

THE CDS AS A MISSION ARM

The Significance, Both Historical and Present-day,  
of the Christian Day School as a Mission Arm,  
as Exhibited By Congregations in the Milwaukee Area

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May 1, 1985

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### I. The Early Years of the Synod 1860 - 1910

- A. Role of the CDS in the establishment of new congregations
- B. Role of the CDS in church growth and stability
- C. Some attempted explanations

### II. The Years of Transition 1910 - 1940

- A. Role of the CDS questioned because of war and depression
- B. Role of the CDS questioned because of the growing quality  
of public education
- C. Results: Those who closed
- D. Results: Those who withstood

### III. The Advent of a New Age 1940 - ?

- A. The decline in public education standards and its effect  
on the CDS
- B. New roles for the CDS: assimilation of new members and  
bridge to another culture
- C. The role of tuition
- D. What next, Christian Discipleship School?

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all those who were so gracious as to answer the poll I sent them. Without their help, I could not have researched the mission activity of the CDS in our own time period.

I would also like to extend a special thankyou to my wife, Susan, the greatest proofreader I know, and the most patient.

## INTRODUCTION

When I began the study of the influence of the Christian Day School on missions, I wasn't sure what kind of trend I would find. I had no idea whether I would find one pattern which could be applied to all congregations or whether there would be no pattern at all. As you read this report, remember that it is not the definitive answer concerning the CDS as a mission arm. Hopefully, it will show some patterns, some trends, and perhaps give another pastor or student an idea of how he can apply these trends effectively in his congregation. But it is by no means the only answer.

If there is one thing which this study has made clear to me, it is the fact that there are very many variables at work in any individual congregation. Because there are so many variables, no one method or application will necessarily be the answer for a given church.

May this study bear fruit both for the author and reader in greater mission awareness in our congregations' Christian Day Schools!

## THE CDS AS A MISSION ARM

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### I. THE EARLY YEARS OF THE SYNOD 1860 - 1910

The CDS played a very active role in the lives of the members of the early Milwaukee congregations. The German-Lutherans who founded WELS churches obviously had strong feelings about the CDS even before they formed as a congregation, for the CDS is an immediate part of their congregational life. Let us examine the role of the CDS in the establishment of new congregations, in church growth, and in church stability in those infant years.

#### ROLE OF THE CDS IN ESTABLISHMENT OF CONGREGATIONS

In order that one might more clearly see how the CDS played a part in the establishment of early Milwaukee WELS churches, it is necessary to turn to the actual biographies of some of the individual congregations. Jerusalem, on 3012 N. Holton St., was one of these congregations. In the summer of 1888, Dr. A Hoenecke bought four lots at the corner of E.

Chambers and Holton, and on Oct. 10, 1888, the little congregation of 28 people founded their church. By March 2, 1889, they had completed a building, the lower half of which was to serve as a school. The CDS was an immediate concern to these members and to their first pastor. He began to teach "in the school with 74 pupils the day after his ordination and installation on May 6, 1889."<sup>1</sup>

David's Star, Jackson, WI, was one of the first congregations to be founded which we of the WELS can today claim as our own. It was also one of the first to open a CDS. In 1843, the first services were begun in the private home of Carl Retzlaff. That same fall, they moved to a two-story house, the home of Fred Bublitz. It was larger and was able to serve a three-fold purpose: a parsonage, school, and church.<sup>2</sup>

St. Jacobi, 8601 W. Forest Home, Greenfield, WI, had a similar beginning. Although it arose from strife between people who were originally members of St. Peter's and who eventually broke away, nevertheless it was a congregation which considered the CDS to be very important in their role as a congregation. "In its very first meeting the congregation considered the establishing of a Christian Day School. Four weeks after its organization, May 18, 1873, the congregation authorized the purchase of a blacksmith shop for \$100,

instructed a committee to remodel it for school purposes, and called Teacher Albert Baerwald."<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the most interesting congregation of all in respect to the role of the CDS is Nazareth, located at N. 25 & Meinecke. This church was formed as a result of CDS activity. Nazareth has a mother and a grandmother. Trinity, one of the earliest LC-MS churches in Milwaukee, established a branch school on the north side of Milwaukee in 1860. This led to the establishment of Immanuel congregation in 1866. She in turn had two daughter congregations. One was Emmaus, on 23rd and Halley, founded in 1890, the other was Nazareth. The congregation built a two-story building, with the church on the first floor and two classrooms on the second. On April 25, 1895, their first pastor, Ed Albrecht, was installed. At the same time, the church and school were dedicated. The following day the school was opened, with 120 students in attendance.

Thus, one can properly say that Nazareth is a result of CDS activity. Out of a CDS grew the mother church and two daughter churches.<sup>4</sup>

Another such church was St. John, 816 W. Vliet St. As one of the earliest churches, it became a mother church through the activity of the Christian Day schools which it operated. It all started when a group of Pomeranian Germans began to meet together to observe

Sunday worship. At first, they met in a member's house and read *Hauspostille*, a collection of Luther's sermons. In 1848, they formally organized as a congregation. "Almost immediately St. John's maintained its own Christian Day School. Buildings were erected in 1862, 1871, 1887."<sup>5</sup> The first building, in 1862, was already a 2-story building. This group planned big, and went on to grow at least as fast as they might have expected, if not much faster, as we shall see.

#### THE CDS IN CHURCH GROWTH AND STABILITY

On March 2, 1889, Jerusalem had completed their dual purpose building, church and school on separate floors. Two short months later, on May 6th, they had one teacher and 74 pupils. And by June they had graduated to two teachers. One might say that the city of Milwaukee was ripe for the harvest. But it seems that the CDS was a very important part of that harvest work.

The trend continued. In 1902, Jerusalem had four classes. A kindergarten had been added. And in 1914, the number of classes had reached six.<sup>6</sup>

Nor was Jerusalem a unique situation. St. Jacobi, the congregation which had arisen out of strife, had 57 pupils in the CDS when it opened. One month after it



had opened, it had 72 pupils, and in one year it had grown to 103 children. An addition was added to the school that year, and 6 years later, on June 1, 1882, a new school was begun. It was dedicated Nov. 26 of the same year. By 1894, attendance had grown to what would be the all-time record, 344 children.<sup>7</sup>

Siloah, 3721 N 21 St., is also an argument for the strong role of the CDS in early mission work. Siloah was dedicated Dec. 16, 1894, but in three years, grew only by nine members. Although they had a pastor (Otto Hoenecke served here as well as at Trinity) they did not grow at the phenomenal rate which most early churches did. They did not have any school, which may have been a large factor in the slow growth. Then in 1898, when candidate Rudolph Jeske was called from the seminary, a schoolhouse was built. By 1900, the congregation had become a member of Synod, and that fall claimed 50 souls.<sup>8</sup> It seems that the CDS was a part of the church which the early German emigrants wanted, yes, even expected. Without a CDS, many were content to find another church.

This seems to be even more true when one compares an early church such as St. John on Vliet, which really did preoccupy itself with the use of the CDS. They expanded their local school not once but three times.

in the 19th century St. John's operated as many as three grade schools. Branch schools were opened at N. Palmer and W. Garfield Sts., and at N. 37th and W.

Michigan Sts. These schools soon developed into independent congregations--St. Marcus and Apostles of Christ.

Christian education certainly was one of the most important aspects of the church. Tuition-free schooling from kindergarten through the eighth grade was offered to any child regardless of church affiliation. In this way, the school was the mission arm of the church."<sup>7</sup>

It must have worked very well, for in St. John's "History Notes," we read, "At the turn of the century baptisms averaged 200 annually (nearly four per Sunday). Confirmation classes were frequently more than 100. People from all walks of life filled the pews at this church."<sup>10</sup>

It also seems clear that the CDS was the primary motivation in the growth of Grace, on the corner of Juneau and Broadway. The CDS was a very important part of the new congregation. Although they were poor, the people proved themselves to be very zealous toward their school. It was their pride and joy, and they strove to meet or exceed the educational standards of the times. The school also became the congregation's greatest mission outreach to the neighboring community.<sup>11</sup>

During the late 1800's many German immigrants settled around Milwaukee, and as a result church attendance grew rapidly. The little mission which Pastor Muehlhaeuser had begun a half-century before had

now grown into a large and affluent church. By 1890 Grace boasted 178 baptized, 70 confirmands, and an annual communion record of over 1900 persons.<sup>12</sup>

Many of its members were rich and prestigious and gave generously to the church. Soon Grace became known as the church with the padded pews. Now people flocked to join the church. Grace found herself sitting back, basking in her affluence, and as a result she was doing almost no active mission work in the area. There seemed no need. This would soon change, with tragic results for the CDS.<sup>13</sup>

#### SOME ATTEMPTED EXPLANATIONS

It could possibly be argued that there were selfish reasons involved in the establishment of so many Christian Day Schools. After all, there was no secular public education at this time. Only a very wealthy family could send its children to a boarding school, if they could find one. So the desire was strong to join a church which would offer social and economic advancement to its children.

But it seems that the desire for a Christian education was also very prevalent. It had already existed in Germany. The Lutherans who came to America had experienced a movement within the German church

that placed a premium on youth work.

Along with the other plans and resolutions for our Synod, Muehlhaeuser and company "resolved that every preacher belonging to the body devote himself especially to the youth and conduct a day school, Bible and mission classes."<sup>14</sup> This attitude is reflected by almost every early congregation. No one had to tell them to build the CDS. It was second nature to them. They began it immediately in conjunction with their new churches.

The CDS was also very helpful in mission work because it was so normal to the German way of thinking.

It didn't appear in any way to be a part of culture shock. It conformed to their way of life. And that is always the ultimate goal for mission work whenever it does not compromise the Gospel.

And of course, one must never forget that the hand of the Lord is involved. The faithful planted. But God gave the increase. He had safely moved them into what appeared to be a new Promised Land. It was a land waiting to bless them. And as they worked faithfully and wholeheartedly for the Lord, he also blessed them with a freedom to worship him in a way they had never known before.

## II. THE YEARS OF TRANSITION 1910 - 1940

Changes in a congregation's attitude toward their CDS or in the effectiveness of the CDS can come from both internal and external causes. Internally, almost every church we have looked at was becoming a second generation church. The individuals who had begun the work of building the church were either dead or very old. And the new generation often may not have fully appreciated what their parents had left them. This can and often does result in a 'cooling' of zeal within the church. And it may be the reason that almost every congregation underwent a period of transition. But there were also some external reasons for the difficult years which our churches and their day schools experienced in mission work.

### ROLE OF THE CDS QUESTIONED BECAUSE OF WAR AND DEPRESSION

With the coming of WW I there was a shift of attitude among many of the Americans in Milwaukee as well as most of the rest of our country. This attitude has been described as "a bitterness against everything German."<sup>10</sup> Because the war was an anti-German war, it left its effect on the rest of our American

institutions.

Our churches and schools felt this attitude probably more acutely than any other institution. After all, they were still operating predominately in German, both in the church and in the CDS. This undoubtedly lead to somewhat of a decline of attendance.

Then, in the 30's came the Great Depression. Many churches felt that they would hardly find enough money to support the pastor and keep the church repaired without adding the expense of operating the CDS. These feelings were voiced, arguments sometimes developed, and many pressed for the closure of their schools. They felt it was no longer a good investment. They felt a church could grow without the CDS. And they bitterly fought for closure.

#### ROLE OF THE CDS QUESTIONED BECAUSE OF THE GROWING QUALITY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

The other important external which adversely affected our schools was the public school. Public education had been around for over half a century. But at first it was so poor that parents would never have dreamed of pulling their children out of the CDS and enrolling them in the public school. Then men like John Dewey set to work at improving education, and by

the turn of the century, the public school was becoming a force to reckon with.<sup>16</sup>

By 1910, the high school was known to most small towns. Public transportation had increased, the junior highschool was developing, and education was growing "broader, more democratic, and more practical."<sup>17</sup>

As public education increased in availability and quality, the recognized need for the CDS decreased in the estimation of many of the members. They saw 'a good secular education' as of first importance. The public schools were at least close to offering that. So why, they argued, should they waste their money supporting a CDS as well?

On the other side were those who believed that no matter how good the education is, if it is not a *Christian* education, it is next to worthless. They had a very Biblical argument. What good is it to gain the world and lose your own soul? For this group, Christian education could never be replaced, even by a public education which seemed to be ever increasing in scope and quality.

#### RESULTS: THOSE WHO CLOSED

Some churches could not withstand the internal pressure of members who were opposed to continuing the

school. Their schools could not be run by a minority of individuals, even though they may have felt very strongly about the need of the CDS.

One such church was Siloah. The year was 1919, a year which saddened many. It was only ten years since the congregation had become self-supporting. But "enrollment was seriously affected by public school expansion. Furthermore, the pastor was no longer able to teach and serve the needs of the growing congregation."<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that Siloah did not close without a struggle. Several attempts were first made to form a joint school with other WELS congregations in the area. But the attempts were not successful.<sup>11</sup>

Yet, we can leave Siloah with a happy note. She was beaten down, but she did not give up the fight. We shall return to see her rise to great mission heights in the later years.

Another congregation which found an incredible change in direction was Grace. She had been resting on her past laurels for a number of years; instead of doing much active mission work, the congregation seems to have grown accustomed to sitting back and just watching the church grow. When Pastor Carl Gausewitz was called to the congregation, in about 1906, he found a slowly declining congregation. The German immigration which had been so pronounced in the



congregation now slowed to a trickle. More and more, the old Germans began moving into the more affluent western suburbs. The large old houses began to come down and in their place tenement houses were erected. Now much of the neighborhood was transient and lower class.<sup>20</sup>

Pastor Gausewitz' reaction to all of this is an interesting one. On the one hand he recognized the continued mission need of remaining in the east part of Milwaukee instead of moving the church to the suburbs. But on the other hand he felt the pressure of a declining church and felt the need to react to it to keep his church membership secure. In the Jubilee Year of 1924 he wrote,

Whilst our own members live scattered, our church and school are down town and near the business center of this large city. The other Lutheran churches and schools form several concentric semicircles to the north, west and south of us. But just because of our location our church still has an important mission to fulfill. This can only be done if our members will in the future, as they have heretofore done, faithfully help and stay with our dear Grace church. Whoever is a member or communicant should not let himself be enticed away by invitations and inducements offered elsewhere.<sup>21</sup>

Yet through this time of decline, he did not waver in his Law and Gospel approach toward the unchurched. In his 1927 Easter bulletin he addressed an invitation to: "The Stranger Within Our Gates,"

We extend an invitation to you, no matter who you are, to worship with us. Whether sad or joyful, discouraged or full of hope, poor or rich, old or young, friendless or befriended, you will find a helpful service at our church.

#### WHY OUR CHURCH OUGHT TO APPEAL TO YOU

It shuns sensationalism and practices plain Gospel preaching.  
It proclaims to man, without fear or favor, the whole counsel of God.  
It leads you to know your sin and your Savior from sin, Jesus Christ.  
It does not aim to entertain, but to edify and lift the heart to God. ❧❧

Then came the 30's and the Great Depression. In 1935 the church council voted unanimously to close the school at the end of the school year. The situation was not new. The problem had been building for some years. The young members were now in suburbs and their children in other schools miles away. The congregation found themselves supporting an increasing number of local children; they were mission prospects, children of poor and unchurched families, children whose parents could not afford to pay for the private education they were receiving. This resulting financial burden was what influenced the council's vote. ❧❧

This monumental decision has aroused much emotion in the ensuing years. Some members were very glad to get out of a financial burden which to them was unbearable and impossible. Others were embittered, recognizing the loss of what had been not only their

glory, but their greatest mission outreach for over 80 years. The mission had been closed, they felt, because of too many mission opportunities. In any event, the school remained closed, the church continued to decline in membership, and the existing members continued to live farther and farther away.

#### RESULTS: THOSE WHO WITHSTOOD

During this time of transition, some churches showed themselves to be real tigers. They wanted their school to remain. They felt it was an integral part of the church. And they planned to see it last.

Jerusalem's school had reached the point that in 1926, most members recognized the need for a new school building. The old building on Holton Street had served as the school for three generations. So a fund campaign was begun for the purpose of building a new school. Property was bought in 1927 and plans were underway. But then came the depression and WW II. It became very hard to acquire building materials. The congregation became discouraged and put off the building project.<sup>24</sup>

But the congregation did not give up. They continued to run the existing school. And their pastor continued to encourage them to reach toward the goal of the new school building. In 1938 he wrote, "Interest

has waned somewhat in recent years on the part of some members. Let us not be so pessimistic. Already in 1927 properties were purchased. . . . If we all get behind the project, we will have a new school in the near future."☺☺

He also put in a pitch for the importance of true Christian education, as opposed to public education:

We must be clear on this one point: namely, that to be full of knowledge does not necessarily mean to be educated. Daniel Webster once said: "Knowledge does not comprise all which is contained on the large term of education. The feelings are to be contained in the large term of education. The feelings are to be disciplined, the passions are to be restrained; true and worthy motives are to be inspired; a profound religious feeling is to be instilled, and a pure morality inculcated under all circumstances. All this is comprised in education." The best means we have are our Christian Day Schools, our Lutheran High School, and our Christian Colleges. Let us use them!☺☺

David's Star is an example of a congregation which struggled with the role of the CDS and the public school very early in its history; earlier than one might have expected. It happened through the pressure exerted by a pastor who evidently had some problems concerning the doctrine of the church and ministry. He attempted to function as dictator, and wished to make the church school a part of the public system. This decision was fought by the congregation until finally

one member, Mr. C. Stiemke, made the astute and emphatic statement, "The schools of the state are not confessional schools, we cannot bring our parochial schools under the jurisdiction of the state without giving up our heritage."<sup>27</sup>

Finally, in 1848, the issue was settled with the following statement, made in the second convention of the Buffalo Synod, which the congregation had at that time joined:

1. According to Mark 10 the church can only maintain Christian schools.
2. These schools cannot be under the supervision of the State Superintendent of Schools.
3. Only confirmed children of our church may attend state schools.
4. Religious instruction may not be given in the state schools.
5. Therefore it is wrong, if the church accepts money for its schools from the state.
6. To help support public schools does not however militate against the conscience of a Christian.<sup>28</sup>

David's Star is also unique in a number of other aspects. It "fostered the English language from the beginning."<sup>29</sup> It did not appear to be hit as hard financially by the transition years as did many of the other congregations. And it continued to be a growing school. Perhaps its country environment helped. Perhaps the use of English was a major factor.

But it should not be forgotten that this congregation also showed itself to be a leader in mission spirit in many other areas of the early WELS. The Spirit had

produced faith, and it showed itself in rich fruit.

St. Jacobi also experienced a gradual decline, one which lasted 20 years. Confirmation classes in the years following 1910 remained large, as did membership totals, but church attendance began to decline. Delinquents were on the increase, and it appeared that St. Jacobi was slowly growing cold. Later, financial considerations also entered the picture.

. . . the congregation, burdened with a large debt, became impatient in waiting for the Word of God to revive the love for the work of the Church. It now fell into all kinds of money making schemes.

It began to depend more and more on the Ladies' Aid for a large share of its income. The contributions of these good ladies ranged from \$500 in 1910 to \$3,123 in 1924. In the latter year the 550 voters only contributed \$4,764 for Church expenses and the plate collection at services were [sic] only \$981 from a communicant membership of over 1,300. So rather than building itself up spiritually by means of the Word, the congregation became preoccupied in making money for the Lord. With the waning spiritual life came also a sharp decline in the school enrollment which dropped to 95 in 1915 and to 41 in 1920.<sup>30</sup>

In 1923 the congregation observed its Golden Anniversary. At that time, Pastor Jenny asked his members "not to grow weary in well doing" and to "send their children to the Christian Day School."<sup>31</sup>

Attendance was continuing to fall off at the German services. So finally, in 1925, the congregation began weekly services in English.

By 1929, about one half of the members attended English services. But it seemed that the spiritual moral of the congregation had not increased.

The congregation had added to the business of making money for the church, the business of offering all kinds of entertainments to keep interest alive and members loyal. The school was in a precarious state. It would have to become a full 8 grade school or be closed. Parents complained that children who attended our school for their confirmation classes, would lose a year upon their return to the public school.

In the fall of 1925 a solution was found in the organization of the Joint Martini-St. Jacobi School with all 8 grades.<sup>32</sup>

An interesting note might be appended concerning their schools. For the first 35 years, tuition was charged for the CDS. It was evidently viewed as an institution which should be self-supporting. Classes were kept large to make them profitable. When they grew small, the tuition could no longer pay the teacher's salary. It was only then, in 1921, that tuition was dropped, a move which one author called "20 years too late."<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps some of the statements quoted were overly harsh. Or perhaps they were deserved. But we must give the congregation credit that they found a solution in a joint school rather than close their CDS. This was a relatively new procedure, but one which could be very effective.

Nazareth was another congregation which fought the depression years by consolidation. First, though, she attempted to solve her financial difficulties on her own. During the depression years, over \$9,000 in non-interest loans was acquired from member loans.<sup>34</sup>

But in order to compete with the rising public schools, it was felt that more was needed. An eighth grade should be added. And the school should be accredited so as to conform with the public school curriculum. In order to do this, Nazareth (LC-MS) consolidated with Bethel (WELS) and began to operate as a joint school. This action was viewed by many as "next to the establishment of the school itself, the most outstanding event during its subsequent development."<sup>35</sup>

This consolidation took place in 1915. As such, it was 10 years ahead of St. Jacobi; in fact, it was the first of its kind in all of Milwaukee. Evidently, many questioned the action, for the 1940 "Messenger" says,

. . . grave doubts were expressed as to the duration of this unheard-of arrangement. Some went so far as to say, 'We'll give you just one year, and you will be glad to conduct your schools independantly again.' . . . we were able to conduct our school in a spirit of true Christian fellowship. It is also noteworthy that our teachers have, during these years, co-operated in a laudable manner which is ostensibly reflected in their attitude



toward the children of both congregations. 36

In 1932 a Kindergarten was established. This was an unusual action, very progressive and in tune with the expectations of education at the time. Again, some questioned the need. But looking back over 13 years of experience, the following statement was made:

Certain it is that the kindergarten has been a source of blessing to the school. Many a child would, humanly speaking, not be in Nazareth-Bethel school today had it started out on its career in the kindergarten of a public school. 37

### III. THE ADVENT OF A NEW AGE 1940 - ?

Since about 1940, the WELS Christian Day Schools in the Milwaukee area have predominately experienced a period of growth. Not every school at every moment was undergoing growth, but as a whole, there has been steady progress.

When we left St. Jacobi, she had formed a joint school with St. Martini. Her attendance was so low that she could not support a school on her own. But by 1941, she had hit the bottom of the recession (49 students) and attendance again began to climb. By 1943, there were 88 children in attendance and the congregation again decided to strike out on its own. The joint school was dissolved. Within 4 years, the number of teachers doubled, now four, and enrollment had increased to 148.<sup>30</sup>

There were other important changes.

In January, 1948, our principal reported 1) that 75% of St. Jacobi's 136 children are in Christian schools, 2) that 52 of our 148 pupils are from unchurched homes, 3) that 40% come by transport.<sup>31</sup>

St. Jacobi's CDS was again proving to be an important mission arm. It was reaching out to the unchurched in the community. It would, through the Gospel,

definitely work results. The time had again come when, for this congregation, the CDS appeared to be an effective mission arm!

By the 1950's Jerusalem also began to show a greater readiness to plan for the future. The building plans, started in the late '20's, but never carried out, were now considered again. "On September 9, 1951, after considerable and prayerful deliberation, the congregation voted to undertake the building of the new school."<sup>40</sup> Ground was broken on Holton St. on May 24, 1953, and that Sept. 20th the cornerstone was laid, and On September 19, 1954 the CDS building was dedicated. In 1961, this school boasted 6 teachers and 207 children. Truly, God had blessed their work.<sup>41</sup>

Siloah had closed her school in 1919. As early as 1929, the congregation officially "went on record to reopen its Christian day school as soon as possible."<sup>42</sup> But the first concrete action came 30 years later. During those years, concerned parents had been sending their children to Bethesda Lutheran School for a Christian training. Now in 1959, Siloah called her first teacher. Mr. Greenfield taught in Bethesda but was supported by Siloah. For the first time, children from Siloah could attend the Bethel school without having to pay tuition. The school grew, soon a second teacher was called, and then in 1961 the

congregation decided to open a four-room  
CDS.<sup>43</sup>

During the fund-raising campaign, a booklet was printed and distributed which was intended to awaken interest, realization of need, and Christian charity. In that letter, strong encouragement was given to all involved, that they make the CDS a part of each member's concern.

Religious training of children is as much a part of the life and growth of a congregation as the work of the Church with its grown-up members. Neglect of this foundation for the future is as shortsighted as it is un-Scriptural. Usually it is dictated by considerations of the flesh; assuredly, it is not the fruit of the Spirit. The Word of God expressly enjoins all Christians to be concerned about the early and thorough rearing and training of children in the Truth.

There are 523 unconfirmed children who are members of Siloah's family. 309 are enrolled in the Sunday School. They are our church of tomorrow. We must take care of them today, training them for this life and the life to come.<sup>44</sup>

In view of the growth of most other schools at this time, the story of St. John's CDS is somewhat of a surprise. The anniversary booklet says simply, "Not until 1961 did St. John's regretfully discontinue its school."<sup>45</sup> The mother church who raised two daughters through her CDS now closed it. Note that St. John's had offered tuition-free education "to any child

regardless of church affiliation."4\* Thereby, she planned to keep the CDS as a true mission arm. That is very commendable. But it can also be very costly. Perhaps it was a large factor in the closure of her school.

The events of the last 20 to 30 years are so close to our lives that they are harder to judge objectively. Little has been written about the mission activity in these years. Moreover, theories really haven't had enough time to prove themselves. In order that I might more objectively analyze the effectiveness of the CDS as a mission arm during these years, I wrote a poll and distributed it among a number of pastors in the greater Milwaukee area. 27 polls were sent out, with the intent of reaching every type of congregation in the area; specifically, older as well as newer congregations, inner city, suburb, and farm communities, both the richer and the poorer congregations. I hoped to see either a general trend or specific trends in specific areas. I hoped that, should a specific approach be better for a given area, the poll might reflect that fact.

Of the 27 polls sent out, 21 were returned. Five of those replied that they could not help, usually excusing themselves on the grounds that they did not personally operate a CDS, and thus felt unqualified to reply.

Both the cover letter and the poll are included in this paper (Appendix A and B respectively) so that one might more objectively analyze the responses and my conclusions.

*Has your congergation ever had a CDS?  
Is it presently operating?  
Has it ever closed? Under what conditions?*

Of those who responded, 12 have a CDS, one is involved in a cooperative CDS, and 8 have never had a CDS. Of the 13 who have had a CDS, 11 are presently in operation, 2 are not. 9 had never closed in the history of the school. Of those who did close at some time, one remained closed since 1935, one was closed only in the 40's, and one was closed for most of the period from the 1920's till the early 1960's.

*Years of operations:  
How many years was this congregation without a CDS?  
Do you believe that having a school in any way changed the mission-mindedness of the congregation?  
In what ways?*

Responses:            Y -    5 yrs. without CDS  
                         Y - 120 yrs. without CDS  
                         Y -    10 yrs. without CDS  
                         Y -    40 yrs. without CDS  
                         Y -    7 yrs. without CDS  
                         Y -    2 yrs. without CDS  
  
                         Y -    never without CDS  
                         Y -    never without CDS  
  
                         N -    never without CDS  
  
                         N - 105 yrs. without CDS  
                         N -    2 yrs. without CDS  
                         N -    2 yrs. without CDS  
  
                         No answer - 3

The answers in this section were very random. Even though twice as many said yes as no, their statistical history was almost identical. In either case, 25% had never been without a CDS. The average time period in which the congregations were without a CDS was 31 years for the "yes" votes and 36 for those who said "no".

I was somewhat surprised by these figures.. I had expected to see much greater variation. My assumption, evidently a false one, was that the mission-mindedness of a congregation would grow with the addition of a CDS. It can grow. One respondent said, "There is greater mission awareness and support from those who have had CDS training." But that takes many years. A congregation could very well become discouraged before that time in which they see fruit from their effort.

Another said that a CDS "caused them to see our Synod's missions as something more important. They were led to look more away from themselves to see that preaching the Word elsewhere is also important." The thing which I find fascinating about this response is that the same claim can be used by those who view the CDS as something negative. One man said the CDS can produce a "tendency to put school before mission."

Judging from these two responses, it appears that the real question is how will the Shepherd approach the

work of the CDS in his congregation? Will he use it merely to train his own children? Or will he awaken his people to the mission opportunities which are available through the CDS? The school, then, is like money in the bank. It is the raw material which can be used, either to one's advantage or disadvantage. How the congregation will use the CDS is then only a reflection of how the pastor trains his people in mature Christian evangelism, both in the community through the CDS and abroad, through offerings. One man made just this point.

Mission mindedness often comes through the Pastor, whether or not there's a CDS--a CDS as a mission arm can be neutralized by CDS staff/principal that does not accept the challenge of having non-WELS in the classroom, which requires patient evangelical instruction and a good dog. [dogmatics] background.

Everyone would like to have this mission attitude on display in his CDS. But how is it done? David's Star chose a very direct way of awakening interest in foreign missions.

School children have a new mission project every month. While Kuske children were in Central Africa, they were taught by their mother with materials sent from here. The school over there was known as "David's Star Annex."

THE DECLINE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION STANDARDS  
AND ITS EFFECT ON THE CDS



In the past, the standard of public education seemed to play a tremendously large role in the recruitment of students. When secular education was next to non-existent, people had flocked to the CDS. But with the advent of good secular education, CDS enrollment had dropped off considerably. Certainly, the depression was also a factor. But it seemed that the public opinion toward education on the secular level influenced the enrollment of the CDS, especially in its outreach to the borderline Christians and the unchurched. I wanted to see if this trend continued.

*Of the non-WELS children who attended your CDS, what do you believe influenced them the most? (number from 1 to 10, from greater to lesser importance)*

*pastor's invitation, home visit  
invited by WELS family  
canvassing  
heard about the school from an outsider.  
problems in public school  
problems in another private school  
quest for best possible education for children  
strong feeling on the part of the family toward  
Chr.Ed.*

*(list)*

*(list)*

Although only two pastors answered in exactly the same way, the answers can be broken down into three general categories. One group (3 responses) said that the strongest influence which brought non-WELS children to their school was a strong feeling toward Christian Education. It was the desire for the best

*Christian* education possible which brought them to the CDS. The three churches who responded in this way were all from affluent areas, areas which have been predominantly WELS for quite a number of years, and where mission-mindedness could have grown for a generation or two. Nor was there a problem of great mobility either in or out of the community, which might have disrupted the continuation of Christian education.

The second group (5 responses) stated that a quest for the best *secular* education had first priority in the lives of the non-WELS individuals who brought their children to the CDS. It was almost always accompanied by problems in the public school which caused them to look for another system of education. Three of the five were inner-city congregations. The other two were from suburban areas, but not from extremely affluent congregations.

The third group (4 responses) came primarily by invitation of a WELS family or from an outsider. This group was mixed in origin, one from the city of Milwaukee, and three from three separate suburban regions.

It must be remembered that public education is not equal in every respect. If it were, there would have been no busing questions across the U.S. in recent years. A lower standard of education and a greater amount of problems related to children from broken

homes, violence in the home, etc., is likely to be found in the inner core of Milwaukee than in the public schools of an affluent suburb.

The three groups help to show that 1) education is viewed very differently even in areas which may be geographically quite close. 2) The pastor's knowledge of the conditions of the public school in his specific area may convince him to change his approach somewhat in the recruitment of non-WELS individuals. Perhaps the issue of evolution or sex education is a sensitive one in his area, and his level-headed approach to it will be a deciding factor in a family's decision for the CDS. 3) Even though we don't want the fact that there are problems in the public school to be the deciding factor in the choice of a child's education, it could be at first. By careful work, the pastor can create a positive reason for attendance while the negative reason works in his favor. The child has come to his school, and as long as he has negative feelings toward public education, he is likely to stay there. In that way, he is a captive audience. As the Word works in his heart, faith will result, and finally attendance will be a true fruit of faith, hopefully both in the heart of the child and his parents.

One final observation might be made concerning strong influencing factors: none of the men surveyed said that the pastor's invitation was the strongest

factor in influencing the family in Christian Education. In fact, the pastor averaged about 5th place out of 10. We who are or hope to be pastors aren't necessarily as effective as a layman in influencing outsiders. That is very important in the organization of evangelism materials. We can expect to accomplish a great deal, but only if we also involve the laity in this work.

NEW ROLES FOR THE CDS: ASSIMILATION  
OF NEW MEMBERS AND BRIDGE TO ANOTHER CULTURE

Regarding the question of mission mindedness, I found some very interesting and diverse answers. One man saw a mission potential in "a fuller, more complete invitation. We can minister to your needs--more of them." That is not only effective for inviting, it can continue to serve a special purpose in assimilation of the new member, making him active in the church and in the school, through his children. And it has the potential of coming full circle, with this member finally reaching out to another individual with the same invitation.

This appears to be especially effective in the black community. "The school provided a bridge to the black community and gave the congregation a realistic expectation of doing successful mission work in the

community."

To that end, I had asked the following question in the survey:

*Do you see the CDS as a strong factor in the stability of a christian congregation . . .  
financially?  
emotionally?  
spiritually?*

*Why or why not?*

Pastors were quite evenly divided in respect to their feelings about finances. One said "the school brings in new members. . . [and] gives old members a cause to support." Another said that the CDS "teaches them to see [financial] needs in the kingdom work. Others took a neutral position. One said, "the moaners are out there, whether CDS's exist or not." They saw no real change in the congregation either way. Still others saw the CDS as a clear financial liability. One made the interesting comment, "Financially, a CDS puts a strain on the budget, but [because of its other pluses] it's worth every cent.

Concerning the question of emotional and spiritual stability, most saw no question. Here are a few of the responses: "When the future leaders of the congregation are well grounded in God's Word, that makes for stability." Another stressed the parents' "assurance of children receiving Christian education."

An inner-city pastor commented, "It gives them purpose and motivation for the next generation. The Central City people see the fulfillment of their hopes in their children--they want the *best Christian* education for their children. And they are *sharing*; that's where mission comes in." Another man restated the point I made a few pages earlier:

It all depends upon the members and even more so upon the called workers. Pastors and teachers have to preach it, teachers have to be visible to overcome "ignorance", "bad experiences", and "tightfistedness". When a congregation backs its school, the school in turn, provides stability.

I heartily agree. Without our continual work and prayer, the CDS will fail as a mission. With our God working through us, who knows the potential?

#### THE ROLE OF TUITION

Tuition is a much tougher question. There are two extreme positions: 1) The church completely supports all children in the CDS, whether or not they are children of the congregation. 2) The individual or his parents completely support themselves. Between these two positions there are many other arrangements, such as 1) the congregation supporting only the children of the congregation, 2) the church and the individual each paying part of the tuition, and 3) a

limited number of outsiders allowed per class in a given year. Which is best? There is of course, no hard and fast rule, but I wanted to get the opinion of the men in the field.

*In general, do you believe congregations maintain a (excellent, good, fair, poor) balance of funds between the CDS and missions?*

Results:       0   Excellent  
              2   Good  
              6   Fair  
              3   Poor  
  
              2   Varies

*Do you believe that the church, the individual families, or a percentage of both should pay tuition? Why?*

Results       14   Church should pay  
              0   Individual should pay  
              0   Both should pay  
              7   Non-members should pay  
              1   Unclear question

*Do you think who pays tuition will have an overall effect on the influence of the school as a mission arm? In what way?*

Results:       7   Yes  
              2   No  
              2   Uncertain or unclear question  
              The comments and explanations to the above

questions were very interesting. But first, I should give credit to an excellent article written by Rolfe Westendorf on just this subject.<sup>47</sup> Many of the men polled had just read it, since it happened to be printed during the time I was researching this paper. They referred me to it, often saying that he had explained all of the pros and cons better than they

could. I do not wish to repeat his points. Rather, let us look at the responses of the poll and draw a working conclusion from them.

It is very significant that no one polled said the individual or both the individual and the church should support the student. One man said, "It is ALL Christians' privilege to provide Christian Ed." Another said, "The school should never be separate from church as would be a logical development of tuition for members. 'Family-feeling' is lost. The whole concept of team-ministry is lost." Yet another said, "Tuition confuses offerings with bill-paying."

It seems that the theory is clear in the minds of our people. The CDS is the work of all. But putting it into practice and meeting ends financially is another matter. There are dangers on both sides. "A high tuition will prevent some people from using the school. A low tuition will endanger [the] school's survival."

"This is a subject we've been discussing lately in part due to some families not contributing as they should," one said. "Some are getting a 'free' ride so to speak." Another felt his church was being used. "Right now busing is causing an increase of 'interest'. Mission work among them is almost nil. Standards must be set up to screen such people from abusing our school and messing up the children."



One man felt quite strongly that mission prospects cannot have tuition free education. He said,

Non-members (mission prospects) definitely must pay tuition. There is no free lunch (educationally speaking). If the school is perceived by the congregation as a mission arm, it will serve that purpose. The members will use it as such and support it.

This question has been extremely important for inner-city congregations.

CDS is the difference between life and death to an inner-city Lutheran congregation, an effective bridge to the black community. We are perhaps too dependent on it. However we do not have another proven method of reaching black families. On the other hand the CDS is too costly for the I-C congregation; other methods may have to be found if Lutheran congregations are going to survive in poor inner-city neighborhoods.

This congregation had come to the decision that members would have free tuition, while non-members would be charged for 60%. In this way, they hoped that they wouldn't be 'used' so much, and yet the tuition would not be exorbitant for the non-member. Another inner-city congregation asks non-members to pay full tuition, while members are tuition-free. The pastor commented, "In today's world you can't give education away. [The] question is the setting of tuition rates that people can afford."

Clearly, there is no easy answer. Again I believe the CDS will be what the called servants make it by their actions and attitudes in relation to it. Whether

-adopt a mission (build mission awareness, first in the students, and secondly, in the parents)

-bridge to another culture

-community awareness (exposure to the community through activities related to the CDS)

-involvement of our members in an attainable mission goal

-growth of own members through more educated layity.

-provide greater ability to serve the prospect

-assimilate new members, either through their own children in the CDS or through involvement in CDS project

-greater reflection of the great commission (mission-orientated church)

-training future church leaders

Dividing up the history of the CDS as a mission arm in the greater Milwaukee area, I found three trends. From early times until about 1910, missions boomed through the CDS. One can argue that the lack of the public school was the deciding factor. Perhaps it was. But why should they not have used an advantage which the Lord placed before them to bring more lambs into his fold?

Again, in the period from 1910 to 1940, there was a great decline in use of the CDS. Were the public school and the depression at fault? Partially. But it may also have much to do with complacency. Perhaps a church began to feel "safe" in numbers and didn't work as hard at evangelism. I think this is apparent in the fact that almost no new approaches toward the CDS were implemented during this period. For example, there did

not appear to be any strong positive action taken to promote growth. Only a defensive attitude against the public schools is apparent.

During the time period since 1940, we are again seeing a growth in CDS mission work. Will it continue?

It is my conclusion that a CDS will only be the mission arm it can be if the pastor and his CDS personnel really want it to be and use it in such a way that it is a mission. Whatever way that is accomplished is irrevelent. But it must be done. Without it, we are foolish stewards of a tremendous gift which the Lord has given us. May God give us the desire and bless our work to that end!

APPENDIX A

February 21, 1985

Dear Pastor,

For my Senior Church History paper, I have chosen to work on "The Significance of the WELS Christian Day School as a Mission Arm in the Milwaukee Area." So that I might more accurately portray both the facts and the feelings of you, the men of the field, I am enclosing a poll. Please fill it out and return it to my by March 15th if possible, so that I can use your input.

I will use your answers but not your name in my paper. Through your answers, I hope to answer the question, "Is the CDS a mission arm, an institution to teach our children, or both?" Or, as some might ask, "Is the CDS a waste of money that could be better used in other missions, is it a mission arm worthy of the outlay of cash, or is it a separate entity, not really a part of 'missions'?"

Thankyou very much for your time and consideration.

Yours in Christ,

Philip Henselin

Has your congergation ever had a CDS?

Is it presently operating?

Has it ever closed? Under what conditions?

Years of operation:

How many years was this congregation without a CDS?

Do you believe that having a school in any way changed the mission-mindedness of the congregation?

In what ways?

Of the non-WELS children who attended your CDS, what do you believe influenced them the most? (number from 1 to 10, from greater to lesser importance)

- pastor's invitation, home visit
- invited by WELS family
- canvassing
- heard about the school from an outsider.
- problems in public school
- problems in another private school
- quest for best possible education for children
- strong feeling on the part of the family toward Chr.Ed.

(list)

(list)

In general, do you believe congregations maintain a (excellent, good, fair, poor) balance of funds between the CDS and missions?

Do you see the CDS as a strong factor in the stability of a christian congregation . . .

financially?

emotionally?

spiritually?

Why or why not?

Do you believe that the church, the individual families, or a percentage of both should pay tuition? Why?

Do you think who pays tuition will have an overall effect on the influence of the school as a mission arm?

In what way?

Comments:

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>"Jerusalem, Golden Jubilee 1888-1938," p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>"David's Star, 1856 - 1956 Church Dedication Centennial Souvenir Booklet," p. 42.

<sup>3</sup>"St. Jacobi, 75 Years of Grace 1873 - 1948," from section entitled, "The First Principal."

<sup>4</sup>"Nazareth, 1895-1945 Fifty Years of Divine Blessings," p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>"St. John's 1973 Anniversary Service Booklet."

<sup>6</sup>"Jerusalem, Golden Jubilee 1888-1938," p. 15.

<sup>7</sup>"St. Jacobi, 75 Years of Grace 1873 - 1948," from section entitled, "The Second School."

<sup>8</sup>Siloah, "Continuing in His Grace 1894 - 1969, 75th Anniversary," pp. 2-3.

<sup>9</sup>"St. John's History Notes," published by members, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup>"St. John's History Notes," p. 1.

<sup>11</sup>This and all following references to Grace are taken from another article by this author, "History of Grace Congregation," published in the 1982 Mission Seminar booklet, Partners in Proclaiming the Promise. Original source is "100 Years of Grace 1849 - 1949," p. 13.

<sup>12</sup>"100 Years of Grace 1849 - 1949," p. 13.

<sup>13</sup>"100 Years of Grace 1849 - 1949," p. 13.

<sup>14</sup>John Philipp Koehler, The History of the Wisconsin Synod, 2nd edition. (rpt. Sauk Rapids: Sentinel Printing Co., 1981) p. 41.

<sup>15</sup>"St. Jacobi, 75 Years of Grace 1873 - 1948," from section entitled, "The Transition Period".

<sup>16</sup>H. G. Good, A History of Western Education, 2nd edition. (1947; rpt. New York: Macmillan, 1960). p. 486.

<sup>17</sup>H. G. Good, p.518.

<sup>18</sup>Siloah, "Continuing in His Grace 1894 - 1969, 75th Anniversary," p. 4.

<sup>19</sup>Siloah, "Continuing in His Grace 1894 - 1969, 75th Anniversary," p. 4.

<sup>20</sup>"100 Years of Grace 1849 - 1949," p. 13.

<sup>21</sup>"100 Years of Grace 1849 - 1949," p. 17.

<sup>22</sup>"100 Years of Grace 1849 - 1949," p. 22.

<sup>23</sup>"100 Years of Grace 1849 - 1949," pp. 18-19.

<sup>24</sup>"Jerusalem, Golden Jubilee 1888-1938," p. 1.

<sup>25</sup>"Jerusalem, Golden Jubilee 1888-1938," p. 16.

<sup>26</sup>"Jerusalem, Golden Jubilee 1888-1938," p.19.

<sup>27</sup>"1843 - 1943 100 Jaehriges Jubilaeum Geschichte der Ev.-Luth. Davids Stern-Gemeinde zu Kirchhayn, Wi.", p. 45

<sup>28</sup>"1843 - 1943 100 Jaehriges Jubilaeum Geschichte der Ev.-Luth. Davids Stern-Gemeinde zu Kirchhayn, Wi.", p. 45

<sup>29</sup>"1843 - 1943 100 Jaehriges Jubilaeum Geschichte der Ev.-Luth. Davids Stern-Gemeinde zu Kirchhayn, Wi.", p. 45

<sup>30</sup>"St. Jacobi, 75 Years of Grace 1873 - 1948," from section entitled, "The Transition Period".

<sup>31</sup>"St. Jacobi, 75 Years of Grace 1873 - 1948," from section entitled, "St. Jacobi Observes its 50th".



33"St. Jacobi, 75 Years of Grace 1873 - 1948," from section entitled, "St. Jacobi Observes its 50th".

34"St. Jacobi, 75 Years of Grace 1873 - 1948," from section entitled, "Our Present School".

35"Nazareth, 1895-1945 Fifty Years of Divine Blessings," pp. 11-13.

36"Nazareth, 1895-1945 Fifty Years of Divine Blessings," p. 19.

37"Nazareth, 1895-1945 Fifty Years of Divine Blessings," p. 19, as they quoted from "The Nazareth Messenger," Aug. 1940.

38"Nazareth, 1895-1945 Fifty Years of Divine Blessings," p. 21

39"St. Jacobi, 75 Years of Grace 1873 - 1948," from section entitled, "Our Present School".

40"St. Jacobi, 75 Years of Grace 1873 - 1948," from section entitled, "Our Present School".

41"Jerusalem, Golden Jubilee 1888-1938," p.2.

42"This is My Church and School," an EMV booklet from Jerusalem.

43"Siloah, 1894 - 1944 50th Anniversary," from section entitled, "History of Siloah - School Discontinued."

44"Siloah, "Continuing in His Grace 1894 - 1969, 75th Anniversary," p. 12.

45"Blessed to be a Blessing," Siloah's 1961 booklet.

46"St. John's 1973 Anniversary Service Booklet".

47"St. John's History Notes," p. 2.

48"Rolfe Westendorf, "The Tuition Dilemma," The Lutheran Educator, February 1965, pp.13-15.

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