

Educational Imperatives in the 1970's

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by

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Introduction

Education today is big business; education, in fact, is our nation's largest enterprise. In 1969 the sum of \$68 billion was expended for education, both public and private, at all levels.

The size of this enterprise also is underscored by the number of people involved in it in one way or another. More than one fourth of our nation's population -- 58.6 million people -- are in schools and colleges, either on a full-time or a part-time basis. This enterprise engages 2.7 million educators in 122,000 separate educational institutions.

Included in these statistics are the private systems of education, also that of our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. In terms of people and money education in the Synod also is big business. The 1969-1970 enrollment in our elementary schools was 25,775; in the eight area high schools the enrollment reached 2,944; and in the synodical schools it was 2,254 (Seminary - 186, colleges - 1,137, prep schools - 931), for a total enrollment on all levels of 30,973. Staffing our elementary schools were 372 men and 623 women, a total of 995 teachers. Higher education in 1969-1970 involved 289 educators.

The total amount of money spent on education throughout the Synod is difficult to assess. In the synodical program the net budget for the Worker-Training Division for 1969-1970 was \$1,528,369. The net budget adopted for 1970-1971 is \$1,800,918. We estimate that our congregations collectively spend about \$6,835,000 annually to operate their elementary schools and \$1,472,000 to maintain their area high schools.

It has been said that statistics can be used to prove almost anything. However, it is not our intention to use the statistics above

for any other purpose than to emphasize the magnitude of our educational task. All of this money is spent, and all of these people spend themselves, on programs of education which generally are in addition to those of the state. Is Christian education so vital? Are we spending our money wisely? Are Christian schools worth maintaining in the future? What problems do we face in maintaining our schools in the years ahead? What challenges lie before us in the new decade of the 1970's? We hope to provide answers to these and other questions which might be raised as we consider

Educational Imperatives in the 1970's

Undoubtedly we face more educational imperatives in the '70's than in any other decade of history. However, we shall endeavor to include all the impelling issues as we see them under but three imperatives. They are: educate, update, and dedicate.

Educational Imperative: Educate!

On the way to our office we pass by a beautiful Roman Catholic church and school complex called St. Therese. It is located ideally in a suburb of homes, not within the decaying central city. Although we have never been in the school, our guess is that it contains about sixteen classrooms. This building, constructed within the last decade, as of this fall will resound with the clacking of typewriters and office machines rather than with the voices of children. No longer to be used as a school, the building will become the office headquarters of the diocese. St. Therese is just one of ten schools of the Roman Catholic Church in the Milwaukee diocese which has thrown in the sponge. Statistics for the state of Wisconsin follow.

	<u>1968-69</u>	<u>1969-70</u>	<u>1970-71</u>
Elementary enrollment	134,414	129,484	116,991
Secondary enrollment	23,511	23,324	21,404

The story in Wisconsin is repeated throughout the United States. Whatever the reasons may be, financial or declining birth rate or otherwise, the Romans obviously no longer consider it an imperative to educate. Dr. Virgil C. Blum, a Jesuit professor of political science at Marquette University and very active in Citizens for Educational Freedom, stated privately that he is deeply disturbed about the future of Roman Catholic education. He claims that this program of the Roman church is in financial trouble, resulting particularly from the change-over to lay teachers. But he also is greatly concerned about the commitment to parochial education on the part of young priests. He fears that there no longer is the total commitment that there once was to Catholic education.

There seem to be indications of similar trends also within the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. Many contend that the decreases in enrollment and closing of schools result only from declining birth rates. But others insist that there is not the same emphasis upon Christian education that there once was.

The tendency of religiously oriented, independent schools to lose sight of their need to educate creates a problem which ought to be of concern to all of us as citizens of the United States. Vitality springs from diversity. E pluribus unum is a phrase generally familiar to Americans. Indeed, there is strength in unity. But as strength is derived from union, so also does vitality spring from diversity. In our time we have seen enough of monolithic society to appreciate more fully than ever before the strength which springs from diversity. This

has certainly been true in the field of education. The dangers which arise from a monolithic educational system are the very imperative so many in government see today for supporting independent, religiously oriented educational ventures. The monsters of communism, secularism, and materialism will have greater chances of sweeping over our nation and into the hearts and minds of our youth in a monolithic educational system. This very danger, though it be negative, contributes toward our imperative to educate.

Another negative aspect stems from the dangers to which our children and young people are exposed in many public schools today. Sex education without moral principles, situation ethics, the new morality, and secularism all represent dangers which underscore our imperative to educate.

The strong imperative to educate, however, arises not from negative aspects, but rather from the positive values which are derived from Christian education.

Education in our church operates from a firm set of guiding principles regarding God, man, salvation, and the meaning of life. Christian education gives the child a sense of identity and purpose in life and in this world. The Christian school does not deprive the child of something, it gives him something more. The key advantage of Christian schools is the imparting of a consistent view of life. Our purpose is to educate the whole child, not only mentally and physically, but spiritually and morally. Christian education gives the student a wider and deeper knowledge of the Bible than he would otherwise generally acquire. Furthermore, it gives the student a heightened sense of moral values, always placing the emphasis upon God's will. It is a valuable asset in preserving our cultural and

religious heritage as Lutherans. Christian education helps to develop stronger Christian faith and convictions. It tends to produce the kind of citizens valued by the state. Christian education provides continuity with the training of a Christian home and also assists the growth of the church by providing the majority of future pastors, missionaries, and teachers. Statistics reveal that 98% of the students at Wisconsin Lutheran College had been trained in parochial schools. Above all, Christian education places young people at the feet of Jesus and trains them for eternity. These are just a few of the positive values which motivate us to educate.

The positive values of Christian education are succinctly set forth in the pamphlet, "Why a Christian School for our Children?" The five reasons listed are: 1) because only a Christian school can give children an education to provide the one sure answer to life's most important question, "How can I be saved?" 2) because the Christian school assists believers in meeting their God-given duty to teach children the Word of God; 3) because in a Christian school the Word of God sheds light on all knowledge; 4) because the Christian school can devote a proper amount of time to the "one thing needful"; 5) because the Christian school makes God's love the basis and motivation in character training.

Obviously, these positive values cannot be derived from public instruction. While we are grateful for the efforts of all Christians who may be teaching in the public school system, we recognize that the Constitution of the United States prohibits teachers from instilling all of the positive Christian values in their classrooms.

Pastor Joel Gerlach, in an article printed in The Lutheran Educator, Volume 10 - Number 4, appropriately calls Christian education "education

on center" because it centers in Jesus Christ and because it educates the whole man. He writes, "The call of the hour is for a renewal of Christian education, first in the home, and then in the Christian Institutions of learning -- Sunday schools, vacation Bible schools, Christian day schools, high schools, and colleges. If we entrust this task to secular instruction, the result can only be a secular society, a society of learned fools who say there is no God. Surely the cost of education is high, but so is the cost of a tonsillectomy or an appendectomy or of filling a tooth. How foolish of us to be willing to bear the financial burden of a healthy body, but not of a sound mind and heart in which the Word of Christ dwells richly. May God help us all to see the need clearly, and may He unite us all in our endeavor as Christians to promote and extend Christian education so that a generation is trained up among us that does 'all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father for Him'."

The Board for Parish Education of our Wisconsin Synod has formally adopted a philosophy and purpose of Christian day schools. This statement appeared in The Lutheran Educator, Volume 10 - Number 2. Whenever we lose sight of our educational imperative, it might be well for us to review this statement. The purpose of Christian education is to carry out a program of unified Christian training. Its aim is to bring up the individual child in the Christian faith, using the Holy Scriptures as the infallible norm and guide. In its entire program the Gospel is to shed its illuminating light upon all subject matter, facts, happenings, activities, judgments, principles, interests, and habits. The scope of the program on the elementary level is to include everything belonging to a curriculum of elementary education, including the perfecting of useful skills, cultivating cultural interests and social

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graces, promoting physical health, and developing the special gifts and talents of the individual child. The basic objectives are to provide faithfully for the eternal welfare of the child and to develop him as a good citizen of our country.

One of the great challenges of Christian teaching is to show the relevance of the Gospel to all thought and action. This requires relating Law and Gospel properly and emphasizing the Gospel so that there is a clear understanding of sin and grace, repentance and forgiveness, and salvation in spite of sin. The Gospel is the great news of salvation, and it is at the same time the motivation for obedience and for an active life of joyful service to God and man. This becomes clear to everyone who is given a Christian education.

In another article by Pastor Gerlach, found in The Lutheran Educator, Volume 9 - Number 3, he speaks about the goals of Christian education on the basis of Romans 12: presenting our bodies as living sacrifices to God, and the transformation of the mind by the operation of the Holy Spirit. Obviously these goals make Christian education an imperative for us, for they are goals to which one cannot aspire in public education. These very goals, states Pastor Gerlach, are the reasons why Christian congregations go through the trouble of starting Christian schools, why mothers are ready to drive 25 minutes twice a day, and why we are willing to pay our tithes in addition to our taxes.

The Christian faith makes a difference in life. Here is the strong imperative for us to educate. We must operate in such a way that this becomes evident. If our schools lose sight of this fact, the problems which beset education will devour our educational system, and perhaps they should. The centrality of the Gospel and of Christian faith in our educational program on every level makes this the work of the church,

the work of the church which should be done at all costs, the work of the church which should be done in spite of the many problems which beset us.

II

Educational Imperative: Update!

Because of the centrality of the Gospel in our educational system and because of the Gospel's unchanging values, we in the church are oriented to the status quo. In our system we are committed to the basic principles rooted in God, redemption, and the nature of man. This orientation somehow seemingly makes us averse to any kind of change. As long as we have the Gospel, we tend to claim, we don't have to be concerned about change, about progress, about development. This attitude not only is dangerous, it could lead to the eventual death of what we treasure so highly. We think it is important that also in the church we remain tuned in to the changes that are taking place in the field of education. This is what we choose to call updating of education.

A pastor today wouldn't think of using a horse-drawn buggy to get around in his ministry. We are living in the '70's, and we use the modern inventions to great advantage in the promotion of the Gospel. Likewise, in the field of education it may no longer be advisable to use the "horse and buggy" methods which may have served our fathers well. On the other hand, all that is old need not be discarded just because it is old. Both the old and the new must be critically evaluated as to their worth for the educational program of the '70's.

The catchword of today in the field of education is change. There have been similar catchwords in past decades, words such as progress, evolution, development. We often are fearful of such

catchwords, but we need not be so afraid. Without espousing any theory of evolution, we can safely say that there are changes taking place in our society today, changes which are due to growth -- growth in population, growth in urbanization, growth in deterioration. There are also changes taking place related to the uses of power, both political power and economic power. There are changes related to the structure of society; and there unfortunately are changes related to attitudes and values. Most of the fundamentals of life today are up for grabs. One need only attend a few movies, read a few best sellers, or keep his eyes and ears open to recognize that ours is a world of change. We believe it imperative that we be tuned in to these changes which are taking place in our world in the '70's. These very changes should move us to hang on to our educational moorings for dear life.

Another change significant for the field of education is the increasing usage of technology. In the decade of the '60's we experienced an industrial revolution in education which is continuing into the '70's, a revolution which has threatened to antique the classroom that has access only to the blackboard and the overhead projector. That revolution has brought into education televised instruction, teaching machines, programmed instruction, and computerized instruction.

We received a notification last week regarding the second edition of Index to Computer Assisted Instruction. This is described as a reference book containing a comprehensive compilation of information on the 910 computer-assisted instruction programs currently operating and available from 85 sources including elementary and secondary schools, colleges, military installations, and industry. Each program listing includes a description of characteristics of the program: its name, author, source, specific subject matter, prerequisites, level of

instruction, appropriate student population, average completion time, logic of program, uses of program, supplementary equipment or materials, status of program, availability of program, funding, descriptive literature, computer language, central processor, and terminal description. This gives us some indication of the type of updating in the uses of technology which is taking place in the field of education today.

The body of knowledge is expanding so rapidly that information retrieval systems become quite necessary. This is one of the primary uses of computers in education. Computers are used for providing repetitive types of learning through individually tailored programs. Computers today are used also for record keeping, for reporting to parents, and for diagnostic evaluation. They are used for billing, scheduling, cataloguing, and managing. We have already gained some experience with computers in our educational system. Some work has been done with computers at Dr. Martin Luther College. At Wisconsin Lutheran High School the scheduling this past year was computerized. Eleven hundred individual programs were scheduled, after the computer had been fed, within a matter of minutes. The billing also has been computerized. Again, this is the type of updating which becomes an educational imperative for our schools in the '70's, and you will note from what has been stated that computers are used today on every level of education.

Increasingly the teacher in the '70's will be required to be a master of the tools of technology, a master in the art of administering learning.

We shall also have to update our libraries in the '70's. The modern library is more than a storeroom for books. The library of the '70's is a materials instruction center, a learning resources

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center. Here one may enjoy the advantage of computer assisted instruction programs; or one may dial for televised tapes and listen to plays, music, speeches, and lectures. The program statement for the new library at Dr. Martin Luther College indicates that it will be such a learning center, at first not with all of the features we indicated, but with the potential for their installation in the future. With the continued increase in knowledge, which according to some projections is to double in the '70's, there will be need for modernizing our libraries, not only at our seminary and in our colleges, but also in our prep schools, area high schools, and even in our elementary schools.

Another area in which our educational system will have to be updated, as we see it, is in the increasing use of various media of communication. Closed circuit television, UHF television, telecommunication devices, and instant communication to the home are means of communication which do not lie in the distant future; they are being used extensively in education already today. In many respects television may be a monster, but it also is a marvel. One of its advantages is that it can extend the reach of a good teacher. We see the possibility of teletaping the lecture of a professor who is particularly gifted in some area and using that tape in more than one school.

The advantage of television is that it brings to students educational experiences beyond the potential of conventional means. In our schools we will not be able to avoid, nor will we want to avoid, the advantages of this means of communication in the '70's.

The curriculum also is an area in which we face constant updating. We are of the opinion that the curricula in our schools of higher education, as well as in our parochial schools, are deserving of constant updating. Sometimes we wish the fifth graders knew half as much about

the present life of American ghetto dwellers as they know about the past of American Indians. In our synodical schools our faculties should be constantly involved in an on-going study and evaluation of the curriculum. In our Commission on Higher Education we have a standing committee to which the responsibility of updating the curricula has been given.

Moreover, we should be looking at the methods of instruction which are being employed in our systems. It will be beneficial to our educational system if we give careful study to the theories of learning. Is education the training of the mind, or is it changing of behavior? These are questions which face educators in the '70's, questions to which we also should address ourselves. Is the lecture method the only method of teaching? What percentage of instruction in our synodical schools follows the Herbartian theory of learning? Are there other methods of instruction which can be adapted to the advantage of our educational system?

Another educational imperative, as we see it in the updating of our school system, involves the administration of the schools on every level. In our elementary schools, even the larger schools, the principals are generally full-time teachers. In our synodical schools the administrators carry teaching loads which are unheard of in public instruction. Can we continue to operate in this way, or will it be necessary to update the administration of our schools in the '70's?

The role of administration too often is neglected. The administrator should have time just to sit and think, to think about the curriculum, about methods of instruction, about improvement of instruction, about the administration of the school.

While academic excellence is never the primary objective, it is still a major objective. Finally, academic inferiority or mediocrity will condemn a school to decline in usefulness and respect. Working toward excellence is our task for the '70's.

What affect will the non-graded school have on our system? The points of entrance to and exit from tomorrow's school may be determined by the mental and emotional maturity of the child rather than by letter grades and grade levels. There are many educators who insist that the grade levels will be abolished, that children should no longer receive letter grades. And there are many areas in which this practice is already in vogue. The bases for such instruction are individual differences and the desire to approach each student on a genuinely individual basis. As the child moves through the levels of education, he assumes more responsibilities for his advancement. We do not presume to predict that we shall be updating our school system to follow this procedure. Nevertheless, we ought to be aware of it and study its implications for us.

There will also be some changes in the '70's in the updating of school buildings. They are being constructed with movable partitions with the idea that buildings get out of the way of people and processes.

All of these ways in which education is being updated in the '70's may have some far-reaching implications for the basic structure of our school system. The last one-room school in Wisconsin has now been closed. In the last meeting of the Committee on Assignment of Calls, eight teachers were assigned to one-room schools. Will it be necessary in the future to recast our basic structures to expedite efficient, prophetically prudential, and economic applications? Will neighboring congregations have to talk more to each other and join in supporting joint schools? We believe it will be necessary in the future to do away

with some of our rugged individualism and to bring about greater coordination of our programs. Such coordination may become necessary on every level of instruction -- elementary, secondary and also within our synodical system. We assume this to be one of our important roles in our future work as Executive Secretary of Higher Education.

One area to which more thought may have to be given at our colleges is that of student housing. The Synod has adopted the policy that no students are to be married. Across the nation, however, one of every four college students is married. Will our colleges have to take this fact into account in planning facilities and programs for the future? A college today which does not take this fact into account fails to meet modern needs.

There are some definite trends today in the construction of facilities with which we should keep abreast. For example, dormitories are planned without the long halls, the crowded lavatories, and the noisy grouping areas.

These are but a sampling of some of the factors facing educational leaders in the '70's. How many of them will have a bearing on our system, we do not presume to say.

Education sees three great issues faced today by schools. They are: 1) the harnessing of modern technology (television, automation, computers); 2) the conventional patterns of education (teams, grades, teachers, students); 3) the basic processes of learning. These issues, more or less, also affect educators in the church.

Wilbur J. Cohen, former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare and now dean of the school of education at the University of Michigan,

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predicts that preschool education will begin at the age of 2 1/2, that education will be supported by federal aid up to 35% of its total cost, and that the school year will be increased from 180 to 220 days.

Whether Wilbur Cohen is a reliable prophet or not we cannot say, but his predictions do have a tremendous bearing upon our educational imperatives for the '70's. We cannot become guilty of playing the part of an ostrich and hiding our head in the sand. This leads us to our third educational imperative for the '70's.

III

Educational Imperative: Dedicate!

We want to dedicate our children to God, who has given them to us. We still recognize that children are a gift of the Lord and that we are responsible to Him in rearing our children. They are His children. They are to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We dedicate our children wholly to Him. We want the very best for them in the field of education. We want for them particularly what the public schools cannot give them. To that end, it is imperative that we dedicate ourselves to the promotion of Christian education, to a renewed emphasis upon the best agency of Christian education outside of the home -- the Christian day school, and to the most advantageous uses of all of the part-time agencies of education in the church.

It is imperative that we also dedicate our planning to the Christian education of our children. Above all, we must know our goals and the reasons for the existence of Christian schools. In the schools our teachers and administrators must also know these things and plan and pursue all programs to the attainment of our goals. Goals precede programs, and the latter serve the former. Our goals, of course, must be solidly and firmly rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The

establishment of our goals and the adoption of programs by which these goals may be reached matter more than structures.

It is imperative for the '70's that we ever remember our educational mission. As skaters whirl, they keep their eyes fixed on a specific point with each turn, or they soon suffer the disorientation of dizziness. The same is true in these times of rapid change for educators in the church. Unless we frequently take a sighting on our specific goals, we may easily become disoriented. Henrik Ibsen in 1882 stated, "I hold that man is in the right who is most closely in league with the future." So our planning must be in league with the future, in line with our purposes and the reasons for our existence. Too often in the past, what we have done in the field of education we have done out of expediency rather than as a result of planning. Planning, rather than expediency, should be our mode of operation in the '70's. Indeed, long-range planning is essential. And again, in this planning there should be some coordination, not only on the synodical level, but also on the congregational level. More and more it is imperative that we speak to each other. In our planning for the future we shall have to consider factors such as population trends and the trends toward urbanization. By 1980 our population will have increased by about 25%. By 1980 about 80% of our population will be residing in metropolitan areas. In 1969-1970 the enrollment in higher education throughout the United States was 7.4 million. By 1980-1981 it will be 11.5 million. These are factors which should enter into our planning in the '70's for the future.

And all of the imperatives to educate and to update have implications for the dedication of our treasures to Christian education. This may be, in the end, one of the most important educational imperatives

of all, namely, that we dedicate our treasures in the '70's to the Christian training of our youth. Both as individuals and as congregations, both as a synod and as groups of congregations, even greater dedication of treasures may be necessary in the future.

There is no reason to believe that the spiralling cost of education will go down in the '70's. In fact, the updating of education has many implications for finance. A much larger percentage of personal incomes may be needed for elementary and secondary education. There may be comparable percentage increases for higher education.

What will be the relation in the future of the federal government and of the state to our educational system? We have adopted our policy statements regarding state aid to education. We want to bear in mind the relation of support of the state to our independence and to the control of education.

We also know that we cannot in the '70's run our educational system, as we have so often done in the past, at the expense of those who are called to serve in them. Your District several years ago adopted a recommendation to the Committee on Assignment of Calls advising that assignments should not be made to congregations whose salary schedules were below the Synod code. As an advisory member of the Committee on Assignment of Calls we recall that such requests for assignments have been made. We cannot continue to educate our children at the expense of their teachers. The effort is worth more.

Conclusion

These educational imperatives are not on an if-and-when basis. They are not to be heeded only if we want to and when we want to. The role of education in our church is a formidable one, and the problems confronting us are greater than ever before. These problems,

however, represent our opportunities, our opportunities to educate our youth in the faith of Jesus Christ, to update our education in ways that will be worthy of our goals and objectives, and to that end to dedicate ourselves as well as our talents and treasures that they may be used to train up our children in the way they should go that when they are old they may not depart from it. Thus many blessings will accrue to our church, and God's name will be glorified.