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PARENT EDUCATION IN RELATION TO CHILD NURTURE
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INFANT BAPTISM
IN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
in
The Biblical Seminary in New York

New York, N. Y.
April, 1952

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INTRODUCTION

PARENT EDUCATION IN RELATION TO CHILD NURTURE
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INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem Stated

In the Lutheran Church as well as in other churches which practice Infant Baptism, this Service is the first occasion when the church speaks publicly and directly to individual parents concerning the new member of their family. It is true that there may be many indirect or informal references to parent-child relationships, but in the service of Baptism the pastor follows a generally accepted pattern of procedure which is primarily beamed at individuals. This pattern, both in respect to what is said and done, is a means of the church voicing its official teachings so that all who hear and see may know what the church believes. With this setting in mind, the orders followed in any service are a real part of the Church's educational program.

Many writers are urging the churches in general to speak clearly to parents in connection with their responsibility for the spiritual nurture of their children. One writer states it thus:

He [the child] is committed to his earthly parents to be trained for God's service. The parents have a responsibility they cannot evade; and when they seek to evade it, it is the duty of the Church and State, acting in partnership, to commit it again to them, assisting them when necessary.¹

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1. Frank E. Gaebelain: Christian Education in a Democracy, p. 239.

The question then arises: Does the order for Infant Baptism used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in which the church speaks to the setting of an infant child in a family, properly instruct the parents of that child in their responsibilities for the Christian nurture of their child?

B. The Problem Delimited

This thesis will not engage in a defense of the Lutheran view of Baptism. Neither will it attempt to examine all phases of the service of Baptism. The phase of child nurture which will receive attention is that which refers to the pre-school child, namely, the period of early childhood. That aspect of the church's parent education program will be considered which relates parents to the Christian nurture of their young children. Special reference will be made to that part of the parent education program which is contributed by the service of Infant Baptism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

C. The Problem Justified

Since the order for Infant Baptism is a part of the parent education program, it is important that it fully utilize the opportunity to make clear to parents their own responsibility. For example, the order does include an exhortation to provide instruction for the child, but the charge is addressed to the sponsors. The parents have no such charge. Furthermore the instruction urged is that which is of a direct nature, that is, with the use of textbooks. Such instruction cannot be adaptable to the infant child, yet it is the infant child that needs nurture first.

Another reason for giving attention to the parent-education aspects of the service of Infant Baptism is this: The service is usually a part of the regular worship service. This means that it is a public service and therefore the guidance given to the particular parents involved is also instruction for all other parents and parent-to-be. Coupled with this is the fact that recurring statements and procedures such as result from having an order for the service can be effective teaching tools.

A joint commission on liturgy, representing several Lutheran synods, has been appointed to work out orders for worship services and for ministerial acts which will be acceptable to their respective groups. This commission has already submitted, to the church bodies involved, proposed revisions, including a proposed order for Infant Baptism. The fact then, that the Altar Book may soon receive official revision, makes this study a timely one.

One more reason for engaging in this study is that there is evidence of erroneous attitudes on the part of parents who bring their children for Infant Baptism. This is indicated by writers too. One writer states: "It is a pity that to many parents baptism is merely a ceremony for naming the child."¹ Another puts his thought this way: "I am afraid that many parents, even among church members, bring their children to Baptism simply to follow a custom, which they do not wish to disregard. They give it no more serious thought than that."² A more extended comment in this connection is this:

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1. Jacob Tanner: The Value of Baptism For My Life, p. 4.
2. Olaf Guldseth: When Bringing Your Child to Baptism, p. 2.

The Christian parent, therefore, has not fulfilled his whole duty to the child when he has had it baptized. It is now the parents' duty, or rather it should be considered the parents' most blessed privilege to keep that child in covenant relationship with the blessed Redeemer. This also belongs to the teaching of the Church of the Reformation. This point, however, many parents seem to forget. Many who are sound on the question of Baptismal Grace, are very unsound as to a parent's duty to the baptized child.¹

All of the above quoted writers are respected in the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

D. The Method of Procedure

The first step in this study will be the examination of a variety of publications in the field of Christian nurture in order to discover the general views regarding the role of parents in relation to the Christian nurture of their children during early childhood. References to the church's relation to the parents in this connection will also be noted. The publications selected will include books, pamphlets, and periodicals representing viewpoints of both those who do and those who do not practice infant baptism.

The second step will involve a consideration of parent training in relation to child nurture as actually carried out in the programs of twelve churches in the United States, designated by the Christian Century as "Great Churches of America."² The phase of the programs emphasized will be that related to infant baptism, or dedication, though the regular church program, as it aims to inform and assist the parents in fulfilling their obligations for the Christian

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1. G. H. Gerberding: The Way of Salvation in the Lutheran Church, p. 55.
2. Christian Century, Volume 67 (Jan. - June, July - Dec. 1950).
(A list of these churches will be found in Appendix A.)

nurture of their children, will also be considered.

In order to secure relevant information from these churches a questionnaire was sent to each of them. Those churches from whom no completed questionnaire was received, will be considered briefly on the basis of the articles concerning them in the Christian Century.

The third step will involve a critical examination of the present procedures in the baptism of infants in the Evangelical Lutheran Church as set forth in the Altar Book,¹ Almanac,² and Liturgical Texts.³ The regular order for infant Baptism is found in the Altar Book, an optional order is found in the Almanac, and a proposed order is found in Liturgical Texts. The objective of the examination will be to discover the explicit and implicit instructions given in the orders which are relevant to the role of parents in relation to the Christian nurture of their baptized child. On the basis of the findings, the orders will be evaluated in the light of the evidence presented in chapters one and two.

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1. Altar Book (Evangelical Lutheran Church), pp. 69-74.
2. Almanac (1951). Handbook for Pastors in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, pp. 136-139.
3. Liturgical Texts, pp. 24-28.

CHAPTER I
THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN CHRISTIAN NURTURE
DURING EARLY CHILDHOOD
AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE
CHURCH

CHAPTER I

THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN CHRISTIAN NURTURE DURING EARLY CHILDHOOD AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCH

A. Introduction

By the very manner in which children enter upon life here on earth, a relationship is established between children and their parents which is personal, intimate, and nearly all inclusive. This relationship does involve the physical realm and there seems to be a general realization of the unique physical responsibility that parents have for their children by the simple fact of the parents' physical relationship to the child. However, when the child's spiritual welfare is considered, there are many indications that the responsibility of the parents is often only dimly recognized. While there are many who apparently would not even regard their child as a gift from God, and thus do not consider God in this issue at all, this thesis is concerned with the role of parents in Christian child nurture.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the nature and scope of the role of parents in Christian education of pre-school children, especially during infancy. Attention will also be given to the church's relation to this responsibility on the part of parents.

The procedure used to attain the goal will involve the examination of the variety of publications in the field of Christian nurture for their emphases on the sources and means of such Christian nurture during early childhood. The publications include books, pamphlets, and periodicals representing viewpoints of both those who do and those who do not practice infant baptism.

B. The Role of Parents in Christian Nurture

During Early Childhood

1. The Inevitability of Parent Responsibility for Christian Nurture.

By the simple definition that parents are those who beget or bring forth offspring, it becomes obvious that there is a relationship between parents and their children which goes far beyond human choice. This chapter will not discuss the laws of heredity which bind the parents and children together, but it needs to be kept in mind that the responsibilities of parents for their children are rooted in this basic parent-child relationship. As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, the task here is to discover what writers are saying with reference to the parents' responsibility for the spiritual welfare of their children.

Many authors make sweeping statements in this connection. A few of these will be quoted in order to get their emphasis clearly to the fore.

a. Teaching Unavoidable in Parenthood.

Regina W. Wieman writes: "It is inescapable truth that the degree of wise consistency of parents provides the foundations for the

child's relations to his family, community, nation, and God as he matures."¹ Herman J. Sweet approaches the issue in this way:

Just in passing, may we explode that ridiculous theory widespread among modern parents and expressed by one mother thus: 'We are not giving our children any formal religious training until they are old enough to choose for themselves. It seems so unfair to give a child ideas of God and religion when he is too young to choose and discriminate.' And in what sort of vacuum is the child to be reared until this age of discretion is reached? . . . If they [the children] are not getting a helpful concept of God, then they may be getting ideas of God as the policeman, the boggy man, the tyrant, or the capricious satisfier of selfish wants. This sort of God comes from false teaching or from no teaching at all.²

Later on in the same book he states: "Whether they accept the role or not, parents are teachers. Indifference, neglect, criticism, and lack of appreciation carry their own lessons."³

Robbie Trent offers this: "Shall I teach my child of God? I am answering that question every day. For good or for ill, positively or negatively, for faith or for fear, I am teaching my child of God."⁴

It is on the basis of emphases like those above that the statement is made that parents' responsibility for the Christian nurture of their children is inescapable. Parents are teachers; the results may be either good or bad. Other writers too give this emphasis,⁵ and it is noted that the thinking is much the same regardless of the view that may be held relative to infant baptism.

Moreover, parent responsibility for Christian nurture does not stem only from the fact that parents and children are uniquely

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1. Regina W. Wieman: Does Your Child Obey, pp. 61-62.
2. Herman J. Sweet: Opening the Door for God, p. 39.
3. Ibid., p. 120.
4. Robbie Trent: Your Child and God, p. 14. Cf. H. J. Sweet, op. cit., p. 29.
5. Cf. E. B. Staples and E. D. Staples: Children in a Christian Home, pp. 55-56. Leslie B. Hohman: As the Twig is Bent, p. 3.

related. It is also placed upon the parents by God himself.¹ An explicit statement to this effect is given by F. E. Gaebelin as follows:

Parents are under divine obligation to provide their children with more than the physical aspects of a home; while they may use the school to give them experience they cannot give, the home is prior to and above the school and even by the time the child is ready for school, it will have given him, for better or worse, a foundation of crucial importance.²

Thus it is seen that both the natural relationship existing between parents and their children and God's desire for parents are in complete accord in the matter of the parents' responsibility for the spiritual nurture of their children.

b. Parental Influence in Earliest Childhood.

That this responsibility is relevant to the child's early childhood may be discovered by observing what writers say as to the time, in the child's life, when Christian nurture begins. Mr. Havneros, for example, says that impressions are made before verbal communications are possible: "that which has gripped the mother, takes hold also of the babe, for an infant is capable of religious feeling before it can think one religious thought."³

Others referring to the time when Christian nurture begins use phrases such as "earliest childhood",⁴ "from birth", "earliest moments" and "foundations are laid very early indeed."⁵ Such writers concur that there is grave danger in any idea of delaying the nurture

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1. Cf. E. B. Staples and E. D. Staples, op. cit., pp. 55-56.
F. E. Gaebelin, op. cit., p. 239.
2. Loc. cit.
3. I. J. Havneros: What About Your Child, pp. 3-4.
4. Lewis J. Sherrill: The Opening Doors of Childhood, p. 38.
5. Cf. H. J. Sweet, op. cit., pp. 27-29.

of children until some development has taken place because it is, in fact, impossible to delay spiritual influence. Impressions are received at a very early age. The question then is not "When shall parents teach" but rather "What shall they teach."¹

By the exclusiveness of the association of young children with their parents, it becomes evident that parents make up practically the total influence exerted upon the very young child.² Thus the question of what parents shall teach becomes even more significant when it is remembered that what parents teach is practically the only teaching that the young child receives.

Mr. Feucht suggests something more that is relevant to the discussion in that he refers to the time element involved in the parents' preparation for their task:

Before long your boy will be going off to school and Sunday School. But don't make the mistake of thinking that his education begins then. That began long ago, in fact, more than twenty years ago. It began when you were born. Does that statement startle you a bit? Let me explain. Everything that enters into the experience of the father and the mother will usually also influence the life of their child to some degree. The attitude of the parents and the atmosphere of the home are the strongest influences which bear upon the life of a child.³

This quotation clearly states that what parents are is more significant than any formal or direct instruction for nurture during the early life of the child. This leads to the next phase of the discussion.

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1. Cf. E. B. Staples and E. D. Staples, op. cit., p. 61.
Cf. Leslie B. Hohman, op. cit., pp. 22, 26.
2. Cf. H. J. Sweet, op. cit., pp. 26-27.
3. Oscar E. Feucht: So You Are a Parent, p. 6.

2. The Means of Spiritual Influence is the Parent-Child Relationship.

It has already been noted that, consciously or unconsciously, parents do teach of God for good or for ill.¹ The next objective is to discover how this inevitable teaching takes place.

a. Indirect Child Nurture During Early Childhood.

The most repeated assertion is that the parents' attitudes are the most important means of influencing the child during early childhood.² The parents' attitudes are communicated to the child by the tone of the voice, facial expressions, and the manner in which the child is handled. Parents do have attitudes and these attitudes are expressed through these various channels and in that way make their impact upon the child. In addition to the parents' attitudes, Robbie Trent cites the parents' practices and interpretations of life as also having importance. Her elaboration is summed up as follows:

If he takes no account of God, either in his speech or in his conduct, still he is teaching, and that teaching is negative. 'God does not count,' he is saying, and the child is quick to adopt that attitude.

If he takes God into account and defies him in speech or in conduct, the parent teaches. 'I am against God,' he says, and the child catches that point of view.

If he respects God, if he loves God, if he honestly seeks to order both his words and his relationships according to the standards of God, the parent is teaching. And who shall say that the child is

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1. Ante, p. 3.

2. Cf. Robbie Trent, op. cit., pp. 13, 23.

Cf. Oscar E. Feucht, op. cit., p. 6.

Cf. I. J. Havneros, op. cit., p. 3.

Cf. H. J. Sweet, op. cit., p. 83.

Cf. E. B. Staples and E. D. Staples, op. cit., pp. 62, 67.

Cf. Leslie Hohman, op. cit., pp. 39, 59.

Cf. L. B. Schenck: The Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant, p. 143.

Cf. P. H. Lotz, ed.: Orientation in Religious Education, p. 243.

not learning, constantly building for himself a concept and a standard which shall in some small way at least bring in for him and for those he touches a measure of the Kingdom of God?¹

Further indications as to how parents teach come from the consideration of the fact that the term "father" is used to designate both the male parent and God. The New Testament account of the prodigal son² indicates more than accident in this dual use of the term "father." In fact, it clearly presents the male parent as a visual aid for revealing the Heavenly Father. This is in the background when writers say that children receive their earliest impressions of their Heavenly Father from their thoughts about their human father.³

Lewis J. Sherrill, after giving an illustration of the great influence ascribed to her father by a woman of unusual spiritual achievement, writes thus:

What a freightage this places upon the father of a household! And if a child has no experience in his own home with which he may associate the idea of a Heavenly Father, then those who seek to help him must almost begin without a place to begin.⁴

Lest the burden of the parents' responsibility for the nurture of their children seem to be heavy, the other side of the picture must also be noted. There is also great encouragement for the parents when they realize that God has given them so exalted a position in relation to their children that they, the parents, are to be God's representatives.⁵

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1. Robbie Trent, op. cit., pp. 13-14.
2. Luke 15:11-32.
3. Cf. Robbie Trent, op. cit., p. 21.
Cf. Lewis J. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 37.
4. Ibid., p. 38.
5. Cf. H. J. Sweet, op. cit., p. 41.

Parents then, by what they are, inevitably make spiritual impact upon their children, and this begins at a very early age. This impact has either good or bad results. Furthermore, the influence of the parents makes up practically the total influence on the child during early childhood. Such being the case, it is necessary to consider now what parents need to be in order to provide the right kind of nurture, that is Christian nurture, for their children. The law of cause and effect certainly is in play here. If the effect desired is that the children may constantly be growing up in the Christian life, then the cause must exist in the parents.¹

References used earlier in this chapter in discussion of the time when child nurture begins,² are also relevant in connection with this discussion of the requirements for parents in relation to the Christian nurture of their children. Both Mr. Feucht and Mr. Sherrill indicate that what parents are is a sum of all their past experiences.³ The conviction that parents can change and improve is implicit in all efforts designed to aid that growth which is a necessary quality for parents.⁴ It is in that light that suggestions seem to be presented.

Robbie Trent has two contrasting pictures which briefly summarize what parents ought and ought not be, if they desire to provide Christian nurture for their children. The first is an explanation of what it means to believe on Jesus:

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1. Cf. L. B. Schenck, op. cit., p. 149.
2. Ante, p. 6.
3. Cf. Oscar E. Feucht, op. cit., p. 6.
Cf. Lewis J. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 39.
4. Cf. H. J. Sweet, op. cit., p. 31.

'It means believing in the things he believed in, living for the things he lived for, always trying to do what he wants. It means trusting him to forgive you and to help you live the way he taught.'¹

This definition is one that is communicated to the young child through attitudes and actions. The description of what parents ought not to be is given in this way:

The child who discovers that his parents are dishonest, or unfriendly, or backbiting, or snobbish, or unbelieving, will not be at all impressed when his parents talk to him about religion.²

The conclusion then is simply that the parent must have daily experience with God and if this is genuine, during the earliest years few words are needed to teach the child of God.³

That parents cannot give to their children what they do not have themselves seems to be obvious and yet the attempt to do so is often made with the result that the children sense the inconsistency and the over-all result is negative. Thus the question as to what shall parents teach becomes essentially: "What must parents be?"⁴ Mr. Guldseth addresses himself to parents thus:

But, dear friends, pray! Pray for yourselves and pray for your child!

A precious treasure is laid into your arms! A treasure for Heaven. Yours is the responsibility for its welfare.

Pray for it!

Pray with it, as soon as possible!

Pray that, when your child arrives at the age of discretion and follows your daily life, it may see you, its parents, living in union with Jesus Christ! Pray that your daily life may bear witness to your child, that you are drawing your happiness, your peace and joy, your strength and comfort from your dear Savior, and that you are walking in His steps.⁵

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1. Robbie Trent, op. cit., p. 41.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Cf. H. J. Sweet, op. cit., p. 30.

4. Ibid., pp. 30, 100.

5. Olaf Guldseth: When Bringing Your Child to Baptism, p. 8.

Here parents are urged to be Christian parents, to be on intimate speaking terms with the Heavenly Father, to be in union with Jesus Christ. Practically, then, if parents are to be what they ought to be for their children, they must heed the words of our Lord when he gave the conditions of discipleship in Mark 8:34: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."¹

Christian parents will provide Christian homes in which Christ rules and the family grows as a unified group of thankful, joyful, and obedient children of God. The leaflet, "Christian Education Builds Christian Homes"², has this to say in regard to a Christian home:

The influences of home life in early childhood are the corner-stone on education. In the Christian education of the child, the home plays the decisive role in the pre-school period, and a tremendously important role throughout childhood and youth.²

When mature Christians reflect on their childhood experiences they find meaningful evidence of the great significance of their home training. L. J. Sherrill gives a vivid example of that in the illustration mentioned above³ of an adult reflecting on the influences of her father.⁴

b. Beginnings of Direct Teachings in Early Childhood.

Several authors point out that there is little by way of direct or formal teaching accomplished during the early years of a

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1. American Standard Version of the Bible. Mark 8:34.
2. Christian Education Builds Christian Homes, col. 2.
3. Ante, p. 7.
4. Cf. Lewis J. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 38.

child's life.¹ Since, however, direct teaching may also begin in very early years, some attention must be given here to that beginning.

The first truth that the child can sense is simply that Jesus is, that He is real and that He is significant in the lives of his parents. When He is spoken of with thankful respect and reverence, when His presence is heeded in all settings and situations, the child becomes aware of a reality even though it is beyond his perceptions. The child receives the impression of one who is strong and one who loves people.²

In regard to the Bible, the Lord's Day, prayer, or even Worship Services, the child is impressed with the attitude of the parents. At a very early age the child senses that this reverence and respect on the part of his parents is associated with another person, namely God. It is God's Book, God's house, God's day and speaking to God. Out of these settings the simple telling of something from the life of Jesus comes as a very natural experience.³

The emphasis for all instruction is that it must be woven into the experience of the child so that it is meaningful to him, and he begins to recognize God as the Source of all the good gifts in his daily life. Unless, however, the child can sense that what is told to him is significant in the life of his parents, the end result is apt to be negative rather than helpful to the growing child.

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1. Cf. Lewis B. Schenck, op. cit., p. 143.
Cf. H. J. Sweet, op. cit., p. 29.
Cf. Ilse Forest: Child Life and Religion, p. 78.
2. Cf. Robbie Trent, op. cit., pp. 28, 34.
Cf. H. J. Sweet, op. cit., pp. 40, 76.
3. Ibid., pp. 83, 90, 104.
Cf. Robbie Trent, op. cit., pp. 23, 124, 132.

In the light of all that has been noted in the discussion of the role of the parent in Christian nurture during early childhood, the quotation from Robert F. Horton cited by H. T. Kerr is pertinent:

The father is as much bound to train the child-soul as he is to feed and clothe its body, and when once the Church begins to insist upon this truth, and when the State declines to give that religious instruction which only parents can give, every man will wake up to the reality of the situation, and will find that if he does not teach his children religion they will go without it, and that to leave his children without it is to inflict on them the cruellest wrong that man can perpetrate.¹

Here is a man who not only asks parents to face their responsibilities for religious instruction of their children but also suggests that both the Church and the State are implicated in the issue. This thesis does not include the State's implication in the issue but it is concerned with the implications for the Church, and attention will now be given to that aspect.

C. The Church's Relation to Parent Responsibility for Christian Nurture During Early Childhood.

1. The Realm of the Church's Responsibility.

The Church is here thought of primarily as the local congregation but it may also refer to the larger body, the organization which groups many congregations together. In the congregation idea, there is the thought of a fellowship of children of God. If that fellowship is real then it is implicit that the whole fellowship is concerned about any part of the fellowship. Thus in general it can be said that every individual shares the responsibility of the whole group and also that

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1. H. T. Kerr: The Christian Sacraments, p. 148.

the whole group shares responsibility with every individual.¹ There are, however, some things that must be done by the individuals, with the aid of the group, and there are other things that can only be accomplished by the collective efforts of the group. Christian nurture for young children is one of those things that must be accomplished by individuals, parents in this case, with the aid of the Church. Let it be well noted that the Church is the aid, not the substitute.²

The relationship existing between the church and the parents in this connection has been well stated in the following:

As a division of labor, the church will be responsible mainly for content teaching while the more difficult task of guiding the child's living of the Christian faith belongs primarily to the parents. Parents' training for this work should have begun when, as children themselves, their parents lived religiously. Their preparation for Christian parenthood should have been fostered when, as high-school and college students, they studied the meaning of Christian marriage. If the minister whom they consulted on the eve of their marriage did his job well, he initiated a process of counselling and church guidance which related the couple to suitable group life in the church in preparation for the coming of children.³

Thus the church is related to the problem of Christian child nurture in that it has an obligation to aid the parents in being prepared for their task. Thus the church should not take over the responsibility from the parents but rather should help the parents to see their responsibility and both insist that they accept it and help them in fulfilling their obligation to their children. After calling attention to tragedies resulting from the evil influence of adults in homes, and suggesting that evidence exists which indicates that only few married couples read

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1. Cf. Lewis B. Schenck, op. cit., p. 152.
2. Cf. H. J. Sweet, op. cit., p. 123.
3. P. H. Lotz, ed., op. cit., pp. 242-243.

their Bibles at home, A. C. Repp offers this comment:

There is little gained in blaming the home for all this until we have carefully re-examined the Church's program of education and, more particularly, have set up a vital study program for adults.¹

He continues with strong urging for an effective Bible-study program for the whole congregation. In doing so he clearly points the way for the direct manner in which the Church can best aid parents in fulfilling their obligation to their children. Other suggestions are given which should also be helpful in the total program of the Church.

2. The Role of the Church in Relation to Parent Education.

If parents are to become sensitive to their own needs it seems logical that some basis of self analysis would be helpful. One Board of Parish Education offers a series of one hundred questions, fifty-seven in reference to "The Ideal Christian Home" and the remaining forty-three related to "The Home and Church Relationships." These questions are designed to help parents analyze themselves and their home.² H. J. Sweet has a more general check list that would also be of help.³

Study and discussion classes are urged for parents. The topics for study suggested are mainly in the fields of the Christian life and the Christian home.⁴ The Worship Service is certainly designed to aid the growth of the Christian life of parents as well as all others in the Service.

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1. A. C. Repp: "We Emphasize a Bible Study Program Now." Concordia Theological Monthly, Dec. 1948, p. 883.
2. Self Analysis Chart for the Home.
3. Cf. H. J. Sweet, op. cit., p. 114.
4. Cf. E. B. Staples and E. D. Staples, op. cit., p. 60.
Cf. H. J. Sweet, op. cit., p. 127.

Significant events, such as marriage, the birth of a child, and the baptism or dedication of an infant give excellent opportunities for the Pastor's personal contact with parents. These afford favorable counselling situations and should be utilized effectively for parent education in relation to obligations for their children.¹

In addition to furnishing counselling situations, the events of baptism or dedication should in themselves give clear and understandable instruction to the parents relative to their duties toward their young child.² In this same connection the whole congregation prays for the child and its future welfare in the Kingdom of God.³

Since this matter of the Church's responsibility to help the parents to fulfill their obligations to their children is always more difficult to follow in practice than in theory, this phase will be more fully examined in the next chapter. There, as previously indicated,⁴ the reports from various successful churches will be analyzed to discover what is being done by way of helping parents to provide adequate Christian nurture for their children.

D. Summary

By the very nature of God's provision for the propagation of the race, parents and children are uniquely related both spiritually

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1. Cf. P. H. Lotz, ed., op. cit., p. 242.
2. Cf. Common Service Book of the Lutheran Church, p. 231.
Cf. Altar Book (Evangelical Lutheran Church), p. 73.
Cf. Lewis B. Schenck, op. cit., p. 140.
3. Cf. Lewis B. Schenck, op. cit., p. 152.
Cf. Altar Book, pp. 70, 71, 73.
4. Ante, p. viii.

and physically. Parents receive great privileges and responsibilities when children are entrusted to them.

In this chapter a variety of publications dealing with the Christian nurture of children were examined to discover their emphasis on parent responsibilities to their children during the pre-school period. It was found that parents inevitably begin influencing their children from the day of birth onward and that this influence is either for good or for evil in respect to the child's concept of God. This influence is communicated indirectly rather than through direct or formal instruction. The indirect, but inevitable instruction is given to the child by the attitudes and conduct of the parents in whom the child sees a visual aid for the Heavenly Father. Direct instruction is only slightly begun during early childhood, and it is accomplished by telling simple truths related to the child's experience.

It was further noted that the church shares the responsibility for Christian child nurture with the parents. The church's relation to the problem was seen to be primarily that of responsibility for parent education so that the latter will be able to fulfill their obligations to their children. The essential field of the church's aid to the parents is this of helping the parents to be what they need to be in order to provide Christian nurture for their children. The church can accomplish its mission to the parents through the means of the regular worship services, special classes of instruction relating to the Christian life and the Christian home. The significant events of marriage, child birth, and baptism or dedication offer excellent opportunities for pastoral counselling with a special concern for the problem of Christian nurture.

Also the Church as a fellowship of God's children, prays for parents and their children that the latter may abide and grow as members of the Kingdom of God.

The next chapter will examine what churches are doing in a tangible way to help parents fulfill their obligations to their children in the field of Christian nurture.

CHAPTER II
PROGRAMS OF PARENT EDUCATION
WITH REFERENCE TO CHRISTIAN NURTURE OF THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD
AS FOUND IN SELECTED CHURCHES

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A. Introduction

In the first chapter attention was directed to what has been written by authorities relative to the responsibility of parents for the Christian nurture of their children and to the church's relation to this problem. In this chapter attention will be directed to what some specific churches are doing in this field of parent education with reference to the Christian nurture of pre-school children.

The group of churches to be considered, it will be recalled,¹ are those selected by the Christian Century and featured in a series of articles during the year 1951 as the "Great Churches of America." That selection lists twelve churches which represent all areas of the nation and also includes various types of churches such as rural, small town, and large city churches. In connection with the term "Great" the following paragraph gives pertinent clarification:

Whether these twelve are the greatest in America is not important, and in any event, only God knows whether they are or not. But they are sufficiently outstanding so that they serve as symbols of what churches ought to be, and what most of them are in some measure.²

Among the several reasons given for the greatness of these churches, there is one that suggests most clearly how the programs of

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1. Ante, p. vii.
2. Editorial in the Christian Century, Vol. 68, January - June 1951, p. 7.

these churches are relevant to the problem of this thesis. This reason is stated thus: "Each [Church] skillfully conveys to the young the truth it possesses."¹

In order to secure information relative to the parent education programs of these churches, a brief questionnaire² was prepared and sent to each of them, together with a letter of explanation for the request. Completed questionnaires were returned by seven of the churches, a few of them including some elaboration. The First Community Church of Columbus, Ohio, also included a twelve-page mimeographed summary of its program of education in marriage and family,³ a sample copy of its certificate of baptism⁴ which gives the baptismal service and a three-page discussion of child's growth in the Christian life. Because of this extra material from the First Community Church, a more complete picture can be given of its program than will be possible for the other churches.

In the case of the five churches from whom no completed questionnaire was received, the articles dealing with those churches were examined to discover general statements relative to their program of parent education. This information will be dealt with separately in this chapter.

In reporting the information secured, the practices in the seven churches from whom completed questionnaires were received will

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1. Loc. cit.
2. See Appendix B (Sample copy of the Questionnaire).
3. Roy A. Burkhart: The Church's Program of Education in Marriage and Family.
4. Covenant of Devotion, the Baptismal Certificate of the First Community Church, Columbus, Ohio.

be considered under two headings. The first will be the general program of parent education with reference to Christian Nurture, and the second will be the procedures followed in connection with the service of baptism or dedication of infants which indicate the implications for parents. This division is made in light of the overall objective of this thesis, namely that of parent education in general and then also the special reference to Infant Baptism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Two charts will be included in this chapter to show the basic answers to the questionnaire.

B. Programs of Parent Education
in Seven of the Selected Churches

The seven churches from whom completed questionnaires were received are the following:

First Methodist Church, Orlando, Florida
Collegiate Methodist Church, Ames, Iowa
Olive Chapel Baptist Church, Apex, North Carolina
Washington Prairie Evangelical Lutheran Church, Decorah, Iowa
First Presbyterian Church, Hollywood, California
First Evangelical and Reformed Church, New Knoxville, Ohio
First Community Church, Columbus, Ohio.

Their general programs will be considered under three headings:

(1) Special classes for parents, (2) Instruction for parents in the Church's over-all program, and (3) Printed materials used in the parent education program.

1. The General Programs of Parent Education in Relation to Christian Nurture.

a. Special Classes for Parents.

Six of the seven churches indicated that they have a program

CHART I

THE GENERAL PROGRAM OF PARENT EDUCATION

Church	Special Classes	Special Sermon Series	Sermons For Special Occasions
First Methodist	Newly wedded couples	Yes	Yes
Collegiate Methodist	Pre-marriage counsel Reading Suggested	x	x
Olive Chapel Baptist	Annual week of Christian Home Emphasis Annual forum for young married couples and those approaching marriage		x
Washington Prairie Evangelical Lutheran	L.D.R. (young mothers)	Stressed a great deal in Sunday sermons	x
First Presbyterian	Building a Christian Home (young couples) Preparing for marriage (high school and college students) Special Course for parents of adolescents	x	x
First Evangelical and Reformed Church	Pastor instructs parents in their home and reminds them of their responsibility		Special Days Confirmation Mother's Father's Christian Festival
First Community	Family workshop (one of which is for newly weds) Family Day in church (four times annually)	x Regular Sermons contribute too	x

WITH REFERENCE TO CHILD NURTURE

Emphasis on Family Devotions	Home Visitation	Production of Material for Distribution	Printed Material for Distribution and Circulation
Yes	Yes	No	
x	x		Christian Home (Magazine)
x		Outline material for forum	Relevant books by the following authors: Burton Duvall and Hill, Wood, Baber, Groves, Trent, Smith, and Tyler
x		Bible-Book and Character study are presented	Good books are listed in the Sunday bulletin
x	x	Varied	Works from the following authors Popenoe, William Evans, Geiseman, Nelson
"Upper Room" Old German Prayer Books	x		Heidelberg Catechism, Church Hymnal, Church Paper "The Messenger"
"Upper Room"		The Ch.'s Prog. of educ. in marriage and family "The Secret of Marriage" "Our Marriage" "Love's Personal Witness" "Let Us Answer the Kinsey Report."	Works from the following authors Magoun, Wood, Hogue, Gesell, Hayward, Lester, Fosdick, Steere, Buttrick, Preston, Menninger. Also Gov't pamphlets on hygiene & children

for educating newly wedded couples or couples with their first child. The seventh church¹ indicated that it has a course of instruction for young mothers consisting in a strong program of Bible study which includes emphasis on Christian nurture. One of the churches² has a program which involves an annual week of Christian home emphasis with attention given to parent-child and husband and wife relations. The week consists of at least one study group, two sermons, and a family fellowship supper. The same church also has an annual forum, conducted by the Pastor, for young married couples and those approaching marriage. Parent-child relations are also discussed in this session and private counselling is available for those in need of it.

Another church³ has a course for young married couples, an occasional five-meeting course on "Building a Christian Home." This church also has classes for High School and College age students titled: "Preparing for Marriage."

Since the First Community Church gave a somewhat extended summary of their program it is possible to include here a much more complete account of its program. Their direct program of parent training begins with young people just beyond the High School age. Their course deals with marriage and the family and covers more specifically choosing a life mate, the engagement, and detailed study on the family as an institution. Each fourth Tuesday of the month, the church has a clinic session in which couples who are looking forward to marriage

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1. Washington Prairie Evangelical Lutheran Church.
2. Olive Chapel Baptist Church.
3. First Presbyterian Church.

may come together and share with one another. The church considers this a better method than personal counselling because in the clinic they help each other, they interpret to each other, and if they have concerns these are universalized.

After the wedding the couple is visited in the home with the purpose of leading them in dedicating their home to be a Christian home. The next course for such couples is one for expectant parents. Such courses are held at intervals throughout the year. The church also has clinic sessions for parents with pre-school children, another for parents of elementary school children, a third for those with adolescent children, and still another for husbands and wives.

While the specific programs seem to vary considerably, it is still true in a general sense that these churches are concerned about helping the parents to be prepared and qualified for their task of Christian nurture. Before making a general summary of the program for parent education, there is need to consider the instruction for parents in the church's over-all program.

Roy A. Burkhardt stresses the need for an all inclusive program in this way:

While there is a growing trend in marriage and family education in churches, schools, and universities and while an increasing number of ministers are counselling young people before marriage, the tragic fact is that most guidance is too late. The time to start a program of marriage education is when a child is born.¹

Mr. Burkhardt goes on to say that what happens to the child in the early periods of its life will determine basically whether he

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1. Roy A. Burkhardt, op. cit., p. 1.

is loving or hostile, secure or dependent. This is true because actions are based more on the basis of emotional response than on knowledge. The adult's emotional make-up is largely molded during the early years of life. Thus whatever the church does that results in real Christian growth on the part of the individual, regardless of the age at which that growth may take place, is thereby giving effective parent education.

b. Instruction for Parents in the Church's Over-all Program.

The most significant phase of the church's over-all program is the Sunday Worship Service, and one of the most significant parts of the Service is the Sermon. All of the seven churches stressed the important role of the sermon in the educational program of the church. In this setting listeners hear God's Word related to life. This will have much instruction for couples who are entering into their first experience in home making and also for those who are looking forward to parenthood. In addition to the regular Sunday morning sermons, there are sermons for special days. All of the churches indicated that these are designed to be an effective part in the parent education program.

Another part of the over-all program, indicated by all of the churches as being a part of their parent education program, is that of the emphasis on family devotions. It seems to have a direct relation to the Sunday worship service in that the family unit does in family devotion what the church family does in the worship service. Two of the churches¹ specifically mentioned the "Upper Room" as their recom-

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1. First Evangelical and Reformed Church and First Community Church.

mended guide for family devotions.

Pastor Oscar E. Engebretson¹ made this general comment in his answer to the questionnaire:

Regularity in Church, at the meetings of the Young Women's groups and the use of family devotion, as well as a conscientious bringing of the children to Sunday School do much to make our children have a good bringing up. We have had an excellent home cooperation from nearly all families in both regularity and lesson preparation. Out of 154 enrolled, over ninety had two absences or less in the last Sunday School year.

Thus the summary statement seems to be that in a real sense, the whole church's program is included in the program of parent education but that there is also need for specific courses for parents in order to meet their immediate needs and to help them solve their individual and specific problems. Another channel through which the church gives aid to parents in the matter of their responsibility for Christian nurture is through the use of printed materials. These may either be distributed or circulated among the parents in the congregation.

c. Printed Materials Used in the Parent Education Program.

These materials fall into two general categories, namely those that are produced by the local church and those that are brought in for use in the local setting.

1. Locally Produced Materials.

Only the First Community Church produces enough material locally to warrant this special heading. The other churches mentioned only such things as outlines for discussion groups, Bible study outlines, and the weekly bulletin. Dr. Roy A. Burkhart has written several books

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1. Pastor of the Washington Prairie Evangelical Lutheran Church.

and pamphlets, all of which seem to be written for the members of his congregation. Some of them deal specifically with the parents and their problems. The latter group will be given attention here.

Earlier in this chapter¹ a mimeographed summary of First Community's education program for marriage and family was mentioned. This gives perspective with reference to the family itself and also summarizes the church's program which is offered to help parents and the whole family. The responsibilities of the parents for Christian nurture of their children are so presented that their need for help becomes quite obvious. The two-fold objective of the church's program is stated in this way: "One is to train parents to do the basic job of guidance within the family. And the second, 'there are a series of training experiences which the organized Church should carry forward."²

This introductory summary of the church's program mentions other productions by Dr. Burkhart that are used in the program. Three that deal with marriage are the following: (1) "The Secret of Marriage". This book is intended for the couple's use before their marriage and before the pre-marital interview and thus serves as a guide for that interview. Its specific purpose is stated thus: ". . . it . . . helps them [the couple] verbalize their problems and gives them freedom to present their concerns."³ (2) A pamphlet entitled "Our Marriage" is presented to the couple at the close of the pre-marital interview: "It is brief but it sums up the signs on the road to successful

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1. Ante, p. 19.
2. Roy A. Burkhart, op. cit., p. 2.
3. Ibid., p. 4.

marriage. It points out clearly the tests of creative Christian marriage.¹ (3) "Love's Personal Witness" is described as ". . . a very personal interpretation of the sexual relationship."

With reference to the sex education of the child and the adolescent, Dr. Burkhart has prepared a mimeographed statement to guide the parents. The title is "Let us Answer the Kinsey Report."

The above local productions from the Pastor of the First Community Church are made available to the people in the local church but they are also available to all others who may desire them.²

Such local productions, having a definite place in the parent education program, are further indications of the thoroughness of First Community Church's approach to the whole problem.

2. Publications Used.

One of the churches³ listed no publications. Three of the churches gave information in this connection by simply referring to general aspects. One of these mentioned the "Christian Home" magazine,⁴ another stated that books were recommended in the Sunday bulletin,⁵ and still another referred only to its denominational Catechism and magazine.⁶ The other three churches gave a somewhat more extended list.

The books recommended by name are presented here together with the church which listed them:⁷

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Community Books, Inc., 1320 Cambridge Blvd., Columbus 12, Ohio.
3. First Methodist Church.
4. Collegiate Methodist.
5. Washington Prairie Evangelical Lutheran Church.
6. First Evangelical and Reformed Church.
7. See Appendix C.

1. Olive Chapel Baptist Church

Burton: "Tomorrow You Marry"
Duvall and Hill: "When You Marry"
Wood: "Harmony in Marriage"
Baber: "Marriage and the Family"
Groves: "The Family and Its Social Functions"
Trent: "Your Child and God"
Smith: "This Love of Ours"
Tyler: "The Little World of Home"

2. First Presbyterian Church

Popenoe: "Many Leaflets"
William Evans: "Divorce and Remarriage"
Geiseman: "Make Yours a Happy Marriage"
Nelson: "Marriages Are Not Made in Heaven"

3. First Community Church

a. From the Wedding to the Coming of the First Child

Magoun: "Love and Marriage"
Wood: "Harmony in Marriage"
Hogue: "Bringing Up Ourselves"

b. First Five Years of the Child's Life

Bulletins on Child Guidance, published by the Children's
Bureau of the Federal Government.
Arnold Gesell: "The Child From Five to Ten"
Arnold Gesell: "The Infant and Child in the Culture of
Today"
Percy and Myrtle Hayward: "Religion in the Home"

c. Books on the Life of Prayer

Muriel Lester: "Ways of Praying"
H. E. Fosdick: "The Meaning of Prayer"
Douglas Steere: "Prayer and Worship"
George Buttrick: "Prayer"

d. Books to Increase Understanding

Preston: "Psychiatry for the Curious"
Menninger: "The Human Mind"
Government Pamphlets on Hygiene

In checking the above lists, it is readily seen that marriage and the family setting is the topic referred to most often. Interestingly, only one book appears in two lists: Wood, "Harmony in Marriage." The more varied list from First Community Church seems to be in accord with Dr. Burkhart's view that parent training actually began when the parent was an infant.¹ The editorial comment in the Christian Century which said that all of these twelve churches are successful in training their children suggests that all of the churches have the characteristic of a complete training program. It appears that in their total program of Christian education, one of the natural results is that parents, if they have grown up in that congregation, have been trained from birth through marriage. Those who have that background will have influence and can be of great help to others who come into the congregation and have not had such early training.

With the stress on the need for training from the very outset of life, the next step in this chapter is to consider the practices followed in the services of Baptism or Dedication which relate the parents to the Christian nurture of their child. The questionnaire sent to the churches included several questions which sought information in this connection.

2. Procedures in Connection with the Service of Baptism or Dedication

Relating Parents to the Christian Nurture of Their Child.

a. Procedure before the Service.

One church² does not follow the custom of having either a

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1. Ante, p. 22.

2. Olive Chapel Baptist Church.

CHART II

THE PROCEDURES DURING THE SERVICE OF BAPTISM OR DEDICATION OF

Church	Specific Training For Parents in Connection With Baptism or Dedication of Their Infant	Questions Concerning Faith, If Used, Are Addressed to:	
		Parents	Sponsors
First Methodist	Conference with parents about basic meaning	x	
Collegiate Methodist	Counsel with Pastor	x	
Olive Chapel Baptist	No Baptism or Dedication Children placed on "Cradle Roll" Literature for parents is delivered to the home each quarter by a visitor		
Washington Prairie Evangelical Lutheran	No special training at this time	x	x
First Presbyterian	Conference before Baptism	x	
First Evangelical and Reformed Church	Conference with parents All Baptisms administered in church Pastor explains the meaning of Sacrament	x	x (Not often used)
First Community	One evening session prior to the Service	x	

INFANTS INDICATING THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PARENTS

The Exhortation to Provide Christian Nurture, If Used, Is Addressed to:	Conditions to be Met By Non-Member Parents Whose Infants Are Baptized or Dedicated
Parents Act of dedica- tion by par.	Sponsors Same promise as all others
x	Same vows as member-parents
	The children are enrolled in the same manner as those of member-parents
x	Ritual men- tions sponsors Parents are encouraged in a good program of Christian nurture. A follow-up con- tact is maintained by the church.
x	Parents must be a member of some church. They must join a church if not already a member.
x	x (Not often used) The practice is to seek to win the parents to the church before the children are baptized
x (Emphasis here)	Same sessions as for member-parents and the same requirements

service of baptism or dedication. The general practice was found to be that the Pastor had one conference with the parents before the Service of Baptism or Dedication. While there was not much elaboration given as to exact purpose of this conference, the implication seemed to be that at such a time the service is explained, its meaning clarified, and the responsibilities for the parents presented.

b. The Use of Questions Concerning the Christian Faith in the Service.

All the churches that either baptize or dedicate their children asked questions concerning the faith of the parents. By far the most usual practice is to address these questions directly to the parents during the service. One church¹ indicated that the questions are addressed to the parents if they themselves carry their children to Baptism, but if sponsors carry the children, the questions are addressed to the sponsors. The indication was given that generally the questions are addressed to both the sponsors and the parents. Another church² also indicated that if sponsors are used, the questions are addressed to both parents and sponsors.

It appears that if parents give a true and sincere confession of the Christian faith, the infant child will have a favorable setting for Christian nurture during his early years.

c. Exhortation to Provide Christian Nurture Given During the Service.

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1. Washington Prairie Evangelical Lutheran Church.
2. First Evangelical and Reformed Church.

All the churches that practice infant baptism or dedication give attention in the service to this matter of Christian nurture for their children. In fact in two of the churches¹ this seems to be the major part of the service. In the first case the statement is made that the service is an act of dedication on the part of the parents. In the other, the order for the service shows that four out of the five questions deal with promises to provide Christian nurture for the child by means of both direct and indirect instruction.

One of the churches² indicates that the exhortation is directed to the sponsors in the regular order for the baptismal service but that more and more the exhortation is being addressed to the parents. The remaining churches simply indicate that exhortation is addressed to the parents or to both the parents and sponsors if the latter are used.

d. Church Policy Regarding Baptism or Dedication in the
Case of Non-Member Parents.

No church gave explicit evidence of refusing baptism or dedication. In all cases these parents are asked to follow the same procedure as the member parents. However, there is evidence of some special concern in these cases. The problem is faced in a variety of ways but the objective seems to be almost the same. The different comments are these: The explanation is made to non-member parents that non-Christians could not take the vows sincerely,³ non-member

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1. First Methodist Church and First Community Church.
2. Washington Prairie Evangelical Lutheran Church.
3. Collegiate Methodist Church.

parents are encouraged in a good program of Christian nurture and the church has a follow-up program.¹ If the parents are not members of the local church, they must be members of some church; through insistence upon that condition the parents are often led to affiliate actively with some church.² The first attempt is to win the parents to the church.³

Thus there seems to be unanimous conviction that the parents are the key figures in the future welfare of the young child. Thus far in this chapter it has been noted that the actual service of either baptism or dedication is not an occasion for any extended program of Christian education, but it does offer opportunity for giving repeated emphasis to parents that their own Christian faith is of crucial importance in the child's welfare and that the responsibility for Christian nurture must be accepted by the parents. In this sense the practices in the service can serve admirably in the total program of parent education by giving emphasis to the significance of the parent-child relationship and crystallizing perspective for meeting the needs of the child.

In the case of the one church⁴ which has no service of either baptism or dedication, the parents are approached through the placing of the child on the "cradle roll" and then a visitor takes literature to the home each quarter.

Before closing this chapter, some general statements regarding the churches which did not return the questionnaire are

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1. Washington Prairie Evangelical Lutheran Church.
2. First Presbyterian Church.
3. First Evangelical and Reformed Church.
4. Olive Chapel Baptist Church.

included. Since this information is taken from the general articles in the Christian Century series it does not always face the problem of parent education directly; the statements do, however, throw light on some aspect of the church that is significant for parent education.

C. General Information Concerning Parent Education
in Five of the Selected Churches

With the thought in mind that parents are a part of the whole group in a congregation, there is significance in the brief comment on Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota. This statement is to the effect that the congregation is characterized by a group who not only know of the movement, power and forgiveness of God, but they are also obedient to Him and serve gladly.¹ An historical statement which is still characteristic of the present attitude in First Church of Christ (Congregational), West Hartford, Connecticut, is this: "That our small children may be present at the public worship of God and not be brought up in darkness in such a land of light as this is, but may be instructed in the doctrine of the gospel."² This, in 1710, was their explanation for their desire to call a Pastor. They continue to have a carefully planned and conducted program of religious education.³ Statements more specifically referring to children and parents are these concerning the Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee: Dr. Robert G. Lee, the Pastor, said: "A child born of ungodly parents is

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1. Cf. Christian Century, Vol. 67, January-June, 1950, p. 111.
2. Ibid., p. 362.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 365.

more damned into this world than born into it."¹ The need for Christian parents is presented uniquely in such words. Further comments on Bellevue's education program indicate that they have 2,000 adults in four adult departments² and that they have approximately 900 young people and adults in their Sunday evening meeting of the Baptist Training Union. This union has seventy classes in it and the effort is described as being effective in the realm of Christian responsibility.³ The contact with parents in the First Presbyterian Church, Topeka, Kansas, is indicated in the following: The Director of Religious Education spent most of her afternoons and evenings "calling on parents who had enrolled their children in Sunday School or had indicated that they were interested in doing so. In this way, she enlisted active parent participation in the total religious education program of the church."⁴ Some rather extensive statements are made relative to the long range training given in the Trinity Lutheran Church of Freistatt, Missouri:

The firm grounding of character in the faith begins for the member of Trinity Lutheran when at the age of approximately ten days he is carried to the altar for Baptism. It goes on through regular attendance at Worship services during his childhood, through the eight years he spends at the parish school, culminating in his confirmation. It is strengthened through Bible study all his adult life, through the service he renders in the various channels Trinity Lutheran opens to him, and continues up to the day when he is laid to rest in the graveyard behind the church, where the community's dead lie side by side, not in family plots.⁵

The following quotation indicates what the members of Trinity Lutheran regard as the most significant part of their training:

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1. Ibid., p. 494.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 495.
3. Cf. Loc. cit.
4. Ibid., Vol. 67, July-December 19, p. 1323.
5. Ibid., Vol. 67, January-June 19

Closely tied into every phase of the church's life is its Christian day school. It is regarded by every member as the key to the Church's continued strength in spite of the growing relations the community has developed with the outside world.¹

In a church where all individuals are well trained, there obviously too the parents are well trained.

D. Summary

Questionnaires soliciting information concerning the parent education program were sent to the twelve churches selected by the Christian Century as the "Great Churches of America." Seven churches returned the completed questionnaires, some of them including extra information and elaboration of their programs.

The programs for parent education in these seven churches were found to have as their objective the providing of Christian education for all the members of the congregation so that they can be truly Christian. Christian parents are offered special courses to aid them in their family program of Christian education, including Christian nurture for their young children. In this way the education of parents actually begins at their own birth and continues throughout life. Three of the seven churches make considerable use of printed materials as aids for parents. Marriage and the family are the topics of most of these materials.

It was noted that the Baptismal or Dedication service provides no extensive emphasis on the parents' responsibility for the nurture of their children, but rather it serves as a part of the total

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1. Ibid., p. 757.

education program. Generally it was indicated that the Pastor has one conference with the parents before the service. In the service itself, the parents are approached at a time when they are responsive and receptive. The occasion can, therefore, be an effective opportunity for helping the parents to realize the significance for their child of their own relation to God in Christ. It can also serve well to summarize the parents' task for the days ahead as they strive to rear their child in the Christian life. It was also noted that non-member parents, whose children are dedicated or baptized, are asked to observe the same procedures as the member parents.

The five churches from whom no completed questionnaire was received, were considered on the basis of the articles concerning them in the Christian Century. The comments in these articles referring to parent education indicated that these churches, like the other seven, have strong educational programs for all the members. The result is that parents too are well established Christians. This alone gives considerable assurance that children of such parents will have favorable Christian nurture.

CHAPTER III
ANALYSIS OF THE ORDERS FOR INFANT BAPTISM
IN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN THE LIGHT OF THE ROLE OF PARENTS
IN CHRISTIAN NURTURE DURING EARLY CHILDHOOD

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A. Introduction

In the first chapter of this thesis, through the examination of books on Christian Education, it was found that by the fact of the law of propagation of the race, parents and children are so related that parents inevitably teach their children and that they are practically the only teachers during the early years of the child's life. This teaching is of crucial importance in the child's whole life. Beginning at the child's birth, such parental teaching is effected solely by indirect methods, that is, by parents' attitudes, conduct, and expressions. If instruction through such channels is to result in Christian nurture, it follows that the parents themselves must be Christians.

Chapter two revealed that the churches selected by the Christian Century as the twelve Great Churches of America have as one of their common characteristics that they are successful in the Christian nurture of their children. In the examination of their programs of parent education in relation to Christian nurture, it was found that early Christian nurture is accomplished primarily by the church helping the parents to be Christian parents. Secondly, these churches during the service of infant baptism or dedication, ask the

parents to express their own faith and to provide Christian nurture for their child. The churches also aid the parents through special classes and pertinent reading materials to help them provide effective Christian nurture for their children.

Lutheran publications¹ used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, discussing the role of parents in relation to early Christian nurture, agree with the education theories summarized in chapter one and found valid in chapter two on the basis of their use in successful churches. The question for consideration in this chapter is whether or not the above accepted views are incorporated in the relevant procedures in the order for Infant Baptism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Thus attention in chapter three will be given to those procedures during the service of infant baptism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church which involve the problem of early Christian nurture and the parents' relation to it. The objective of this thesis does not involve the defense or elaboration of the Lutheran view of baptismal regeneration. The statement of that conviction and the reasons for it

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1. Cf. I. J. Havneros, op. cit., p. 6.
- Cf. Book Mission Tract Number 183: Confirmation . . Why?, p. 3.
- Cf. O. Guldseth, op. cit., p. 7.
- Cf. G. H. Gerberding: The Way of Salvation in the Lutheran Church, pp. 55-66.
- Cf. O. Hallesby: Infant Baptism and Adult Conversion, pp. 47-52.
- Cf. H. E. Jacobs: The Book of Concord, p. 378.
- Cf. F. V. N. Painter: Luther on Education, p. 117.
- Cf. I. M. Wallace: Regulations and Customs Pertaining to the Use of the Sacraments. Vol. V, Memoirs of the Lutheran Liturgical Association, p. 78.

are presented in many publications.¹ For the purpose of this chapter it is sufficient to say that the baptized child is regarded as a child of God who needs to grow in his Christian life.

Obviously there is more that makes up the church's parent education program than that which is said to or asked of parents during the service of baptism for their child. This service, however, is a significant part of that program in that it is usually inserted into the regular public worship service.² The law of repetition indicates that whatever is said and done in such a recurring baptismal service, has considerable influence in forming general viewpoints concerning the child, its immediate and future needs, and the relationship of the parents to those needs. The occasion offers excellent psychological opportunity for effective instruction of the parents whose child is being baptized. It is to this specific phase of the parent education in relation to Christian nurture, namely that which is given in the service of infant baptism, that attention is directed in this chapter.

The procedure will be to center the examination on the regular order for infant baptism³ used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church. There are two other orders that also need to be considered. One of these is an optional order called: "The Church of Norway's New Order for the Baptism of Infants."⁴ The other is a proposed order⁵ which is

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1. Cf. H. E. Jacobs, op. cit., pp. 39, 173-174, 471-476.
Cf. Book Mission Tract No. 153: Born Again, p. 2.
Cf. Book Mission Tract No. 183, op. cit., p. 3.
Cf. O. Guldseth, op. cit., p. 6.
Cf. L. J. Njus: Sponsors at Baptism, p. 2.
2. Cf. Altar Book, p. 75.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 69-74.
4. Cf. Almanac for the Year of Our Lord 1951 (Handbook for Pastors in the Evangelical Lutheran Church), pp. 136-139.
5. Cf. Liturgical Texts (Proposed by a Joint Commission on Liturgy), pp. 24-28.

being considered by several Lutheran Synods including the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The last two orders will be compared and contrasted with the regular order found in the Altar Book. These three orders will subsequently be referred to as the regular, optional, and proposed orders respectively. The findings in these orders relevant to the problem of the role of parents in relation to Christian nurture will be stated in summary form and compared to the findings of chapters one and two of this thesis. The results of this comparison will indicate the possible effectiveness or manifest deficiencies in the order for the program of parent education in relation to early Christian nurture in the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Most of the historical explanatory notes used in this chapter will be taken from general Lutheran sources. The one exception will be that of a reference to notes on the Book of Common Prayer. The current interpretations are taken from writers within the Evangelical Lutheran Church or from writers whose publications have extensive use in that Church.

B. The Service of Infant Baptism

Examined for Implications for Christian Nurture

Keeping in mind that all parents are teachers but that their teaching has either good or bad results¹ the first matter of concern in this examination is to determine what kind of nurture is involved in the orders by observing the goal or results desired.

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1. Ante, p. 3.

1. Nurture Characterized by Its Objectives.

The immediate and ultimate goals in relation to the baptized child are indicated in the order¹ by such terms or phrases as: "Be made righteous", "Eternal life by Jesus Christ", "see the kingdom of God", "we will now, in the name of our Lord Jesus, receive it [the child] through Holy Baptism into His believing Church, that it, as a member of His body, may partake of His salvation", "disciples", "inherit Thy kingdom . . . , through Jesus Christ our Lord", "life everlasting", "lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead", and "may abide in Christ."

In summary, these terms and phrases give the picture that this baptized child is a disciple, a member of the body of Christ which is His believing Church.² Being such a member he sees the kingdom of God and through his abiding in Christ, he has a living hope which is based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Thus the immediate goal is that of abiding in Christ³ and the ultimate goal

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1. Cf. Altar Book, pp. 69-74.
2. M. Luther: Three Treatises, p. 178. In connection with the question of faith on the part of the baptized child, Luther writes: "Here I say what all say: Infants are aided by the faith of the others, namely, those who bring them to baptism."
Book Mission Tract No. 183, op. cit., p. 5. Here the matter of faith is expressed thus: "Faith into which he (the child) was baptized."
O. Guldseth, op. cit., p. 5, speaks of the faith of the child as "The little child is precisely in the right condition to be dealt with by the Spirit of Jesus Christ."
3. L. J. Njus, op. cit., p. 2. Mr. Njus, speaking of erecting the Christian life says: "Baptism is not a prepaid insurance of salvation, regardless of how that life may have been lived . . . The baptized child must submit to God's authority in faith, love and obedience."
Book Mission Tract No. 149: Saved Through the Means of Grace, p. 3. The author states the need of nurture in this way: "Of course, the life thus implanted must be nourished and tended through instruction in the Word of God."

is indicated by the phrases referring to salvation and life everlasting. The nurture indicated in this regular order is that which will effect an abiding in Christ with a living hope for eternal life based on Christ's resurrection from the dead.

The optional order has the same ideas as found above but has the following additions:¹ "Let him grow up within Thy Church as Thy child"; "teach him to fear and love Thee"; and "that it [the child] be brought up in renunciation of sin and in the Christian faith." In the realm of the immediate goal this order adds the thoughts of growth through teaching and the positive and negative aspect of the Christian life, namely the being against sin and in the Christian faith.

The proposed order² adds only the thought of "always living according to Thy Will" to those ideas found in the regular order.

Thus the kind of nurture referred to in the orders is that which will result in a continual living abiding in Christ, with its ultimate goal being eternal salvation. On this basis the nurture here referred to is identified as Christian nurture. It appears that the optional order has the most adequate expression of what such Christian nurture should accomplish, in that it suggests something of the development involved in the goal.

In the process of defining Christian nurture in terms of its immediate and ultimate objectives, the question as to how this Christian nurture is to be effected naturally arises. Attention will be given to that question next.

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1. Cf. Almanac, pp. 136-139.
2. Liturgical Texts, op. cit., pp. 24-28.

2. Methods of Christian Nurture Indicated in the Orders.

a. General Statement.

The general statement of the method of Christian nurture is given in the same way by all three of the orders, namely by the quotation of Matthew 28:18-20 with the teaching summarized as involving the observation of all that which Jesus commanded. This general statement leads to the perspective that Christian nurture is essentially a process of instruction.

b. Specific Statements.

The specific statements should give some elaboration as to how the process of instruction is accomplished. The regular order makes mention of two means of effecting Christian nurture, the first being that of adult prayer in behalf of the child and the second that of instruction in the catechism.¹

The optional order speaks of adult prayer, but does not mention the catechism. It adds the thought of home influence by these words: "Let piety and love rule in his home." This phrase is found in one of the prayers so that it is not addressed to any human but the parents are certainly implied in such a phrase. Thus the

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1. H. E. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 360. When Martin Luther was addressing himself to pastors and teachers concerning their instruction of the young he wrote thus: "But when you are teaching the young, retain the same form and manner without change: teach them, first of all, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, etc., always presenting the same words of the text, so that those who learn can repeat them after you and retain them in the memory." It is to be noted that this is an exhortation to pastors and teachers, not to parents or sponsors.

optional order indicates adult prayer in behalf of the child and a pious, love-filled home as the means of Christian nurture.

The proposed order seems to have essentially the same elements in this connection as does the regular order. Adult prayer is more implied than explicitly mentioned. The word "catechism" is not used, but the "Ten Commandments", "Lord's Prayer", and the Creed are itemized. Since these make up the first three parts of the catechism, it appears that this order is similar in this respect, to the regular order. In addition, this order charges: ". . . as he [the child] grows in years, you place in his hands the Holy Scriptures, bring him to the Services in God's House, and provide for his instruction in the Christian faith . . ."¹ This is found in the charge to those who present the child.

Relative to the methods of Christian nurture as indicated in the orders, it is evident that they all regard Christian nurture as being essentially a process of instruction. The regular and proposed order break this down into adult prayer in behalf of the child and what appears to be academic instruction of the child. The optional order indicates also the matter of adult prayer but for another item suggests the home atmosphere of love and piety.

Both the general and the specific aspects in the above methods of Christian nurture suggest the teacher-pupil relationship, in a process of direct or formal instruction. The baptized child is obviously the pupil, but further examination is necessary to determine who the teacher or teachers are.

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1. Liturgical Texts, p. 26.

3. Agents of Christian Nurture Indicated.

The orders have such collective terms as "Dearly beloved", "Christian friends", "Christians", and "those who present the child." The two specific terms used are "parents" and "sponsors." It appears evident that the more general terms always include parents and sponsors and that the burden for the effecting of the specific aspects of Christian nurture noted above is laid upon either the parents or the sponsors or on both groups together. These two groups will now be considered separately as agents for Christian nurture.

a. Parents.

In the regular order the parents are mentioned only once and there only incidentally. In the exhortation at the close of the baptismal service, the sponsors are charged with the responsibility of instructing the child in the catechism, if the parents should die before the child reaches the age of discretion. This does imply that the parents have this responsibility¹ first but it does not explicitly speak of such responsibility on their part. Thus it can be said that

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1. G. H. Gerberding, op. cit., pp. 62-63. In the matter of parents teaching their children, Gerberding says this: "Therefore, oh, ye parents! pray for your child, Pray with your child. Teach that child to pray . . . It is not desirable, neither is it necessary, to try to teach the very young child doctrines and abstract truths . . . There are other and better ways. Begin by showing the child Bible pictures . . . With the pictures connect the stories of the Bible." Gerberding quotes Luthardt thus on page 60-61 of the above work: "Religion must first approach the child in the form of life, and afterward in the form of instruction. Let religion be the atmosphere by which the child is surrounded, the air which it breathes."

Cf. O. Guldseth, op. cit., p. 8.

Cf. I. J. Havneros, op. cit., p. 7.

by implication the parents are charged with the first responsibility for their child's instruction in the catechism.

The optional order also mentions the parents only once, but this reference is direct. The order specifically states that the following question shall be addressed to the sponsors and to the parents: "Is it your desire that this child be baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and that it be brought up in renunciation of sin and in the Christian faith?"¹ Unless the parents answer this question in the affirmative, the child is not to be baptized. While such a question does not commit the parents to provide Christian nurture for their child, it does follow that if parents answer the question sincerely in the affirmative they do have the right desire for their child. The need for the parents' being Christian is implied in the prayer that the child may have a home ruled by piety and love.² The optional order further refers to the parents by implication when the sponsors are asked to "assist in" the spiritual nurture of the child. The implication is quite obvious that the sponsors are to assist the parents, and in that way the parents too are reminded of their responsibility for the nurture of their child.

The optional order, then, has somewhat more of direct reference to the parent than does the regular order, but still the parent education in relation to child nurture seems to be vague.

The proposed order makes no mention of the parents whatsoever although they may be included in the phrase: "those who present this child." If the parents do actually present the child and do not

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1. Almanac, p. 138.

2. Ante, p. 42.

have sponsors, then the above phrase would definitely refer to the parents and the charge for Christian nurture would be directed to them. Since however, the setting for the order seems to imply the use of sponsors, it is doubtful that one can say with any certainty that parents are even implied in this order.

Thus it becomes evident that only the optional order makes any direct reference to the parents. The implicit references are quite clearly indicated, but as far as parent education is concerned, it appears that little, if any explicit instruction is given in any of the orders examined.

Since sponsors are referred to frequently, their role in the service and their relation to Christian nurture also needs attention.

b. Sponsors.¹

In the regular order the sponsors function in a three-fold way. First they speak the "Amen" at the close of each of the prayers

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1. H. S. Gilbert: *The Liturgical History of Baptism*, Vol. III, *Memoirs of the Lutheran Liturgical Association*, p. 119. Concerning the history of the use of sponsors: "The Church administered the sacrament of Holy Baptism to infants in the same way as to adults, only in the case of infants sponsors made reply for the child; and this is how the custom of having sponsors came into vogue."
Walter Daib: "The Baptismal Rite: A Brief History of Its Development." *Pro Ecclesia Lutherana*, Vol. III, No. 1, June 1935, p. 11. Here the statement concurs on the history of the use of sponsors: "Sponsors solved the difficulties arising from using for children forms intended for adults."
Waters of Life, *Life in Christ Series No. 1*, p. 2, speaks of sponsors as Godparents and lists their functions in the following phrases: "to answer for those who are to be baptized"; Godparents enter into spiritual parenthood for the child . . . they promise that his soul new-born in Christ will be thoroughly instructed in the saving doctrines of the Word of God . . . It is their duty to continually interest themselves in the spiritual welfare of their Godchild . . . And, if the parents are unable, through (continued on next page)

in the baptismal service, secondly they answer the questions which are addressed, by name, to the child being baptized. Thirdly they receive the specific charge to be witnesses of the baptism, to remember the child in prayer and in case of the parents' death before the child reaches the age of discretion, they are to be responsible for the child's instruction in the catechism. There is nothing either in the order itself or in the accompanying instruction to the pastor that indicates any qualifications to be met by the sponsors.

In the optional order the sponsors stand beside the parents throughout the service, and simply share all that is asked of or directed to the parents. The exhortation for providing Christian nurture is addressed to the sponsors but they are charged with the duty of assisting in the child's spiritual nurture and remembering him in

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1. (continued from preceding page) death or other cause to care for the religious education and physical welfare of their children, the Godparents must attend to this."

A somewhat different view is expressed with reference to the Book of Common Prayer:

J. H. Blunt, ed.: The Annotated Book of Common Prayer, p. 414.

After speaking of the sponsors as giving answer for the child, this comment is made: "It must at the same time be remarked, that in making these answers the sponsors are simply the mouthpiece of the child, and do not incur any responsibility on their own account in consequence, either as regards the child or themselves. Yet as each godfather and godmother makes them, they can hardly fail to have a keen consciousness of the fact that these very replies were once made on their own behalf; and the thought may well arise, How have the vows they made been kept in subsequent years? Baptism doth re-present unto us our own profession."

A recent writer wrote of the sponsors with these emphases:

L. J. Njus, op. cit., pp. 3-4. The sponsors represent the church and share the responsibility with the parents; they should be chosen with care from among the members of the church. The sponsors should continually remember the child in prayer. They could be of great help in remembering the child's baptism as his spiritual birthday and sending him a spiritual greeting on each anniversary.

prayer. Although the practice of addressing the questions concerning faith to the child is permitted in this optional order, the recommended practice is that the Pastor simply states the faith into which the child is to be baptized.

Relative to sponsors, the proposed order has some distinct features. Several guiding principles are listed for the benefit of the pastor. One of these refers to the sponsors by saying: "only members of the Church shall be accepted as sponsors, and they shall be instructed as to their spiritual responsibility to the child."¹ In this order the questions concerning faith are addressed to the sponsors without any mention of the child's name.² If sponsors present the child, the charge³ is directed to them.

Since sponsors, in all of the orders, are charged with the responsibility for the Christian nurture of the child it appears that all the explicit instruction given relative to Christian nurture is directed to them. By the practical observation of the sponsors' relationship to the child, the exhortation seems to be commensurate with their actual desirable function.⁴

C. Parent Education in Relation to Early Christian Nurture
as Found in the Orders for Infant Baptism
in the Evangelical Lutheran Church

Only by implication do the regular and proposed orders refer to

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1. Liturgical Texts, p. 24.
2. Cf. H. S. Gilbert: op. cit., p. 122. Mr. Gilbert gives an extensive listing of the variations in the use of questions concerning faith in the orders for Infant Baptism.
3. Ante, p. 43.
4. Cf. L. J. Njus, op. cit., p. 3-4.

parent responsibility for Christian nurture. The responsibility thus referred to is the provision for direct instruction such as teaching the catechism or the Bible. Even if the responsibility implied were explicitly stated, the parents would not be given any guidance with reference to the nurture of their infant child. As indicated in the first chapter, this early instruction is effected by indirect teaching, not through the use of printed materials.¹ It is thus evident that these orders do not adequately emphasize the cruciality of the parents' being Christian as the first necessity for providing early Christian nurture for their child.

The optional order also does not explicitly refer to the parents' responsibility for Christian nurture. However, this order does, at one point, address the parents directly. This is done where both parents and sponsors are questioned concerning their desires for their child's spiritual status. It was noted² that if parents answer in the affirmative, they are not thereby explicitly committing themselves to provide Christian nurture for their child but that it does focus attention on a basic attitude. The implication seems to be that unless the parents are Christians themselves, they would not, and could not sincerely, answer the question affirmatively. This implication together with that in the prayer that the child may have a home ruled by love and piety, while not being explicit, definitely indicate the parents' basic responsibilities for their child in terms of the parents' desires for their child and the home that they provide for it.

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1. Ante, p. 17.

2. Ante, p. 45.

The optional order, then, like the regular and proposed orders, only implicitly refers to parent responsibility for the Christian nurture of their child. In contrast to them, however, that which is implicit in the optional order is guidance which, if heeded, would do much to provide adequate early Christian nurture for the child.

D. Summary

At the outset of this chapter attention was called to the agreement between general publications referring to the role of parents in relation to early Christian nurture and Lutheran publications in the same field. They were all found to be in essential agreement that during early childhood teaching is effected indirectly, that is, by what parents are in their attitudes and by what they themselves do in the presence of their child. Keeping this basic theory in mind, the three orders for Infant Baptism used or proposed for using, in the Evangelical Lutheran Church were examined for their instruction for parents with reference to their role in early Christian nurture.

It was found that all of the orders place strong emphasis on the child's need of the new birth and that the ultimate goal desired is eternal salvation. Some attention is also given in all of the orders to the child's nurture for the purpose of realizing the goal. The sponsors are explicitly charged to pray for the child and to be concerned about Christian nurture. The emphasis given to them is in the realm of direct teaching.

The part that parents are to play in the process of the Christian growth of their child is only implicitly indicated. In the

case of the regular and proposed orders, even this implicit guidance for the parents has reference to direct teaching such as urging the parents to provide instruction in the catechism. This, it was noted, is irrelevant with reference to early childhood. The optional order, while having a direct reference to the parents concerning their desire for their child, also only implicitly refers to parent responsibility for early Christian nurture. In this case, however, the implications are relevant to early Christian nurture, and are also in agreement with the theories summarized at the outset of the chapter.

Thus it was found that none of the orders for Baptism of Infants in the Evangelical Lutheran Church are giving explicit instruction to parents relevant to their responsibility for the early Christian nurture of their child. The findings of chapters one and two indicate that such explicit instruction is needed. Furthermore, it was found that the implicit instruction given, in this connection, to parents is not equally favorable in all of the three orders. Only the optional order has implications for the parents that are relevant and favorable to early Christian nurture.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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A. Summary

The purpose of this thesis has been to discover precisely how the service of Infant Baptism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church fits into and contributes to the church's total program of parent education in relation to early Christian nurture. In the endeavor to follow a sound approach to the problem, it was considered to be necessary to discover first what the role of parents is in the effective Christian nurture of their young child. After discovering the role of the parents, it also seemed necessary to examine the church's relation to the parents in this responsibility for Christian nurture. The next step involved the discovery of programs being effectively used by congregations of this present time. Thus the theories could be further evaluated in the light of actual practice.

With the findings of these two chapters in mind, the orders for Infant Baptism used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church were examined. The results of the study may be summarized as follows:

The several publications examined, dealing with the role of parents in relation to child nurture, indicated that parents inevitably teach their children. The teaching during the early years of the child is effected by means of the parents' influence upon the child, that is by indirect rather than direct or formal means. The results of this influence are either for good or evil in respect to the child's concept of God. This is true because of the fact that the parents are either

for God or against Him, and the parents in turn, by their attitudes and conduct are serving as visual aids to give the child his concept of God.

It was further noted that the church shares the responsibility with the parents in that the church should teach the parents and help them so that they in turn can fulfill their obligations to their children. The church thus is to be an aid to the parents, not a substitute for them. The church can accomplish its mission to the parents through the means of the regular worship services, special classes for the parents, and in general aiding the parents to grow in their own spiritual lives.

Special events such as marriage, child birth, and baptism or dedication offer excellent opportunities for pastoral counselling which can be used effectively for promoting early Christian nurture.

In the light of the above, attention was turned to the actual practices of some successful churches today. Questionnaires were sent to the churches selected by the Christian Century as the Twelve Great Churches of America. Completed questionnaires were received from seven of the churches. The examination of the answers given, together with other materials and information offered by these seven churches, revealed that these churches have programs of education which are designed to help all the members of the congregation to be growing in their Christian lives. This in itself was helping parents too, because what they are is a significant factor in early Christian nurture of children. It was noted that the Baptismal or Dedication services provide no extensive emphasis on the parents' responsibility for the nurture of their

children, but rather these services serve as a part of the total parent education program. Generally, it was indicated, the pastor has one conference with the parents before such a service. It was noted that non-member parents, whose children are dedicated or baptized, are asked to observe the same procedures as the member parents.

The five churches, from whom no completed questionnaires were received were examined on the basis of the articles concerning them in the Christian Century. These articles indicate that these churches too, like the other seven, have strong educational programs for all the members. The result is that parents too are well established Christians.

It appears then, on the basis of both the written discussions and the effective programs of successful churches, that the essential factor in a parent education program is that the parents themselves must be helped personally to be ever growing Christians. With reference to Christian nurture during the early years of a child's life, there is no substitute for the necessity of Christian parents whose faith permeates their whole life, their attitudes and actions.

The third chapter opened by noting that Lutheran writers agree essentially with the findings in both chapter one and chapter two.

Against this background the service of baptism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church was examined for its emphasis on parents in relation to the early Christian nurture of their child. Three orders were examined, the regular order used in the Church, an optional order, and a proposed order. It was found that all three orders place strong emphasis on the child's need for the new birth and recognize that the

ultimate goal of this new life is eternal salvation. Some attention is also given in all of the orders to the child's nurture for the purpose of realizing the goal. The sponsors are explicitly charged to pray for the child and to be concerned about his Christian nurture. The emphasis given to them is in the realm of direct teaching.

The part that parents are to play in the Christian nurture of their child is only implicitly indicated. In the regular and proposed order this implicit instruction for the parents urges them to instruct their child in the catechism and the Bible. This can well be instruction for children in their late childhood but it seems to be irrelevant for infants and children in their early childhood. The optional order gives no explicit instruction either, but its implicit instruction is relevant for the young child in that parents are urged to have Christian homes and to desire their child's growth in the Christian faith.

Thus it was found that none of the orders state explicitly what the role of the parent is in relation to the early Christian nurture of the children. Neither do they effectively urge the parents to accept the responsibilities involved because the implicit instructions do not seem to be sufficiently clear to be easily recognized.

B. Conclusion

The conclusions that are significant in the light of the purpose of this thesis are those which focus attention on the order for Infant Baptism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Christian churches all need to be concerned about the matter of the parents' crucial influence upon their children because, in the early years of the child's life, the parents make up practically the total influence

exerted upon the child. The churches need to use every opportunity for both helping the parents to be truly Christian and charging parents to fulfill their obligations to their children. Thus the Evangelical Lutheran Church should make the most of the opportunity afforded through the practice of Infant Baptism, to impress upon the parents their responsibility for Christian nurture. During this service the church speaks officially to individual parents, but at the same time informs all who hear, and it should make certain that instruction is both relevant to the setting and clearly stated. With this in mind the following suggestions are offered as improvements in the order. First the order itself should clearly indicate that parents must be Christian if they are going to provide Christian nurture for their young child. This would at least involve the parents' testifying to their own faith at the time of the child's baptism. An exhortation should be included for the parents, stressing the fact that in the early years of their child's life, they will be teaching him by their attitudes, conduct and expressions; that what they teach their child during his early years is of crucial importance for his whole life; that the results will be either for good or for evil; and that parents cannot teach by attitudes, conduct, and expressions anything different from what they are themselves.

Since the orders often contain instructions for the pastor, there ought to be emphasis there too that the pastor should have at least one conference with the parents before their child is baptized. He should be urged in this conference clearly to present to the parents their inescapable role in the Christian nurture of their child, and should indicate the means which the church has to offer to aid them in their task.

While the above suggestions do not imply that the order for infant baptism should be the only place and means for parent education in relation to child nurture, it does seem evident that if the suggestions were incorporated into the order there would be a marked improvement. It should do much to overcome the present danger of parents' not knowing what is involved for them when their child is baptized, and also would help many to accept the serious responsibility which they bear and to fulfill their obligations to their child in a manner pleasing to Him who is Father of us all.

Then there rests upon the church the further responsibility of actually providing an adequate parent education program. The successful churches referred to in chapter two offer suggestions as to what makes up an effective parent education program. The total church program should be planned to give effective help to all the members, including parents, to be growing Christians. Special courses should be offered to parents. These should be so designed that they will help parents both in their own personal lives and also in their efforts to teach their children. This would involve recognition and acceptance of the responsibilities to parenthood as well as practical suggestions of technique.

It may well be that if the service of Infant Baptism clearly indicates the crucial role of parents in relation to the Christian nurture of their children, the parents will more readily avail themselves of the help offered by the church.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY'S LIST
OF "GREAT CHURCHES OF AMERICA"

Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee.

Collegiate Methodist Church, Ames, Iowa.

First Church of Christ, (Congregational) West Hartford, Connecticut.

First Community Church, Columbus, Ohio.

First Evangelical and Reformed Church, New Knoxville, Ohio.

First Methodist Church, Orlando, Florida.

First Presbyterian Church, Hollywood, California.

First Presbyterian Church, Topeka, Kansas.

Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Olive Chapel Baptist Church, Apex, North Carolina.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Freistatt, Missouri.

Washington Prairie Evangelical Lutheran Church, Decorah, Iowa.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO THE GREAT CHURCHES

1. Do you have a special program for parent education with reference to pre-school child nurture? _____
 - a. Study groups _____
 - b. Home visitation _____
 - c. Special Sermon Series _____
 - d. Sermons for special (Mother's, etc.) _____
 - e. Family devotion emphasis _____
 - f. Other _____
(Any elaboration you give will be helpful)

2. Is there any training given in connection with the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism to infants? _____
In connection with the Dedication of infants? _____
Comments? _____

3. In connection with the administration of Baptism or Dedication of Infants:
 - a. Are questions concerning faith, if used, specifically addressed to parents _____, sponsors _____, others _____?
 - b. Is the exhortation, if any is used, regarding child nurture addressed specifically to parents _____ or sponsors _____?Comments? _____

4. a. Are children of non-members dedicated or baptized? _____
b. If so, is there any stress on qualifying conditions to be met by the parents? _____
Comments? _____

5. Is there any attempt made to give this kind of training to newly married couples? _____. Before children are born or soon after? _____
Comments? _____

6. Do you produce any material yourselves as a congregation which you distribute in connection with Parent Training? _____
(If so, sample copies would be very helpful)

7. What printed materials, periodicals, pamphlets, or books are used in this connection?

Author

Title

Publisher

APPENDIX C

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CIRCULATED IN THREE OF THE "GREAT CHURCHES"

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