vital experience themselves. This is an area which needs much more attention from the church.

A second need upon which no especial emphasis is laid is the recognition that the home is the foundation of Christian growth. Recognition of this need is fairly recent and this may explain why little attention has been paid to it. The church has a better chance to help parents if it can get parents to recognize this need.

The fact that the home is a school is widely recognized, yet this knowledge is not utilized to any great extent. In many ways the church still carries on its program as though it were assuming the entire responsibility for the Christian education of the child. A program of parent education cannot be considered adequate until it places the responsibility on the parents and recognizes that the church is a partner of the home.

The denominations studied have all started constructive programs for parent education. The great need now is to keep the programs enlarging and advancing.

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