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### Lutheran Day School Operation: Financial Stewardship Implications

Thomas Radtke

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, [rev.radtke@radmen3.com](mailto:rev.radtke@radmen3.com)

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LUTHERAN DAY SCHOOL OPERATION:  
FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP IMPLICATIONS

THOMAS G. RADTKE

MARCH 1, 2005

Concordia Seminary  
Saint Louis, Missouri

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM TO BE ADDRESSED

Lutheran day schools offer a vital component in educating the children of Lutheran congregations. They teach the faith and nurture it by the application of God's word and through the example of Christian teachers. Since all day schools operate in communities where public school education is also available, congregations with these schools are determined to offer quality educational opportunities and, certainly in the minds of parishioners, a better educational alternative than their public school counterparts. This occurs because there is an emphasis on good education taught from the Christian focus.

The presence of a day school offers many advantages to both the congregation and the community. The presence of teachers and children adds vitality to the congregation that is not always experienced in congregations without a school. The presence of a day school offers evidence of Christian witness to the entire community. The day school offers an alternative to public education, if so desired, and an entry level into Christian doctrine and membership in the congregation for the un-churched of the community. In many congregations, therefore, the day school is the most effective means of evangelism.

The desire to expand the vineyards and reach the lost through a Christian education is complicated by the financial challenges these congregations face. The chief challenge facing such congregations and schools is maintaining quality education in the face of the high operational costs. Congregations that operate day schools place a high value upon the Christian education of children as a vital part of their mission and ministry.

Financial challenges have not always been experienced within the schools of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. William C. Rietschel, LCMS educator, observes that up

until recent decades, LCMS congregations provided the full financial support for Lutheran schools. In the mid to late 1800's, member parents were not responsible for any part of their child's education beyond their regular church contributions. He says, "All member children attended the Lutheran school. In fact, not to attend was almost regarded as being heretical. Often non-member children, considered mission projects, also attended free. For many parishes a Lutheran school was considered an obligation."<sup>1</sup> This is an historical approach to the funding of Lutheran day schools, but one that is rarely practiced today. Unlike the early days of Lutheran schools, all children of the congregation are not expected to attend the day school, nor are all congregations expected to operate a school.

From 1872, the time of the Silver Jubilee of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, to the mid 1930's, tuition was not commonly the practice of congregations.<sup>2</sup> As new Lutheran schools were established, there has been a change in the approach of funding the day school. These schools started on a tuition basis. The same rate was not charged to all families, but rather a differing amount was charged for members and non-members. Formerly congregations bore the responsibility of funding schools. With this new funding expectation, the basic premise required the parents to bear the financial responsibility of the funding for the day school.<sup>3</sup>

While the move toward tuition based funding appears to be born out of desperation due to the financial shortfalls in congregational budgets, a study of the history of this development paints a different picture. Its beginnings are actually 60 years ago; only recently

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<sup>1</sup> William C. Rietschel. *Foundations of Lutheran Education*. (St. Louis: Concordia Academic Press, 2000) 130.

<sup>2</sup> Leonard Bassett, "Lutheran Schools' Tuition Policies". *Lutheran Education*, 135 no. 1 (September/October 1999), 13, 15. In 1872 Congregations believed that the entire expense of the school should be born by the congregation. 1930 marked a change in that approach with the beginning of the Great Depression.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

has it developed into the issue that it is today. Rising costs through inflation, added to a reduction in financial stewardship in some congregations, have made tuition for members, as well as non-members, an increasing necessity. Both school and congregation budgets have been affected by the rising cost of day school operation and the shortfall of contributions to meet these costs.

In June of 2002, Trinity Lutheran Church, Springfield, Illinois, adopted a minimal tuition for member children for the first time. Tuition is in addition to fees assessed to each child during the year. This was done in response to continued financial problems and in direct opposition to the historical philosophy of the congregation concerning the funding of the school. There was a concern that students would be lost to the school because some parents could not afford the increase in cost. There was also a concern that overall revenue would not increase, the congregation would merely see a shift from contributions to tuition.

In light of this history and challenges confronting Lutheran schools today, this paper will examine what various congregations and schools experience regarding the funding of their day schools, how they manage the challenges that are before them today, and what plans are in place for the future. Underlying all of these challenges and concerns is the purpose of the Lutheran day school that still remains regardless of the cost involved. H. James Boldt, Carl Moser, and Martin F. Wessler state:

“Lutheran school administrators state that school funding is their primary concern today. Schools cost more and more and congregations, although they value their schools very much, are less able to pay for the increasing school costs.”<sup>4</sup>

If the day school is to survive and thrive today, means will need to be examined that will successfully fund the operation of these schools. This is the challenge that faces

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

congregations that operate day schools now and in the future.

This disparity between costs and contributions has been a recent development. In the past, when disparity did not exist, day school costs were handled through congregational offerings. Len Bassett, in his article, "LCMS School's Tuition Policies", states:

Officially, as recently as 1988, Synod still promoted total parish support for the local congregation's school but acknowledged the spread of member tuition as a means to supplement that support. In the introduction to the document 'Church Growth through Lutheran Schools,' the authors write, 'We of the LCMS have long upheld the belief that Christian education of the children of the congregation member families is the responsibility of the whole congregation, not just tuition paying parents.' (Schlimpert & Moser, 1988)<sup>5</sup>

William Rietschel states that with the passage of time, operational costs escalated, congregations found that it was more difficult to operate a school without assessing a charge to parents. This resulted in congregations classifying children into four categories:

1. Children whose parents were members of the congregation who paid no tuition since it was assumed that their parents were contributing through the general treasury.
2. Children who, with their parents, had no church home and were considered mission prospects, thus paying no tuition.
3. Children whose parents belonged to other Lutheran congregations.
4. Children whose parents were members of non-Lutheran churches.<sup>6</sup>

Today, funding sources for Lutheran day schools include congregational income, tuition and fees, development income, fund-raising, endowments, and special projects funded through the government and other agencies. During 2000-2001, 46 percent of Lutheran elementary school funding was received from tuition and fees, 45 percent from the congregational

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 15-16.

<sup>6</sup> Rietschel, 130.

budget, and 9 percent was received from other sources.<sup>7</sup>

While congregations view their schools as an educational ministry to their members, the economics of today make the accomplishment of this goal more difficult without the payment of tuition. While various approaches have been used for financial support of day schools, the movement toward member tuition has increased, William Rietschel states:

As already indicated, for many years most Lutheran schools in this country were financed principally through the congregation's budget. And this is still the primary means of financial support for elementary schools. However, as the cost of Lutheran schools has increased due to lower pupil-teacher ratios and more costly instructional programs and techniques, many congregations are now unable to finance the total operation. Consequently, there is any number of Lutheran schools that are funded almost entirely by tuition and fees.<sup>8</sup>

It was only a period of a few short years after Schlimpert and Moser's observation in 1988, that said school funding should come from congregational support alone,<sup>9</sup> that Synod officials changed to a position of supporting at least a partial tuition for students. Schlimpert and Moser's observation articulates the Synod's traditional approach to school funding, but one that has recently changed. It was their observation that traditionally school support was the responsibility of the congregation. In changing times, they saw a change in that approach. While publications have come short of advocating full tuition, Schlimpert and Moser see member and non-member tuition as a viable option for school funding. In pointing to this change, Len Bassett quotes a publication, "Lutheran Schools Administrator's Handbook":

No single way can be expected as the only right way for funding a Lutheran school. However, the funding sources selected should not hamper the teaching of the Christian faith or achieving the Christian-education objectives of the school.

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<sup>7</sup> *2000-2001 Statistical Report Summary Schools and Early Childhood Centers of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod*. Ross E. Steuber, Editor. (St. Louis: Congregational Services-School Ministry, May 2001), 8.

<sup>8</sup> Rietschel, 131.

<sup>9</sup> Bassett, 15-16.



The funding practices for the school should strengthen the tie between the school and congregation and should call for commitment on the part of the parents to insure that they are actively involved in the Christian education of their children.... If the congregation finds it virtually impossible to consider making substantial contributions to the school, it will be necessary to consider the tuition option.<sup>10</sup>

Congregational leadership often attributes financial shortfalls to the poor giving of members or more specifically the poor giving of school families. In the periodical, Issues, Challenges & Opportunities, H. James Boldt, Carl Moser, and Martin F. Wessler list the following possible solutions when funding problems occur:

- Borrow
- Hold payment on obligations, including paychecks
- Send crisis appeals to members
- Cut or reduce planned spending and programs
- Complain about the school's cost<sup>11</sup>

The authors point out that poor giving is usually not the sole reason for this financial dilemma. Moving members to first fruits giving, as well as dealing with the changing nature of congregations and schools, contributes to the challenge before congregational leaders.

In addressing this problem as it faces Trinity Lutheran Church, the writer will survey other schools and determine the method that each congregation uses to fund the operation of its day school. My premise from the outset is that some of these day schools use the traditional means of funding through congregational offerings while others use member tuition as a major factor in the funding of their day schools. The purpose of this exercise is to evaluate the methods used and make application to Trinity for the best method of funding their day school operation.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> H. James Boldt, Carl Moser, Martin F. Wessler. *Issues, Challenges & Opportunities* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991) 27.

In order to accomplish this, the Central Illinois District Education Executive and the Major Applied Projected Advisor were consulted as to what characteristics and demographics would be desirable when comparing other schools with Trinity. After some time and deliberation, it was decided that all surveyed schools should be from the Midwest and as close in size as possible to Trinity Lutheran Church and School. Letter and surveys were sent to twenty-two schools and ten surveys were completed and received. It was on the basis of these ten surveys that statistics were analyzed for a recommendation to Trinity Lutheran Church for future funding of the day school operation.

CHAPTER 2  
PURPOSES OF LUTHERAN SCHOOLS  
AND THE PURPOSES OF TRINITY LUTHERAN SCHOOL,  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

**Christian education for children of the congregation**

**Instruction in the faith**

In order to understand the purposes of Lutheran schools, it is helpful to see what has been said throughout the history of Lutheranism regarding the purposes of Christian education. J.C.W. Lindemann, a Lutheran educator, states:

Thus Luther, the chief reformer of the church, became also a reformer of education, one of the fathers and founders of the world's systems of popular education, and certainly the founder of Lutheran schools the world over. The statement of the noted historian Froude that 'The Reformation is the hinge on which all modern history turns,' is justified also with regard to education.<sup>12</sup>

Because of this emphasis, education was a very important aspect of the Reformation. In fact, the Reformation spread quickly because of Christian education.

As Lutheranism spread to the United States, C.F.W. Walther became recognized as the founding father of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. His influence was keenly felt in the area of education as well. It may be due to his influence that the inclusion of schools within each congregation was the usual practice in the beginning of the Synod. August C. Stelthorn, Lutheran educator and author, commenting on the significance of C.F.W.

Walther's influence said:

After pointing out a few additional reasons why the public school does not meet the needs of Lutheran children, both the author of the theses (Walther) and the Synod emphasized most emphatically the duty of Christian parents to send their children to a Lutheran school and the obligation of congregations to maintain such schools.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Stelthorn, 12

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 118.

With this development, it can be seen that early congregations in the United States saw that it was an important responsibility to provide for instruction of children in the Christian faith.

The motto of the Reformation was *sola fides, sola gratia, and sola scriptura*.

Translated, the emphases were faith alone, grace alone, and scripture alone. These were seen as the cornerstone of the Reformation. It was the teaching of Martin Luther and the other reformers that we are not saved by what we do, but rather by God's grace in Jesus Christ. Rather than emphasizing what the Church taught, there was a renewed emphasis upon what the Scriptures taught. Because people needed to learn what the Scriptures taught, education developed into an important part of Lutheran practice. Writing in the late 1800's, J.C.W. Lindemann, a noted Lutheran educator of that day, wrote:

If we consider that Luther emphasized the matter of education and the schools, urged learning and establishment of schools, recommended the arts, languages, rhetoric, history, mathematics, music, etc., in his other writings as well, in letters, and the like; that he pointed out the honor of the general priesthood of believers its duties, the dignity of the public ministry, and exemplified his teaching by his own example—we can understand his great influence, and how something new was created in the matter of schools, and many localities agreed with him and put into practice what he advised and what he insisted in the name of God should be done.<sup>14</sup>

Lutheran education concerned itself not only with church education, but with civic education as well. It placed a value also upon a Lutheran citizenry that understood its duty as Christian members of society.

It was the desire of these early Lutherans to develop a sense of continuity. In order to accomplish this purpose, schools were established that taught Lutheran doctrine and spoke in German. It was the desire of these early Lutherans to provide their own schools and not to depend upon the public schools to provide education for children. W. H. Beck, writing in Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States, explains this reasoning:

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<sup>14</sup> Steuber, 11.

Lutherans asserted that they would maintain their own schools and did not wish to see their children considered paupers by being educated at public expense, according to the law--the major opposition to public schools came to be based upon the question of language; for the many new congregations made up of German immigrants, as also the older congregations that had been strengthened through such accretions, were not as yet ready to change over to English during a period when reorganization and new organization was going at a pace and was causing many problems to adjustment.<sup>15</sup>

While this may have the appearance of separatism, it was most likely a desire to nurture both members of the community and faith that motivated such an attitude. These settlers also understood the important place that Christian education, particularly Lutheran education, played in the new land that they would call home.

It is because of the importance placed upon education of the young, that schools were seen as a vital part of the work of the Synod. It was considered so important that as each congregation was established, a school was established as well. Walther and others saw this as most vital in extending the work of the Synod; as Beck explains:

Walther and his associates were most active in extending the work of the Synod and in insisting upon the planting of a school alongside of each church. In the words of Walther: 'In the Saxon-Lutheran congregation it was the rule always to establish at once the office of teaching (Schulamnt) together with the office of preaching (Predigtamt). Within a few days after the arrival of the first division of the company of immigrants in St. Louis, a school was founded there. If not a teacher could be appointed, it was a self-evident thing that the minister took over together with his ministerial office of schoolmaster and administered both according to his ability.'<sup>16</sup>

In the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were congregations whose pastors served in both capacities of pastor and teacher. The first congregation that I served operated a day school for the first fifteen to twenty years of its existence with the pastor also serving as teacher in the school. In my discussions with

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<sup>15</sup> W.H. Beck. *Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1939), p.79.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

pastors of the previous generation, I discovered that several of them had begun their ministry in this combined capacity. This underscores the importance congregations placed upon the establishment of schools.

The pursuit of a Lutheran day school education is still a valuable commodity today. While other choices are available through public schools, congregational members and people in the communities where Lutheran day schools operate still choose the option of a Lutheran education for their children. What is unique about Lutheran education? Allen Hart Jahsmann in What 's Lutheran in Education? says:

But the very nature of philosophy suggests that there is a Lutheran philosophy and, from one point of view, *many* Lutheran philosophies, for though Lutherans accept the doctrines of Holy Scripture as inspired divine truth and their standard of faith, yet this does not mean that they must cease to think. Rather they have the philosophic task of thinking consistently in harmony with their theology and of critically evaluating their educational theories and practices in the light of their philosophy, or, as we might call it, historical Lutheran faith... One of the distinguishing features of a genuine Lutheran is that he accepts the Bible as the primary source of faith, hence truly Lutheran thinking flows from, or is in harmony with, Biblical theology.<sup>17</sup>

Writing about the subject of Christian education in comparison to public education, August

C. Stellhorn, in his book, Schools of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, says:

The public schools, however, cannot possibly meet the educational requirements of Christian parents and the Christian church in the performance of their God-given duties. Under the law, and because of the separation of church and state, a public school is not permitted to teach either Lutheran or any other specific religion; nor may it train children and regulate their attitudes and conduct according to any specific faith.<sup>18</sup>

If it is the desire of parents to have an atmosphere where Lutheran education flourishes, it follows that it must take place within the environment of the day school.

Perhaps in a former day, faith could be taught in public school classrooms, but such is not the

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<sup>17</sup> Allen Hart Jahsmann. *What's Lutheran in Education?* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), Introduction, x.

<sup>18</sup> Stellhorn, 117.

case today. Public school educators are not necessarily trained in Christian doctrine and could not effectively teach from this perspective.

This desire to provide a Christian education is not a condemnation of the public school system. The Lutheran day school is not an escape from the evils of the world into an isolated Christian environment. Parents who enroll their children in a Lutheran day school may still be supportive of the public school system in the area where they live but prefer the purpose and nurture of Christian education. In their book The Role of the Christian Teacher, Lutheran educators Lee Roy Holtzen and Roy C. Krause summarize this attitude:

Christians can believe in and be supporters of the Christian school without being negative or non-supporters of the public school system. Public schools have an important role to fill and deserve the support of all people. They have their specific goals and many schools put forth much effort in attempting to reach these goals. However the public school is not a Christian school. Law to provide any form of education that includes religion has prohibited it. The Christian school provides an alternate form of education for those who desire to include the spiritual along with the mental and physical. Persons who prefer a Christian education may do so without casting reflection on the public school system that is an integral part of our American system of democracy.<sup>19</sup>

There is not a conflict between the two types of education in the minds of Christians but rather the two, parochial and public, function with different approaches to providing a solid education for children in the community.

Even with this importance shown throughout the history of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, today significantly fewer congregations have day schools. Stellhorn laments this change in congregations:

The parish schools have been the real nurseries of our church. It would be very deplorable, yes, of evil consequence in more than one respect, or if they should meet a slow or even early death. There are those among us who predict this. But the situation is not quite that bad. We will say that words of admonition are in place.

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<sup>19</sup> Holtzen, Lee Roy and Krause, Roy C. *The Role of the Christian Teacher*. (Seward, Nebraska: Concordia College, 1984, 59-60.

The number of schools (including many Saturday schools) has not kept pace with the growth of the Synod.<sup>20</sup>

This prediction in the 1960's has been experienced to a certain degree. There are fewer congregations operating day schools today than there were previously. Although there has been some growth, not all congregations establish day schools or maintain the schools they already have. The 2000-2001 statistical report of the Board for Congregational services notes a five percent decrease from 1991-92 to the time of that report.<sup>21</sup>

The importance of Lutheran schools in the world's perspective has paled by comparison with the schools in the public education system. The buildings of Lutheran day schools are not as impressive, and their equipment and programs may not compare with their larger counterparts, but there is a great value regardless of the world's perspective. This is true today and certainly was true in previous days. In 1962, August C. Stellhorn saw a great importance in the differences of public and Lutheran education. In order to support this view, he quoted from a periodical of 1878, the Evangelisch-Lutherisches Schulblatt, an early school periodical of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod:

The 684 parochial schools which, by the grace of God, exist within our Synod are such an exceedingly great treasure, such a glorious gift of our highly praiseworthy Savior, that their great value, their blessed and beneficial influence cannot be described in human words, yea, not even calculated! Although the majority of them, in the opinion of the world, are unimportant, small, and insignificant; although but a few can compare with the impressive public schools, so far as buildings and equipment are concerned—all of them have an advantage and beauty which, in the eyes of God and His true children, transcend those of all other schools. They have the gem of the divine Word. They teach the Law of the Lord of Lords and the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Stellhorn, 306.

<sup>21</sup> Steuber, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 189.



While there are many changes in the area of education, some constants still remain in terms of quality education. Throughout its history, quality of education has been a key emphasis of the Lutheran day school and a reason for its success.

### **Training for membership in the congregation**

As the Lutheran day school instructs students in the faith, it is in the process preparing them for membership in the congregation. Through the lessons learned in school, students are given a good foundation for their membership in the congregation. This is an important part of a Lutheran day school education according to William Rietschel, as he illustrates in quoting Arthur Miller, Lutheran day school administrator who says:

A Lutheran philosophy of education is the application of Lutheran doctrine and of a philosophy compatible with that doctrine to the problems of education. A Lutheran philosophy of education begins with Scripture. It accepts the truth of God's revelation and applies reason only in the area which the Lord has left to Christian judgment and discretion.<sup>23</sup>

The Lutheran day school also plays a very important role in the training of members in the congregation. This is the reason why at the beginning of the Synod, it was assumed that every congregation would establish a school.<sup>24</sup> Proper instruction of the membership of the congregation begins in childhood. In contrast, by the year 2001, only 22% of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregations operated elementary schools.<sup>25</sup>

If values are learned from childhood, then faith has a stronger foundation in an individual's life.<sup>26</sup> Jesus says in the Gospel of St. Mark: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth,

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<sup>23</sup> Rietschel, 49.

<sup>24</sup> W. H. Beck. *Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States*. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1939), 105.

<sup>25</sup> Steuber, 3.

<sup>26</sup> Holtzen and Krause, 59.

anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.” (Mark 10:14-15) If this is true, then early education is not only crucial but also beneficial.<sup>27</sup> It produces a foundation of faith that children carry with them through childhood into adulthood and is firmly planted in them.

The Lutheran day school environment teaches these lessons in multiple ways. First, it teaches through religion lessons taught each day in the classrooms. This may take the form of devotion and discussion and at other times the explanation of Bible stories. In the lower grades, work begins through memorization of the catechism, reaching its high point in confirmation instruction in the junior high grades. Chapel services are held regularly bringing God’s word to the students through another method of instruction. Lessons learned in the classroom and chapel are sometimes experienced through service projects both to members of the congregation, people in the community, as well as participation in mission offerings and activities where students can express their faith in action.

Dr. William Kramer, in his book Lutheran Schools, sees the role of the Lutheran day school as being very crucial to the doctrinal training of young minds that, in turn, can be carried with them in their faith into their adult lives. He sees this as a three-tier approach, with the last tier being as it is carried out in the lives of adults trained in the Lutheran day school:

Lutheran schools aim for Christian instruction in depth: first, by imparting a thorough knowledge of Christian doctrine; second, by showing how religious belief to be genuine, must affect all activities and areas of life; third, by training their pupils in the Christian life they advocate.<sup>28</sup>

Doctrine is important in the life of each member of the congregation. Doctrine teaches the

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<sup>27</sup> Allen Hart Jahsmann, 109.

<sup>28</sup> Holtzen and Krause, 59.

truth about God to each individual from the Scriptures. A benefit of the Lutheran day school is that this truth is taught over a period of years in the context of everyday life. In this way it is carried from the classroom into relationships and activities in the congregation. Members of Lutheran congregations that have had the benefit of this training can put this into action through congregational involvement. This is evident through their involvement in the congregation and their sharing of faith through outreach in their communities and occupations.

August C. Stellhorn says this about the importance of the day school in the life of the congregation and the Synod:

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, like some other church bodies has ever been Biblically conservative. It has diligently sought doctrinal truth and tenaciously clung to it. It has inculcated this truth upon its membership from the pulpit, in the classroom of its lower and higher schools, and in its publications. One of the greatest factors has been the education of children, particularly by means of the parochial school.<sup>29</sup>

Children taught in the Lutheran day school receive instruction in this doctrine every day over a period of years, thereby giving a foundation that can be digested over a longer period of time.

Considering this, the day school plays a very vital role in the education of the congregation's membership. In his book, The Church Teaches, Elvin W. Janetzki states that Lutheran day schools are a means to an end. They are not an end in themselves. He points out that there are two bad reasons for establishing and maintaining schools. One reason is that the congregation has always maintained a school. A second reason is that in Australia, where he lives, the government makes funds available for the establishment of such schools. The prime motivation is that funds are available for such a school and its establishment is viewed

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<sup>29</sup> Stellhorn, 483.

as being advantageous for the congregation. Facing that opportunity for increased revenue, congregations do not want to miss such an opportunity. What then are reasons for maintaining a Lutheran day school? He lists three: 1) Helping Christian parents to discharge their God-given responsibility of educating their children; 2) Helping the Church to nurture children received in Holy Baptism; 3) Helping to prepare future professional church workers.<sup>30</sup> In this way, members of the congregation are trained in their responsibilities and may also be moved toward professional careers in the church.

Among churches and denominations, the Lutheran Church is known as a doctrinal church. As times change and opinions change as well, it is necessary to have a training ground for the teaching of doctrine. In some denominations, theologies have changed with time and social conditions. There is a consistency in the Lutheran Church from the time of Martin Luther to today. Lutheran schools have played an active and vital part in the promulgation of doctrine and in the training of members and congregational leaders through its schools. Doctrinal teaching has a lasting effect when it is a part of every day life for children. Lutheran day schools and that doctrinal foundation has continuity from one generation to another. W.H. Beck has this to say about this function of Lutheran schools:

The close relationship of education and religion, of church and school, has been the dominant idea behind the schools that were established by the Lutheran Church from Luther's day to the present; and this ingrained principle is responsible for the unwavering tenacity with which the Church has held its doctrinal position and polity during the past four hundred years and likewise explains why parochial schools are maintained up to the present time, though many forces and trends in modern education militates against this system. If the Church intended to educate its children in spiritual matters, it could so only by undertaking also their general education and development; religion was not a subject to be added to the others, but was to pervade and permeate all; the reaching of all branches thus devolved upon the Church to the same extent and degree and made the school a vital part of the program of each Church.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Janetzki, Elvin W. *The Church Teaches*. (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1985), 74,76,77.

<sup>31</sup> Beck, 7-8.

It is interesting that W.H. Beck, writing over 60 years ago, voices a tension that still exists today in the debate over the merits of public vs. parochial education. There is a viewpoint that somehow parochial education is inferior to the public educational system. There is a difference, however. In 1939, the importance of some kind of religious emphasis was considered as important as the basics of public education. Beck's comments do give clarification to the foundational importance of Lutheran schools. The positive qualities that such schools provide have remained constant over the years and may have an even greater value today.

William Kramer, in his essay, "Educational Rights of Lutheran Children" approaches the value of a Lutheran day school education from the aspect of the rights of children, instead of emphasizing why congregations operate schools, there are rights due to children in Lutheran congregations:

By his Baptism the Lutheran child becomes a child of God. What is more, by having their child baptized, parents promise in effect that they will bring him up as a Christian, and they will do all in their power to give an adequate Christian education and training. The Lutheran child, then, in addition to his inherent right to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, has this right by virtue of his Baptism and by virtue of the fact that both parents and the congregation have assumed responsibility for his Christian upbringing. He has, therefore, in a special sense, the right to expect a Christian education of the highest order. The fact that the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod advocates this right as a matter of principle provides an added emphasis.<sup>32</sup>

Lutherans schools provide a necessary benefit in the lives of children, but there is also the responsibility that parents have towards their children. As they promise to provide Christian nurture for their children, the Lutheran day school provides the most in-depth instruction they can provide.

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<sup>32</sup> Kramer, William. "Educational Rights of Lutheran Children". *Readings in the Lutheran Philosophy of Education*. Bickel, L. G. and Surburg, Raymond F. , editors.( River Forest, Illinois: Lutheran Education Association, 1956), 71-72.

## **Equipping for responsible Christian citizenship**

It is the goal of Lutheran day schools not only to provide quality education, but to prepare their students for life in society as well. As that goal has been approached, an interesting benefit has arisen from the Lutheran day school that sees students excelling in comparison to their public school counterparts. Writing in 1963, A.C. Stellhorn noted:

Not a moment do we dare forget—we shall remind ourselves of it constantly, and here express it again—that it is our sacred duty to see that the children in our schools reach the highest possible standards in acquiring the English language and common knowledge in the branches of general education. But we shall speak only of our duty. To the honor and praise of God we shall not remain silent about the success that our schools are achieving in this respect. Not a few schools, for example, have reached greater proficiency in English, arithmetic, etc. than many public schools.<sup>33</sup>

These accomplishments far exceeded the original goal of the Lutheran educational system and speak to the high quality of education in Lutheran schools.

Lutheran Day Schools were established not only for the purpose of religious education and training, but also with the objective of training for civic development and responsibility. Both Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions call upon Christians to live not only within the context of the congregation, but within the community as well. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus states: “You are the salt of the earth.... You are the light of the world.” (Matthew 5:13,14) As Lutheran Christians, the members of the congregations are called to influence society by living out their faith. Beck comments on the purpose of Lutheran schools:

The primary objective of schools includes both the spiritual and civic development. The churches established the schools for the direct purpose of developing a consecrated and intelligent laity, which would be imbued with the spirit of the Christian religion according to the Lutheran Confessions and through which the Church endeavored to strengthen its confessional position and conservative

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 190.

practices and keep a high moral plane.<sup>34</sup>

Related to the issue of an educated citizenry through Christian education, throughout history some have believed that religious education should be added to a good public education instead of having separate public and parochial schools. In order for this to happen, a public education must be given to students and religion added later almost as an add-on. This has never been the view of Lutheran education. Giving in to this way of thinking implies that religious education is irrelevant and has nothing to offer in terms of civic preparation. In fact, the value of Lutheran education is that it teaches more than religious views to students; it also prepares them for life in the world. W. H. Beck comments:

The primary objective of Lutheran parochial schools has been at all times and in all Synods the inculcation of Christian doctrines and principles of life and their coordination with the entire curriculum of the school. It is the long established conviction of the Lutheran Church that education and religion must go hand in hand; that a nation cannot make the right kind of citizens by a godless education and bringing in religion afterwards.<sup>35</sup>

Citizens are called upon to make decisions. They can make better decisions if faith in God is part of the educational process. While there is a concept of civic righteousness, that is, godless people who make decent and moral decisions, an education with God at the center will provide a better foundation for making such decisions. It is the philosophy of Lutheran education that this certainly is the case.

Because Christians believe that the government is “a servant of God” (Romans 13:4), there is a respect for those who are in authority regardless of political affiliation. Christians can also bring faith and morality to bear in the voting process, as well taking part in volunteer

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<sup>34</sup> Beck, 415

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 408

or elected positions. The training received in Christian faith through a Lutheran day school education can aid in this process. It does so by giving a firm foundation of faith to those who have received this training.

In his book, The Lutheran Parochial School, Wayne E. Schmidt further elaborates upon the development of the Lutheran school as well as the necessity for its existence:

Schools were necessary, first, for the contribution that they made to ‘the spiritual realm and the salvation of souls.’ Schools, in other words, were to serve the church and its religious aims. Second, schools were necessary if temporal government was to survive and function. Without schools, orderly and good government would cease to exist. These are the arguments that Luther employed in *To the Councilmen* to encourage the establishment and maintenance of schools in Germany.<sup>36</sup>

It is within the history and tradition of Lutheran schools to have a wider vision than life in the church and the teaching of faith. This may account for its universal appeal to the general public and also its position as the most outstanding evangelistic tool that congregations have.

### **Outreach by the day school to the community**

#### **Providing quality education from a Christian perspective**

While there are those who view the Lutheran day school as a ministry of the congregation to the children of its membership, there is also the added dimension of reaching out to the community through Lutheran education. A.C. Stellhorn re-emphasizes this purpose:

The congregation or parish resolves to maintain a school for the purpose of carrying out its own obligation toward the children of the community, particularly those of its members, according to the words of Christ: ‘Feed my lambs.’ ‘Teach all nations...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.’<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Wayne E. Schmidt. *The Lutheran Parochial School*. (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Publications, 2001) 19-20.

<sup>37</sup> Stellhorn, 193.



His reasoning strikes at the heart of a conflict that sometimes arises in the membership of the congregation: “Is the school only for the members of the congregation, or is it for the community as well?” According to Stellhorn, it is for both the congregation’s children as well as children in the larger community. He does make the point, however, that the prime concern is for the children of the congregation.

Today, families that choose the congregation’s school for the education provided there might have come to the congregation solely because of the day school. Congregations that operate day schools through this understand that day schools are important mission vehicles. It is the belief of congregations that operate day schools that they are presented with a unique opportunity to provide quality education as well as Christian instruction.

Because Lutheran day schools serve the purpose of inviting people to the congregation because of the Christian education they provide, they function as an important part of the congregation by which they have been established. Regarding this relationship between the congregation and the school, J.C. Lindemann, a noted educator of the late 1800’s noted:

The congregation itself (not the state, not the Synod) is at all times the owner and governess of the school. As the congregation has the duty to maintain the school and, when possible, always improve it, so it also has the right to organize the school as it pleases, provided that this takes place to honor God, for the true benefit of the church and civic communities, and in keeping with the church’s confession. Thus, the congregation also has the sacred duty earnestly to watch that the school is conducted in keeping with its purpose. The congregation stipulates the regulations for the school; it determines the curriculum; and the course of study is also put into operation only through the congregation’s approval.<sup>38</sup>

Lutheran day schools face a myriad of challenges in mission and ministry today.

While it is certainly true that the principles of Lutheran education have remained constant

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<sup>38</sup> Schmidt, 19-20.

throughout the history of day school operation, the culture into which this ministry is being applied is ever changing. H. James Boldt, Carl Moser, and Martin F. Wessler make this observation in their book Lutheran Schools 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Issues, Challenges and

Opportunities:

Somehow congregations and their schools need to deal more effectively with current trends and patterns that may negatively affect children, families, and society: erosion of values, declining literacy, drug abuse, self-centered life styles to name a few. Nor can the congregation and school ignore the growing number of poor, homeless, hungry, hurting people in our society.<sup>39</sup>

This certainly speaks to a change in the composition of the student body in Lutheran day schools. It cannot be expected that the type of student in Lutheran day schools today is identical to that of the past. This, however, is a great opportunity for mission and education as families today especially are in need of the message of the Gospel. This may dictate to a certain degree the approach of the curriculum as well as services offered outside of the classroom.

**Evangelizing families through children**

As in all mission or evangelism work, there must be a philosophy that is owned by the entire congregation and not just a few members. The faculty, pastors, and members of the board that oversee the school operation are limited in what they can do in outreach. If outreach is the desire of the entire congregation, the opportunities become endless, and more children and families can be reached. H. James Boldt, Carl Moser and Martin F. Wessler say this: “The more we talk about our congregation’s purpose, the more the members are recognizing that the congregation’s mission is also the mission of every member. Things

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<sup>39</sup> Boldt, Moser, and Wessler, 10.

begin to happen. We have reason for praising God every Sunday. We no longer have arguments about the high cost of operating our congregation and school.”<sup>40</sup>

As the history of the purpose of Lutheran schools has been studied there are some constants over the years: Scriptural foundations, sound educational principles, preparation for responsible citizenship, and active membership within the congregation. Changes have come about due to ethnic composition of neighborhoods and communities that lead to a difference in the composition of the students in Lutheran schools. Because not all students have a Lutheran or Christian background, an additional purpose of the day school’s mission has arisen.

Lutheran day schools see themselves in the role of providing Christian education for the members of the congregation. They also have an important role in outreach to children in the community. These students are in the Lutheran day school because it provides the education their families desire. There is another emphasis provided by community children in the day school: Through the education they receive, centered on the message of the Gospel, they become missionaries to their families.

Elvin C. Janetzki states regarding the overall missionary outreach to such families in his book The Church Teaches:

It may be argued by some, in this connection, that a Lutheran school may see its purpose not only in terms of education or nurture, but also in the area of missionary outreach. Most schools, undoubtedly, can point to a number of students, and even members of the staff, who have become Christians, maybe Lutherans, through their association with the school.<sup>41</sup>

This has been an emphasis that has risen in recent years when a larger number of students are in Lutheran day schools that are not members of the congregation. In addition to providing a

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>41</sup> Janetzki, 90.

solid Christian education, there is a need to also see this opportunity for outreach through the day school and the children of non-member families.

How significant is the role of Lutheran day schools in this regard? Carl J. Moser cites several examples of students who have brought the message of Jesus Christ to their families as a result of the Christian education they have received:

Phillip was baptized as a direct result of a Lutheran school. Concerned for Phillip's eternal welfare, Phillip's teacher asked Phillip's parents when their son had been baptized. As a result, Phillip was baptized in a Lutheran school chapel service. Eventually, his parents became active members of the congregation operating the school.

Stephanie heard the news that her grandfather had died when she returned home from her first-grade class in a Lutheran school. Trying at the same time to console her grandmother, Stephanie's mother quietly whispered to Stephanie, 'Grandpa died.' Then Stephanie, with childlike faith, shared with her mother and grandmother, 'Don't be sad. Grandpa is not dead. He is in heaven.' Through the witness of Stephanie's childlike faith, her mother eventually began attending worship services with Stephanie. Her mother and grandmother later joined the church.

When asked to give his religion, Fred's father wrote 'Presbytitist' on the Lutheran school enrollment form. In response to the principal's inquiry about his denomination, the father jokingly said, 'Well, my wife and I attend the Presbyterian church half the time and the Baptist church the other half.' It became obvious that the father and mother were not regular members of any congregation but considered themselves Christian. Their son came home from school and began leading the family in prayer before dinner. The parents began coming to school events, where they heard the Gospel shared in worship and informal comments. They attended church services when Fred sang in the children's choir. Eventually they took the pastor's adult confirmation class and joined the congregation. Later, Fred's dad became president of the school board and still later chairperson of the congregation.<sup>42</sup>

There are many more such accounts from congregations that operate Lutheran day schools as they attest to the missionary emphasis of Lutheran schools. Through the education they provide, these schools strengthen the faith of students or may even bring them to faith. As

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<sup>42</sup> Carl J. Moser, *Sharing Christ*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), 16.

students are inspired by the message of the Gospel, they want to bring this message to family and friends.

The outreach that children provide in the mission emphasis of the Lutheran day school is one aspect of the overall emphasis that such schools provide today. Because of the needs of families today, the Lutheran day school cannot only be concerned about member children but must be concerned about others in the community as well. Patrick T. Ferry, President of Concordia University Wisconsin, states the benefit of the Lutheran day school for his own children in this way:

There is one place that I know for certain that catechesis and kids coalesce, a setting where learning and living link: Lutheran schools. I am grateful to God for schools like Mount Calvary Lutheran in Milwaukee. It is our family's church and the parish school our four youngest children attend. The school is staffed with dedicated, consecrated Lutheran schoolteachers whose synodical education has prepared them well to integrate faith and learning. I am grateful for the support my wife and I have from those teachers who assist us in sharing our common faith with our children and helping them to grow. And, because it is a school that welcomes and encourages non-member children to attend (most of the children are not members but reside within the neighborhood community), I celebrate the ways in which the church and staff work together to reach out through Lutheran education and Christian witness to tell the good news of Jesus.<sup>43</sup>

With the distribution of children of the day school changing from almost all members to a small percentage of the total student make-up, the emphasis has shifted. Schools are faced with finding a new approach as they reach out to members of the community through the education that they provide.

Because of this change in composition, there are any number of schools that have a rather large percentage of their enrollment from outside of the congregation. If mission were

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<sup>43</sup> Patrick T. Ferry, "Telling the Good News About Jesus in the Year of the Child", *Lutheran Education*, (River Forest, Illinois: Concordia University, 2001), 55

part of the purpose of the Lutheran day school, outreach would be expected and desired. In his book, Foundations of Lutheran Education, William C. Rietschel says:

These non-Lutheran and non-Christian students are being viewed as potential members of the Lutheran family, i.e., mission prospects, and have caused an ongoing re-examination of Lutheran schoolings ends and objectives. A Biblical theology of mission has evolved that still acknowledges the Lutheran school's primary end of promoting and nurturing the faith, but also stresses the Great Commission.<sup>44</sup>

The approach of Lutheran day schools must have a double thrust of both educating the members of the congregation and evangelizing those who have been brought into their school because of the education that is provided by the congregation through the operation of the day school.

William C. Rietschel outlines the approach toward the Lutheran day school operation today as seen by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod:

- 1) To nurture faith
- 2) To grow in grace and knowledge
- 3) To saturate with the Word
- 4) To communicate and establish Christian values
- 5) To equip for Christian service
- 6) To reach out<sup>45</sup>

Because of the composition of congregations and communities in which Lutheran schools exist, there has been a slight shift in purpose and direction. Schools had initially been established for the purpose of educating in the faith. Today, while this is still an important purpose, there is an additional purpose of emphasizing the mission the Lutheran day school provides.

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<sup>44</sup> Rietschel, 71.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 73-74.

This mission can be realized as non-member families are reached through the various programs and events that the school sponsors. This can be done through a weekly newsletter that informs parents of events at the school that add to the instruction and worship of school students. Events of the Parent Teacher League bring the un-churched into contact with members of the congregation where faith may be shared and shown by both adults and children in the school. Services during the Advent and Christmas season, in particular, provide excellent opportunities for children to speak the message of the Gospel to their parents and other parents as well.

Day schools can also carry this mission to non-member families through other school and congregational activities. Today, families and schools have become very aware of sports related activities. As parents who are not members of the congregation attend these events, they interact with member families. Through this or through invitation, they may attend worship services of the congregation where the gospel is proclaimed. Non-member parents attend worship services where their children are part of day school choirs. Vacation Bible School is another opportunity for carrying the mission to non-member families through their children's involvement in the program; scouting programs also can serve as a form of outreach for congregations and day schools.

As the overall purpose of Trinity Lutheran School and other Lutheran Day Schools is observed, it appears that there is a dual purpose. Certainly as it has been through history, Lutheran Day Schools, such as Trinity, provide a solid Christian education to the membership of the congregation. Today, a mission thrust has joined this purpose. Congregations understand that their day schools provide a wonderful outreach to people in their community. Under the auspices of a solid education, Jesus Christ is brought to people

who may have a passing acquaintance with the message of the Gospel or may have none at all. It is this important two-part emphasis of education to the children of the congregation as well as children in the community that congregations are charged to support, maintain, and mobilize with their gifts and abilities.

### **Utilizing facilities**

Another way that Lutheran day schools reach out to the community is through the use of their facilities. This also calls for a shift in attitude by the school and the congregation. No longer are school facilities viewed as the sole property of the church and school, but also as a method for drawing in the people of the community. The shift in emphasis has gone from looking inward to creative ways of advertising the Lutheran day school by use of its buildings by the community.

This especially is true when the congregation has as part of its facilities a multi-purpose room or a gymnasium that can be used for other events. It shifts its focus from inward to outward with a vision that is concerned with people in the community as well as members of the congregation. While it is true that buildings do not share the gospel, they are a vehicle that can create receptivity in people to hear this message of salvation in Jesus Christ. It also shows the community that the church and school are interested in others outside their immediate family of faith. It shows the congregation to be an active participant in community life.

Carl J. Moser states this as a changing attitude that has occurred in the recent decade as schools definitely have become an evangelism tool:

The 1990's are the era of evangelism opportunity for Lutheran schools. Congregations have included schools in their vital strategies for sharing Christ in their community. Congregations are starting schools, not only for nurture, but also for



service to communities and for sharing Christ. New programs and evangelism processes have gained in popularity and are being used more energetically by congregations.<sup>46</sup>

He states as his backup for this viewpoint the growth rate of early childhood centers that have a high percentage of non-member families enrolled. A decade ago, nineteen percent of school families were un-churched. In the last decade there has been an increase in care programs. These have taken the form of all day programs or before and after school care. Their numbers have grown as a result of an increased number of un-churched and other families who see the need for this education and care for their children.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to educational opportunities in the classroom setting there are other avenues for the use of the Lutheran day school's facilities that may benefit the community and also serve as an outreach tool. Scouting has long been a program, with its emphasis upon religious and moral training that has made use of Lutheran school facilities. Members of the community who desire these programs for their sons and daughters regularly have contact with Lutheran day school facilities. In recent years, Lutheran day schools have provided a very active athletic program. Friends and relatives receive exposure to school facilities through their attendance at athletic events. When Lutheran day schools have adequate facilities for community events, the rental of school space provides another opportunity for outreach as facilities are rented for various activities.

### **Energizing the congregation through school families**

#### **Through involvement in school activities**

In order for the Lutheran day school to have an effective part in the life of its families,

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<sup>46</sup> Moser, 14.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

it is important that the role of parents be used in this process. It may be assumed that since a congregation operates a successful school, the parents have discharged their responsibility. It is more realistic for parents and school to form a partnership in this process.

Elvin W. Janetzki warns of this danger:

Parents abdicate the nurture of their children in the hope that school and church will do it; they become preoccupied with things instead of the life of God, either because material needs are in meager or rich supply; the youngsters are engulfed in new activities and new companions who witness the world to them rather than their witnessing Christ to the companions; faith in God is exchanged for grudging participation in religious forms and the imposition of ancient ceremony rather than the receiving of the Word of God for edification. Can the church remember that parents—and not merely children—have a high priority as its clients for the edifying Word? That the calling of being a parent is a high strategy in the distribution of the Word of Christ for nurture?<sup>48</sup>

The congregation can be energized as families become involved through the education of their children. They take part in these activities along with members of the congregation and this itself may be a catalyst for them to become members in the congregation.

Depending upon the size of the day school, there are many opportunities for parent involvement in activities connected with the day school. One way that members of the congregation can be involved in the day school is through volunteering as reading aids, cafeteria helpers, and volunteers in various other capacities. The excitement and energy of children and their activities have an energizing effect on the rest of the congregation. Athletic contests provide this atmosphere as well. Grandparents, parents, and other relatives can lend their support at these activities and therefore spread the day school's enthusiasm throughout the congregation. Members of the congregation can be very involved in such programs as Market Day, which is a program operating in any number of Lutheran day schools. It is a

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<sup>48</sup> Janetzki, 16.

program that allows parents of the day school, members of the congregation and others to purchase groceries. This purchasing provides a percentage of sales to the school.

The kind of care that is provided through these activities has a mutual benefit for the entire congregation. It calls for the involvement of all and develops care for one another.

Elvin Janetzki comments:

Mutual care in the school, or lack of it, must eventually affect the lives of all. Members of a Christian community cannot be indifferent about sin in their lives or in the lives of their fellows. A living faith will feed upon the daily diet of forgiveness of sins. When a member no longer lives by what God gives in Christ, when confession of sin is ignored and forgiveness flouted, then the ties that bind that person to Christ and to Christ's people have been rejected.<sup>49</sup>

The care that school families have for one another builds up that part of the congregation. It also has a "rippling" effect throughout the rest of the congregation. This is an aspect that continues to develop energy to a congregation that is not present when the congregation does not operate its own school. The school, its students, and families become a very vital part of the congregation through their involvement in activities in the school and also through their involvement in activities of congregational life.

Dennis H. Verseman states regarding this important role that schools play in congregational life:

Parochial schools are the chief instruments in building up or keeping alive any church organization. We need not go far to find an illustration to this assertion. What is the cause of the most unparalleled growth of our Synod? Is it not chiefly because the founders of the Synod have from the beginning seen the necessity and benefit of parochial schools wherever they are placed, also deeming it not below their dignity to teach school themselves where the congregation was unable to pay a teacher? All of the zeal and fidelity of the venerable founders of our Synod would have helped little without church schools. Most congregations would have died out with the old members.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>50</sup> Verseman, Dennis H. "The Distinctive Mission of a Private Religious School System: The Role of the Teaching Force in the Schools of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod" Ph. D. diss. University of Michigan 1998, 35.

It follows that if families of Lutheran day school children are active in the life of the congregation, then there is an energizing effect that they have on the congregation. This was something foreseen in 1800's with the founding of the Synod. Early on, very few congregations were established without the operation of a day school. The day school was seen as part of the total Christian education package and may well be, as Dennis Verseman points out, a reason for its continued growth.

### **Through the Use of Spiritual Gifts for the Welfare of the Congregation**

The congregation will be energized through the presence of the Lutheran day school and its families as they put to use the gifts God has given them in service to one another. God at all times gives gifts to his church. Special gifts or abilities given for the building of Christ's body, the church, are referred to as spiritual gifts. These are important to the life of the congregation and are bestowed by the Holy Spirit.

David J. Lieske states that it is important for people to be awakened and equipped for this important service in the life of the church. Unless people see that they have a needed role in the life of the church, they will hesitate to be involved. This is certainly true of Lutheran day school families as well as other members of the congregation. Lieske says regarding this use of gifts:

Unless God's people are equipped for the work of Christian service, they will not be able to use the gifts God has given them, fully for Christian service. And unless God's people realize that all Christians are to be active in using the gifts God has given them, they will not go out and serve Him.<sup>51</sup>

With the existence of the Lutheran day school, opportunities for use of these gifts are present

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<sup>51</sup> David J. Lieske, "Designing a Member Development Process for Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Delavan, Wisconsin" Doctor of Ministry Thesis,(St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1994), 19.

where they would not be if the congregation did not operate a day school. The presence of the school provides new avenues for service to the membership of the congregation. The key is always education, training, and equipping.

Parents and grandparents of students can aid in the various activities the day school has in both the academic and extracurricular areas. Those skilled in areas of academics can utilize their gifts in special areas of academics as guest presenters or substitute teachers. Some assist or take active roles in coaching athletics. If they possess musical gifts, these can be a great assistance to choirs and the overall music program of the day school. In addition, the faculty and staff of the day school can lend their gifts to the overall ministry of the congregation.

This can be manifested through many “behind the scenes” activities within the school and also the congregation. Some parents and grandparents assist by giving of their time, making use of the skills they use in their occupations, such as medical personnel, managers of people in the business world, as well as those who are skilled in various building trades. Some parents and grandparents assist in lunch room supervision, playground monitoring, volunteer art programs, and also as reading assistants, or those who assist teachers in hearing memorization assignments.

Lieske further states of this opportunity for Christian service in the life of the congregation:

After making people aware of the fact that there are spiritual gifts that God gives to His people in order for them to do Christian service, it is also very important to help develop those gifts. This is one of the points that Mary Ellen Drushal makes in an article which begins with the question: ‘When will the church move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century in managing its human resources?’ Unfortunately, there is much more that should be done in managing the human resources that God gives for accomplishing the mission of making disciples than is being done at the present time.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 34.

The presence of the Lutheran day school provides additional opportunities for such service. It is the responsibility of the congregation to make use of these gifts and channel them into the overall life of the congregation. When this takes place revitalization spreads to the entire congregation as well.

### **Trinity Lutheran School's Fulfilling of Lutheran Day School Purposes Through its Educational Program**

Trinity Lutheran School embraces much of the history of the Lutheran day school, as well as its purposes. The first pastor of Trinity, Rev. Francis Springer, served as principal of the first public school in Springfield in the year 1856. The beginning of Trinity Lutheran School is generally acknowledged to be 1860.

Since Trinity Lutheran Church and Trinity Lutheran School are at different locations, attempts have been made throughout the years to meet the needs of members at both the church and school locations. A statement in the congregation's anniversary booklet of 1981 states: "The Lutheran school system in Springfield, started by Trinity's one-room school in 1860, has expanded to now include Trinity's large school, schools at three other congregations, and Lutheran High School. Truly one of our greatest blessings is our Christian schools, providing a Christ centered education to our young people."<sup>53</sup>

Trinity congregation has long placed a high value on Lutheran Christian education. The Philosophy of Ministry of Trinity Lutheran School states:

Lutheran Christians place an extremely high value on full time Christian education. A Christ-centered, Bible-based religion curriculum is combined with God-pleasing discipline to prepare students for citizenship on earth as well as in heaven. Our

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<sup>53</sup> Trinity Lutheran Church Archives Committee, *140 Years of Grace 1981*, (Springfield, Illinois, 1981), 13

school counsels, teaches, and influences students. We consider Christian living here on earth as the beginning of eternal life with Jesus.<sup>54</sup>

Within the framework and purpose of Lutheran education, both Trinity Lutheran Church and Trinity Lutheran School see their philosophy of ministry summed up in a mission--to worship, to grow, to serve. This comes in response to the great Commission that charges the congregation to make disciples of all people through the use of the gifts given to them by God.

Trinity Lutheran School embraces the traditional purposes of instruction in the faith for students who attend the school. Its philosophy of Lutheran Christian Education as noted in the Family Handbook states this goal:

Lutheran Christians place an extremely high value on full time Christian education. A Christ-centered, Bible-based religion curriculum is combined with God-pleasing discipline to prepare students for citizenship on earth as well as in heaven. We consider Christian living here on earth as the beginning of eternal life with Jesus.

Trinity Lutheran School strives to achieve the above standards in addition to educating young minds in the state-approved curriculum. All subjects, however, are taught from a Biblical perspective and its Christian application to life.<sup>55</sup>

Trinity Lutheran School understands that worship is ongoing and not an isolated event on the weekend. In order to accomplish that purpose, devotions are conducted daily in classrooms, and chapel services are conducted weekly. In addition, worship is incorporated in all subjects taught in the day school. In future planning, it is the desire of the Board of Christian Day School that oversees the operation of Trinity Lutheran School to promote the day school within the congregation. This will be done through publications and Bible studies that promote the importance of Christian education.

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<sup>54</sup> Trinity Lutheran School Handbook, "Philosophy of Ministry of Trinity Lutheran School" (Springfield, Illinois: Trinity Lutheran School), 6.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

In the area of growth, Trinity Lutheran School understands that its responsibility is not only to students, but also to parents and faculty members. It is a philosophy of Trinity Lutheran School that high academic standards must be maintained for proper learning to take place in the school setting. Various types of extracurricular activities are available, as well as experiences for the growth of faith and fellowship activities.

### **The Fulfillment of Lutheran Day School Purposes through a Desire for Outreach**

Trinity Lutheran School sees its responsibility to the membership of the congregation as its primary responsibility. Throughout the last twenty years, enrollment in the school has consistently remained largely from the membership of the congregation. The percentage of member children as opposed to those outside the congregation has regularly held between eighty-five and ninety percent. With this in mind, the school also sees the opportunity of bringing Christian education to children of the community.

A recent development in this area of the congregation's ministry has been the establishment of The Learning Center (TLC). This is an all day long, as well as all year long, educational program for three and four year old children. Many of the children in this program are not connected with the congregation initially. This provides a community exposure to Lutheran education because children are given a quality education in an inviting atmosphere. For students who are not members of the congregation, an introduction is provided into the day school and also into the congregation.

Parents from The Learning Center are part of Parent Teacher League, which is an organization to promote understanding between school families and faculty. They take part in activities of the day school, such as an open house, wiener roast, sock hop, and other outings. A Pastor's Class has been held in the past to familiarize parents of non-Trinity



parents with Lutheran doctrine. Parents also receive newsletters periodically that inform them of activities within the Learning Center, the day school, and the congregation.

With the addition of a large parish hall in 2001, there has been an increased use of facilities by people in the community. Several organizations in the community have made use of this facility. Among these were a local neighborhood association for organizational meetings, a flu shot clinic, an informational seminar for nurses in the dangers of lead poisoning, as well as planning meetings for the city of Springfield and the State of Illinois.

Students in the day school also participate in the life of the congregation. At Christmas and other occasions, school choirs sing for monthly meetings of the Ladies Aid. Several of the day school's three choirs sing during worship services. The second grade class works with the quilting group on missionary projects, quilts, and blankets. Students in the lower grades regularly communicate with shut-ins during Christmas and at other times during the year.

Following the example of Jesus, Trinity Lutheran School is active in serving others with the various gifts given to them by God. In order to accomplish this part of their mission, Trinity Lutheran School always has an eye opened to the mission opportunities of reaching others through Christian education. Families who have benefited from the education that Trinity provides have told others about their educational experience. The school family reaches out to student families and provides for their needs as they are able. This can be seen in the time of family upheaval during times of divorce, financial difficulty, and death in the family. Trinity Lutheran School does not have as its goal to be viewed as an exclusive educational facility, but as one that is open to people of the Springfield community and surrounding areas of Springfield.

William C. Rietschel, in his book, Foundations of Lutheran Education, states that the day school is the door for the church's ministry to children and adults in many cases. He says, "Instead of the congregation providing students for the school, the school will provide members for the congregation."<sup>56</sup> Trinity Lutheran Church, like many congregations today, utilizes its day school as one of the leading methods for introducing people to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and membership in the congregation. Like many other Lutheran day schools, Trinity has seen its purpose of the education of children changed to not only include classroom instruction but also outreach to families and people in the Springfield community.

**Fulfillment of Lutheran Day School Purposes  
through Family Involvement in the Congregation**

Parents of Trinity Lutheran School students find many areas of activity in the school through Parent Teacher League, scouting and athletic activities. Those who are members of the congregation already serve on various boards and committees in the congregation. The Family Handbook states:

Because our Lord tells us that we all have been given different gifts and abilities in order to serve one another, we therefore provide a variety of educational experiences for students to develop their talents and skills for responsible living, and help them look for opportunities to serve.<sup>57</sup>

This avenue is not only open to students, but to parents as well. Their enthusiasm and involvement in the day school often carries over into life in the congregation.

William C. Rietschel sees this as an important part of the Lutheran day school's ministry in the congregation. He points out that it is important to give students opportunities

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<sup>56</sup> Rietschel, 166.

<sup>57</sup> Trinity Lutheran School Family Handbook, 6.

for Christian service. Equipping for service is one of the main tasks of the Church. He sees the day school filling a unique purpose in this role:

In fact, the Lutheran school is the church in action, not something separate from it. The Lutheran school is the body of Christ in a particular location, carrying out its work of mutual service and up building. As Christ said, 'For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I with them.' (Matt. 18:20) There the word is being shared. There Christ's work is being carried on.<sup>58</sup>

Trinity Lutheran School values highly the opportunity of teaching the faith to students who are members of the congregation as well as those who are not. While that may be its prime purpose, as it is in many Lutheran day schools today, it also understands that the school has an important mission to the community. It continues to be a place that creates activity within the congregation and a good representative of Lutheran education to the community.

On two occasions in the past, Trinity Lutheran School has been accredited by the National Lutheran School Association (NLSA). As part of this process, members of the congregation are asked to serve on various self-study committees. Some of the members of these committees have children in the day school, while others may have had them enrolled at Trinity in the past and other committee members have not. In addition to this volunteer activity, there are other opportunities for service in school activities where parents and grandparents can take part in a variety of activities. These can take the form of active participation, or attendance at these events to show their support both with their presence, as well as financial assistance.

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<sup>58</sup> Rietschel, 74.

CHAPTER 3  
A BIBLICAL AND CONFSSIONAL PERSPECTIVE  
ON CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP  
AS IT RELATES TO LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

What is Christian stewardship? In the minds of some people it deals with money and budgets. The message of Scripture and the Confessions, as well as Synodical programs, such as “Whole Life Stewardship”, stress that stewardship is more encompassing than the amount of money given by individuals to the budget of their congregation. The focus of this project is the congregation’s financial stewardship in relation to the operation of the day school. How can the operation of the day school be funded? Will the traditional approach of funding by way of congregational offerings be sufficient, or is it necessary to institute tuition for members of the congregation who send the children to the day school? However, in order to focus upon that specific aspect of stewardship, it will be important to study the entire concept of Christian Stewardship. A better understanding of proper financial stewardship can be gained from the larger picture of stewardship in general.

**Christian Stewardship Defined**

In answering the question, “What is stewardship?”, James Hudnut-Beumler states:

It is the responsive practice of human beings tending to do what has been placed in their care by God. It is the responsive practice in the sense that it is something people do because of what God has first done for us. Stewardship is the peculiar response that we can make to our creator who has blessed us with his gifts and given us responsibility for creation and for the Gospel.<sup>59</sup>

By this definition, it is seen that Christian stewardship is a response to what God has first done for us. While people may respond in a resentful manner to the subject of stewardship, it

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<sup>59</sup> Congregational Stewardship Workbook. *Planning Whole Life Stewardship*. (Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Department of Stewardship Ministry: St. Louis, 2000), 3.

should be seen in response to a gift from God. According to Hudnut-Buemler, by this definition, a responsibility also accompanies this gift. Our stewardship is not surrendering what is ours, but rather what is God's, given for our use. This is true in both the larger picture of stewardship as well as the more specific aspect of financial stewardship.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has operated with a definition of stewardship that states more specifically: “Stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the church, in managing all of life resources for God's purposes.”<sup>60</sup>

Rather than emphasizing a part of one's life for stewardship, this definition shows that it really has to do with all of one's life. All that we have comes from God, and stewardship is the living of that life toward God's purposes. It is, as the definition states, a joyous response from the child of God. It is a joyous response because it is not a response that is forced, but flows freely from faith.

In his book, The Chief Steward, J. E. Herrmann stated fifty years ago, that many viewed stewardship as a once a year pledge. He states: “Stewardship is viewed by many in our circles as a way of raising money rather than a way of life. The word is used with frequent emphasis as a prelude to the every-member canvass in the fall and then tucked rather indifferently into mothballs for another year.”<sup>61</sup> This is the approach that most people consider instead of seeing stewardship as an ongoing way of life for the Christian.

The question is, “Can stewardship be successful once a year, or is it an ongoing process?” Given the several definitions by Herrmann and others, it would appear that it should be an ongoing process. Dr. Walton H. Greever states that it is, “The practice of the Christian religion.” He adds: “Christian stewardship is what I do after I have once said, ‘I

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>61</sup> J.E. Herrmann. *The Chief Steward*. (The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod: St. Louis, 1951), 11.

believe!’ It’s the response of my whole life to Christ out of gratitude for an amazing love that meant death on the Cross. It’s the giving of everything I am and everything I have to Him, as He directs. It’s total commitment. It’s the fruitage of my life. It’s faith in action...’’<sup>62</sup>

In the meaning of the Second Article of the Apostles Creed, Martin Luther states a summary of stewardship or living the Christian life: “That I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.”<sup>63</sup> This is evident in our lives because of what Jesus Christ has done for us. He has not only died to save us, but he has died to save us for a purpose.

As congregations operate day schools, the question of financial support and financial stewardship will always arise. As costs for textbooks, programs, and salaries rise in general, congregational budgets will be challenged. As people have a greater understanding of Christian stewardship, they can be motivated toward the support of the congregation’s day school in all aspects of stewardship.

## **The Purpose of Christian Stewardship in the Lutheran Day School**

### **Providing Opportunities for Ministry**

The concept of stewardship can be removed from the minds of people to the point that it ceases to have practical meaning in their lives. In order for it to have practical meaning for them, its purpose must be understood. T. A. Kantonen in his book, A Theology of Christian Stewardship, gives this meaning to the purpose of Christian Stewardship:

If Christ is in fact the Head of the church he must determine his body, then its thought and activity and he must be allowed to use its members as the head uses the members of the body. Then its life must be none other than Christ himself going forth to achieve his redeeming purpose. Its voice must be the voice of Christ proclaiming the eternal gospel. Its hands must be Christ’s hands doing his works of love. Christ

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Martin Luther. *Luther’s Small Catechism*. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 14.

himself must look through our eyes, walk in our steps, love through our hearts. To describe the church as the body of Christ is to describe the church as living out the meaning of Christian stewardship.<sup>64</sup>

These eyes, feet and heart are a visual illustration of what it means to be carrying out Christian stewardship. It is that their entire life is part of stewardship. St. Paul uses a similar analogy, to the life of the Christian, as he talks of life in the Christian congregation in I Corinthians 12 and the part that every member has in the functioning of the congregation:

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Now the body is not made up of one part but many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason cease to be a part of the body. And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason cease to be a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts of the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’ On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there would be no divisions in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (I Corinthians 12:12-27)

As congregations operate Lutheran day schools, the use of all people and their gifts is an important facet to the life of the school. The added dimension that a day school gives to a congregation is the ongoing activity and support that families can give to the school and church and thus be an avenue for Christian stewardship.

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<sup>64</sup> T.A. Kantonen. *A Theology of Christian Stewardship*. Concordia Heritage Series. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 79.

The picture of Christ's body in Christian stewardship illustrates that we are part of him and serve his purposes. It also reminds us that we do not function independently of one another, but together in support of one another serving Christ purposes. While his gifts are given to us freely, there is a responsibility that we also have regarding the use of these gifts.

The Congregational Stewardship Workbook states that stewardship is a seeking of what God desires for each individual:

For individuals, stewardship begins with our responding to God's grace by seeking what God desires for us. The ultimate act of stewardship is to seek to be who God desires you to become. Richard Bolles expresses it so well in his little book, 'How To Find Your Mission in Life.' Bolles says that our first mission, which is one we share with others, is to 'seek to stand hour by hour in the conscious presence of God, the one from whom our mission is derived.'<sup>65</sup>

In the Lutheran day school setting there is a good opportunity to help people realize this potential that God desires for them. Through various activities in the school, both academic and extra-curricular, people are given the opportunity to exercise ministry in the context of the school and congregation.

Turner N. Clinard, in his book Responding to God, sees this opportunity for ministry as an important factor in the life of all Christians. He says,

Among these several calls there is, however, one that is universal to Christians, and that is the calling or vocation to Christian ministry. There is no teaching in the New Testament that is clearer than the teaching that every Christian is called to ministry, to service of others for Jesus' sake.<sup>66</sup>

This echoes an important emphasis of the Reformation of vocation. Each Christian is called to serve God in whatever work or service they perform. Faith and growth of respect for God are virtues that all Christians should strive to attain. The Apology of the Augsburg

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<sup>65</sup> *Congregational Stewardship Workbook*, 8.

<sup>66</sup> Turner N. Clinard. *Responding to God*. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), 55.



confession states: “All people, whatever their calling, should seek perfection, that is, growth in the fear of God, in faith, in the love for their neighbor, and in similar spiritual virtues.”<sup>67</sup>

With this in mind, the work of people within the congregation, as well as in the day school community, is essential to carry out stewardship in either one. It cannot simply be a demand, but members of the congregation and day school communities need training to see the importance their ministry plays in the larger picture. Patrick McNamara, a stewardship consultant, studied eleven congregations from six denominations who were recognized as models of “stewardship congregations”. He made the following observation regarding the involvement of members in the stewardship process:

For me, however, the central point is that pastors, staffs and congregations have found stewardship—as they have come to pray about it, talk about it, understand it and give it time to work—to be a fundamental galvanizing force that works to enhance and sustain giving and volunteer energies within the congregation. Stewardship furnishes a theology and a vocabulary enabling pastors and congregational leaders to talk openly to church members about the classically painful topic of money, and in our day of busy two-wage earner families, giving of time and talent.<sup>68</sup>

Time, more than any other feature, may be the biggest opponent to the use of ministry by families in congregations. McNamara equates stewardship theology with opening the door to true Christian discipleship. This separates the idea as the use of one’s ministry as opposed to a narrow “fund raising” mentality of stewardship.

Waldo J. Werning, author and stewardship consultant, sees such “fund raising” or money-raising as only a part of a very broad picture. In his book, Christian Stewards, he gives the example of the Apostle Paul who was not hesitant to gather money for the work of the church in his day. Rather than the giving of the people, he was concerned with the motive they had. Werning states that they had “hearts for God” rather than “purses for the church”.

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<sup>67</sup> Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert ed. *The Book of Concord*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 283.

<sup>68</sup> Congregational Stewardship Workbook. *Growing Christian Stewards*, 17.

He leads into the idea that the ministry of people is the primary factor in exercising Christian stewardship in the congregation. The heart of stewardship is the offering of the whole person

He emphasizes this point by saying:

Stewardship efforts should seek to lay bare false pretenses of piety and to help get away from the 'averageness' and mediocrity that can never be a sufficient response to God. The task of stewardship is not a ministry for the survival of the institutional church; God is allowing his people to survive for a greater ministry to which He is calling them. The call to total mission may be muffled by equating a dollar challenge to God's total call.<sup>69</sup>

Emphasis upon ministry in the area of stewardship calls people to involvement in both the day school and the congregation. It eliminates dependence upon the clergy and administrative staff and faculty of the day school to areas that God has provided for in each and every individual Christian. There is a much larger picture than keeping the church alive and maintaining its existence. There is a serious consideration of what God has called his church and each individual Christian to accomplish. Waldo Werning adds:

If fruit is to be seen, church and stewardship leaders must be craftsmen who accurately reflect God's Word through stewardship messages. They must avoid lecturing members to work *for* the church, but teach them as the church! Such admonitions as 'your church needs your help' and 'do something for your church today' only motivate people to think in terms of doing something *for* the church instead of being busy *as* the church.<sup>70</sup>

Society of today constantly appeals to the time, loyalty, and money of people. The church has a much greater purpose than that. The church and the day school are made up of people and are not an institution isolated from them. The challenge before the congregation and the day school is to make effective use of the ministry of people.

A classic example of dealing with this challenge is recorded in the Bible in the book of Exodus. Moses had taken all the work of leading the Israelites upon himself. His father-in-

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<sup>69</sup> Waldo J. Werning. *Christian Stewards*. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 10.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

law Jethro advised him of a better option. Jethro could see that both Moses and the people would soon suffer from what we call “burn-out” today. He instructed Moses, “But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousand, hundreds, fifties and tens.” (Exodus 18:21) Moses took all the work upon himself because he was needed by the people. While that in itself was flattering, it did not accomplish God’s intended goal and did not make use of the ministry of the other leaders of Israel. As a postscript Jethro adds: “If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.” (Exodus 18:23) Providing meaningful opportunities for the ministry of people both brings satisfaction as well as effectively accomplishing God’s appointed work.

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod’s Department of Stewardship states in the booklet, “Building Effective Volunteer Ministry”, that building such a ministry and enabling it to operate is a vital function of a growth-oriented, soul-saving congregation of Christian believers. While the purpose isn’t the same as it was in Moses’ day, there is still a delivery from slavery to freedom—the freedom that Jesus Christ brings. The authors say:

The effective use of time, talents and gifts is a key part of leading. In order to come to faith and grow in faith, we need to act on our faith—in fellowship, service, worship and in many more ways. Each church family will determine its unique list of opportunities for services needed to save souls in its own community.<sup>71</sup>

The day school provides a plentiful opportunity for service from the members of the congregation as well as the school families who are not members of the congregation.

Because of the large number of activities that are present each school day and through extra-curricular activities, opportunities need to be made available for parents, grandparents, family

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<sup>71</sup> Congregational Stewardship Workbook. *Building Effective Volunteer Ministry*, 3.

members as well as members of the congregation for this important aspect of ministry in the congregation.

The authors of “Building Effective Volunteer Ministry” conclude by saying that it is important for congregations to develop a system for people to serve. When they do not have these opportunities, they run the risk of becoming inactive or withdrawing from the congregation completely. They comment:

Building effective volunteer ministry requires more than following 24 items on a checklist. Church volunteering involves the commitment of every Christian to use his or her God-given gifts, talents and interests in service to bring lost souls to belief in Christ. It is the responsibility of the church to equip and enable its members to deliver the message of the Good News through the use of their unique gifts.<sup>72</sup>

It is impossible for a handful of people to do the entire work of the congregation. When the gifts of all members are utilized, then the work to which all Christians have been called can be accomplished as it is provided by God.

### **Managing the resources God has given**

With the number of families connected with the Lutheran day school, there are many gifts and talents available for service to both the school and the congregation. The school has a two-fold educational goal for families of day school students, as well as members of the congregation, in regard to the day school. The first goal is to remind and teach that resources of people, abilities, time and financial resources are gifts from God, while the second is to teach how these resources can be managed appropriately.

Writing in the Large Catechism, Martin Luther speaks regarding the view of people that all things come from their providing instead of that which is taught in the First Article of the Apostles Creed:

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 11-12.

For if we believed with out whole heart, we would also act, accordingly, and not swagger about and boast and brag as if we had life, riches, power, honor, and such things of ourselves, as if we ourselves were to be feared and served. This is the way the wretched, perverse world acts, drowned in its blindness, misusing all the blessings and gifts of God solely for its own pride, greed, pleasure, and enjoyment, never once turning to God to thank him or acknowledge him as Lord or Creator.<sup>73</sup>

At the root of managing resources in the Lutheran day school is the understanding that they come from God. As the precious nature of these gifts in terms of people, and their abilities are appreciated, they can be utilized in the various areas of the ministry of the Lutheran day school.

The Congregational Stewardship Workbook makes the distinction between ownership and management in the pamphlet entitled, “Planning Whole Life Stewardship”:

Stewardship is knowing the difference between being an owner and a caretaker. Stewardship is about caring for and developing resources. It does not mean that we give away everything we have. It means that we invest and manage it the way God intends. We cannot give what we do not own. The only thing we have to ‘give’ to God is what he first gave us: our will. Stewardship begins with surrender to the Lord. Only after we have surrendered ourselves to the Lord do our gifts of time, talents and resources fit into proper perspective.<sup>74</sup>

In the managing of resources, it is important to remember that we are using what God has given us to use temporarily. Our gifts, time and finances are not our possessions, but rather they are all owned by God. God does not demand that we stop living, but rather that we live with the attitude that he has shown us and that he gives to us.

A prime example of that is recorded in St. Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians. The Macedonian churches were poor in comparison the other churches. When the collection was being taken, they pleaded with the Apostle Paul to take part of the offering to the saints in Jerusalem. St. Paul notes that they gave beyond their ability to give. How did this happen?

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<sup>73</sup> Kolb and Wengert, 433.

<sup>74</sup> Congregational Stewardship Workbook. *Planning Whole Life Stewardship.*, 7.

He says: “And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God’s will.” (II Corinthians 8:5)

These Christians made good use of what had been given to them by God. Through the management of their resources they were able to take part in something that was important to them. More importantly, their response was greater than expected given the resources that they had. Christian stewardship calls us to use what God has given us as good managers of his gifts to us.

The heart of stewardship is God’s heart. These Macedonian believers certainly exhibited this quality. This is a lesson certainly to be taught in the classrooms of Lutheran day schools and also displayed by all those who are actively involved in this ministry. Students not only need to be taught what Christian Stewardship is, but they also need to learn it from parents, teachers, pastors and members of the congregation.

### **Motivation for Christian Stewardship**

#### **Thanksgiving for God’s love in Jesus Christ**

St. Paul writes, “And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and rose again.” (II Corinthians 5:15) Our lives are not lived for ourselves. Our Savior has given the greatest gift of all to us and because of that we are freed to live for him and others. In his book, A Theology of Christian Stewardship, T.

A. Kantonen states:

In Christian stewardship the nature of giving is derived solely from God’s own nature and from our relationship to him. All pride of achievement is ruled out by the acknowledgement: ‘Of thy own have we given thee.’ The behavior of God’s children is shaped by unconditioned and overflowing love of their Father who ‘makes his sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.’ This means

that they 'do good...expecting nothing in return.' Giving is supremely exemplified in God's gift of his Son and our Lord's complete giving of himself.<sup>75</sup>

A prime motivation for all Christian giving comes from what God has done first in the sending of Jesus into the world. Any other type of giving would be based what the individual does. The motivation would come from shaming or coercing instead of thankfulness. T. A.

Kantonen continues:

It is a joyful and spontaneous expression of gratitude for what God has given. 'God loves the cheerful giver,' not one who gives, 'reluctantly and under compulsion,' for God himself 'gives freely to all men generously and without reproaching.' Christian giving thus mirrors faithfully the nature of God and the nature of Christian stewardship.<sup>76</sup>

Because of its thankful nature, Christian stewardship is a joyful experience. This is God's desire for all giving, because of the way he has given to us.

The motivation for Christian stewardship can never be one of a forced nature, for then the response is limited. Appealing to the guilt of people or motivating from comparison with others is not the way that God desires. It really has everything to do with the nature of being a Christian. Out of thanks to God for all that he has done, Christians desire to honor him with their lives. St. Paul states: "For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord." (Romans 14:7-8)

Turner Clinard, a Presbyterian theologian, states in his book, Responding to God: "To be a Christian is to live a life of grateful response to the outpoured love and grace of God. When we live for Christ who died for us and not for ourselves alone, then Christ is the

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<sup>75</sup> Kantonen, 42.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

Lord of our lives.”<sup>77</sup> Our stewardship really begins with our response to God in thanksgiving and then moves forward from that point.

Turner Clinard also points out that until recently, stewardship was seen only as a doctrine of giving. He points out that it is “the total response of persons to God, receiving all of life as a trust, and living all life ‘as unto God.’” He reaffirms that point in quoting the Prophet Micah:

With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has showed you O man what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:6-8)

In stewardship it is not about what we give, but rather who we are and where we are in relationship to God. Clinard comments:

Micah’s point is that the right response to God is more than sacrifice, more than giving in any amount. For it is the whole life response which God seeks. Christian stewardship does not call for money but for the whole person, and it is impossible to enter into it fully apart from the total surrender of one’s life to Christ.<sup>78</sup>

The truth that Micah portrays is that our giving to God cannot be removed from ourselves. Christian stewardship is not about meeting requirements, but rather it is a heartfelt response to God in thanksgiving. Any other type of stewardship could be met by anyone regardless of his/her faith or lack of it. That is why giving of financial resources is but one part of Christian stewardship.

Helge Brattgard, a Lutheran theologian, makes the point that it is the idea of being a steward that deepens the Christian belief in creation. He states in God’s Stewards:

The fact that man was created to live on earth implies that he already stands in relationship to God. But man is most strongly tempted to escape his stewardship

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<sup>77</sup> Clinard, 23.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 92-93.



obligations, to make himself into a god, and thus place his time, property, and abilities at his own disposal. If he yields to this temptation, he will end up in idolatry. The First Commandment and The First Article are helpful at this point. They tell man that he is a steward, who for a brief time receives gifts from the sovereign Giver, in order that these, in gratitude and obedience, may be taken care of wisely, faithfully, and in the knowledge that an accounting will have to be given. But this stewardship cannot be isolated from salvation.<sup>79</sup>

Stewardship is really all about the effect of salvation in believers lives; our sanctification. As those redeemed by Christ, we are given a new attitude. We are enabled to live outside of ourselves and live out our lives in thankfulness for what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

### **Faith in God's providing for our needs**

In his explanation to the first article of the Apostles Creed in the Large Catechism, Martin Luther points out that in response to this article, we must live our lives as stewards. This acknowledges our total dependence upon God for all that we have. It is Jesus who says, "apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) Martin Luther says:

Hence, because everything we possess, and everything in heaven and on earth besides, is daily given, sustained, and protected by God, it inevitably follows that we are in duty bound to love, praise, and thank him without ceasing, and, in short, to devote all things to his service, as he has required and enjoined in the Ten Commandments.<sup>80</sup>

As we know of God's providing as a result of faith, in faith we also dedicate what we have been given to his service since it is his.

This calls for faith in God's providing. This is a lesson not only learned in the classrooms of Lutheran day schools with the instruction of students, but it is also a lesson to be learned and demonstrated in the operation and activities of the school. Lutheran theologian Paul Brattgard observes such faith:

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<sup>79</sup> Helge Brattgard. *God's Stewards*. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), 152.

<sup>80</sup> Kolb and Wengert, 433.

If this faith in God is lost, a person can no longer be a steward. We then lapse into idolatry, which is characterized by a mistrust in God, lovelessness to our neighbors, and slavery to the created things.<sup>81</sup>

A lack of faith in God would cause people to revert back to their own self-interests and looking at their lives only in terms of what they could see and experience.

In the practice of this stewardship there is a tension. It has to do with the meaning of faith. The Congregational Stewardship Workbook describes it in this way:

Though it is good to aim high, overly optimistic expectations almost always lead to frustration, dashed hopes and failed programs. (Stewardship leaders must) understand the subtle but crucial difference between trusting in God's goodness to meet legitimate needs and framing God as a sort of sugar daddy in the sky.<sup>82</sup>

This challenge can come before the Lutheran day school in terms of additional staffing, new programs, or the financing of new physical facilities. It calls for a faith that God can provide beyond what we can see. This is a subtle distinction.

As God provides for our every need, the greatest need has been met by the salvation that has been provided for us in Jesus Christ. One of the foundation stones of the Reformation is that this salvation is by faith alone. The Lutheran confessions clarify that faith is really never alone. Helge Brattgard states:

In the Lutheran confessions this connection between faith and works is stressed emphatically. Such words as 'assuredly', 'necessarily', 'shall', 'must', (*certe, necesse est, debet, oportet*) are used to express the necessary connection between faith and works.<sup>83</sup>

Because stewardship flows out of faith, it falls under the category of a good work. It is not something that the Christian does to gain salvation, but rather it is an evidence of faith, for only with faith can it be exercised.

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<sup>81</sup> Brattgard, 142-143.

<sup>82</sup> Congregational Stewardship Workbook. *Growing Christian Stewards.*, 6.

<sup>83</sup> Brattgard, 175.

Our faith in God's providing does call for a response from us. Christian stewardship is about trusting and acting. Writing in the introduction to his book, A Theology for Christian Stewardship, T. A. Kantonen summarizes:

What is this thing that you call stewardship? If it represents only clever means which practical-minded Americans have devised for raising money, interest in it soon subsides. But if it can shown to be vital Christian faith in action, revealing its power to transform all areas of life, then it raises the hope that here may be the beginning of a new awakening and renewal, a new coming of the Spirit. The fulfillment of this hope, both in America and elsewhere, demands a greater depth in our approach toward stewardship, an exploration of its full potentialities in the light of the theology of the Christian gospel.<sup>84</sup>

Such an attitude of stewardship invigorates the Lutheran day school environment. It does this by teaching in the classroom through application of faith in the lives of students. It is also important for them to realize that it is the same faith they see in their parents. This can give meaning to the response of stewardship for the growth of the congregation's faith life and activities.

### **Christian stewardship response**

#### **Equated with Christian living**

In Christian stewardship people meet their failures as well as the successes that God provides. It is sinful human nature to look to one's own needs first and then to the needs of others. The Law-Gospel emphasis brings our failures to mind, announces our forgiveness and brings about the new life, or Christian life, in us.

Stewardship consultant and author Waldo Werning says regarding the Law-Gospel message:

Proper stewardship response cannot be experienced apart from knowing the judgment of the Law for our failures and forgiveness of the Gospel for providing service to God. The struggles of the sanctified are won, and stewardship is made possible,

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<sup>84</sup> Kantonen, vii.

through God's judging Word (the Law), which reveals man's sinfulness, and through God's forgiving Word (the Gospel), which proclaims God's love and mercy for man's regeneration and sanctified life.<sup>85</sup>

Stewardship response comes from this entire message, but can only be produced in us by the Holy Spirit working through the Gospel. The Law clears the way and turns us away from ourselves and toward God and his desires for us as his children.

A response from God's people is definitely called for since exercising Christian stewardship does not come naturally to us. We learn stewardship from what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. T. A. Kantonen points out that in the life of Jesus Christ there was one fundamental theme and that was to follow the will of his Father. We are called to the very same response although we cannot perform perfectly as Jesus did. Kantonen says:

Quite simply he says, 'Follow me.' Stewardship is nothing but a wholehearted response to that word. Its constant aim is to translate Christian thought and Christian speech into Christian action. Its watchword is 'Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.' It therefore defines a Christian, not as one who believes what Christ taught, or even as one who believes in Christ, but as one who follows Christ in the obedience of faith.<sup>86</sup>

Christian stewardship certainly can be equated with Christian living, because that is what it is. People make comments and observations about Christians, and it usually is connected with their conduct. While Christians have full forgiveness of all sins, there is also a witness they give to others by their conduct. Jesus calls us to follow and our stewardship response is an important part of that response.

This path is not always easy to follow. It is that way because Christians are sinners living in a sinful world. If Christians are to respond to following Jesus, there is a matter of courage that is involved. Helge Brattgard sees this courage in this way:

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<sup>85</sup> Werning, 29..

<sup>86</sup> Kantonen, 103.

A notable feature of this stewardship courage is its openness to the world, to mankind. The death and resurrection in which man becomes involved through Baptism—and which are realized in his sanctification—are by no means isolated from the everyday life of the steward. Quite the opposite. Such a life is lived out there in the place of work, at home in the family circle, as well as in the many different situations made possible by leisure time. There it is that the service is carried out which presupposes the death of the ‘old man’ and the daily rising of the new. It is precisely in this position, cast out into the world, where he has been placed in order to share the gifts which he has received, that the steward finds himself more lonely and tested than he would be in any snug and protected spiritual circumstances.<sup>87</sup>

After receiving the good news and life given in the word, Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper, the steward does not keep these blessings to himself or herself. This is where the challenge comes in for the Christian. It is a challenge to students in Lutheran day schools as they leave the comfortable climate of school and for their parents, as well, in their respective callings. Yet the message of God’s love in Christ comforts and equips them for such service.

We live the Christian life as we practice Christian stewardship and respond to the message of the Gospel. T. A. Kantonen comments:

As stewards in the New Testament connotation we are ‘stewards of the manifold grace of God.’ The living center of our stewardship is Christ himself. It is a matter of our personal relationship to him, not the management of impersonal things according to impersonal codes and principles... Because we have also discovered that this Christ-centered message of the new life calls for more than analysis. It invites both its proclaimers and its hearers to the venture of faith. It asks us to entrust ourselves wholeheartedly to that Christ who is the living Word.<sup>88</sup>

As we entrust ourselves to the Lord, we have responded to his love for us and live our lives in service to him. This motivates all aspects of our Christian lives and stewardship.

### **Giving of Financial Resources**

As the subject of stewardship response is discussed, even today it is a common perception among Christians that the amount of money that they give is the issue at hand.

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<sup>87</sup> Brattgard, 174.

<sup>88</sup> Kantonen, 25.

Christian stewardship really has to do with all of life; it is a much larger picture. However, the financial stewardship of the Christian is important because it is part of life and worship. It is a very necessary part of the congregation and the Lutheran day school. Without money, the congregation and the day school cannot continue to provide ministry to the congregation and community.

Where does the practice of member tuition fit into the picture of giving in response to God's love for us in Jesus Christ? Is not the charging of tuition a function of the law as opposed to that of Gospel? Yet, the problem remains that costs continue to rise in day school operation. Health benefits are on the increase, as well as utility bills and rising textbook costs. A variety of extra-curricular activities associated with the day school are considered by parents as being necessary and desirable. Is it Biblically defensible to charge tuition to members of the congregation as a method of giving to the congregational and school budget?

Turner N. Clinard sees giving as a part of worship as well. Realizing that it is part of the overall stewardship picture, he notes that it is also an important part of worship:

Yet one other thing must be said. Christian giving is an act of worship. Sacrifices, first fruits, and the tithe in Old Testament times were not prescribed to answer the question, 'How much must I give?' but to make giving an act of worship. Worshipers did not come before God without an offering (Ex. 23:15; 34:20). Rather they brought their first and their best in appreciation and thanksgiving to God and a declaration of their trust in God's providential care. So they fulfilled the word of the proverb, 'Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase' (Prov. 3:9, KJV). Parenthetically, the Bill Joneses who come to worship without an offering will soon cease to come.<sup>89</sup>

King David understood this. After the plague God had sent upon Israel subsided, David went to sacrifice on the threshing floor of Araunah. Araunah offered the floor free of charge since David was his king. David refused the offer and said, "I will not sacrifice to the LORD my

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<sup>89</sup> Clinard, 101.

God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.”(II Samuel 24:24) David wanted to give his best to the Lord instead of holding back in his offering.

Since there are misconceptions about giving and the reasons why members of the congregation should give to the congregational budget and day school budget, the method and motivation are important. Waldo J. Werning poses the question of why we are to give:

Why are we to give? First and foremost, as we have discussed earlier, we are to give because of God’s great and unending love to us in the forgiveness of our sins through the sacrifice of our Savior Jesus Christ. There are other reasons why we give as a response of God’s grace (2 Cor. 8:7). Giving is an integral part of worship, and expression of thanksgiving to God (2 Cor. 9:12; Ps. 96:8) We give as a response to Christ, who gave himself for us (2 Cor. 8:9)<sup>90</sup>

As stewards, our fear of God or feelings of guilt about giving should not initiate our financial stewardship. It is motivated by the love that God has shown to us in our Savior Jesus Christ.

Giving to God really has to do with receiving. It is a matter of thanks to God for his blessings to us. Christians are besieged in other environments outside of the congregation to give. There are various needs in the community and around the world that plead for money. Many means are used to convince people that they ought to give to this fund or that appeal. The motivation is often sympathy for those less fortunate or an emotional call to stir feelings of guilt.

Writing in his book, Giving and Stewardship in an Effective Church, church consultant Kennon L. Callahan states:

The key to giving is receiving, for in receiving, we learn how to give. Many people receive generously and graciously, not because of who they are, but of Whose they are. They have received the graciousness and generosity of God’s love. Amidst the sacredness of life they have discovered the sacredness and generosity of receiving—and thus of giving.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Werning, 115.

<sup>91</sup> Kennon L. Callahan. *Giving and Stewardship in an Effective Church*. (San Francisco: Harper-Collins Publishers, 1992), 114.

This is the New Testament concept of financial stewardship. It is not so much a legal requirement as it is a response to blessings received. There is no set amount to be given; it is a response of a grateful heart. Because of this concept, there is a challenge involved for members of Lutheran congregations today. It calls for examination of our blessings received from God. There is no set formula for our giving, but rather with thankful hearts we are called to give freely and generously. Because there is this freedom, the tendency on the part of some people is to limit their generosity.

The Old Testament concept was the tithe, or ten percent. This is still a guide that is used by many Christians today. Waldo J. Werning makes this observation regarding the tithe:

Tithing is a commendable practice, but it must be handled carefully, since it has no specific New Testament sanction. It cannot be urged on others as the will of God for them, but must be sought by a person on his own initiative. The tithe is not man's real problem; the real problem has to do with putting God first and giving generously. God's grace is operative in all of this to give the faith to go far beyond ten percent.<sup>92</sup>

Actually, even the tithe took into consideration the larger picture of the Old Testament believer's life. There were also first fruits offerings, freewill offerings and animal sacrifices.

Werning also points out that this giving has more to do with attitude than action:

God is extremely concerned about the attitude of the giver and the tither, for He does not want our sacrifices alone, but our love and obedience in total service to God and man (Hos. 6:6; Is. 1:11-13; Mic. 6:6-8; Hag. 2:14; Matt 23:23-25; Luke 11:42; 2 Cor. 9:3-5,7)... What becomes of Christian growth and sanctification when we tag everyone's faith at ten percent? Some may have only four percent faith, if it could be known, and it would be very harmful to load their consciences with the force of a law which says they must give ten percent. Such people need to start where their faith is and then grow beyond ten percent as God gives grace.<sup>93</sup>

It is because of these reasons that the attitude of giving is so important. As people are encouraged to grow in their financial stewardship, it is important for them to understand who

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<sup>92</sup> Werning, 123.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 122.



makes this growth possible.

Our financial stewardship is a cheerful response as St. Paul says in II Corinthians 9:7: “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves the cheerful giver.” The Lutheran confessions emphasize this in the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord:

In this sense and meaning it is right to say and teach that those whom the Son of God has freed to do good works freely or from a free and willing spirit. Chiefly on the basis of this interpretation some conducted a discussion on the spontaneity of good works.<sup>94</sup>

Good works, whether financial stewardship or other God-pleasing actions, are not contemplated or forced but flow out of faith and are done according to one’s faith and the grace of God that has been experienced.

An additional opportunity is present in Lutheran congregations operating day schools. In past years it was assumed that congregations would each operate a day school and assume the cost of operation. Today twenty two percent of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregations operate day schools.<sup>95</sup>

Where does the charging of tuition fit into the overall Biblical picture of giving to support the operation of the day school? Certainly something could be said about the support of the teachers in the day school. In the Old Testament, the Israelites were to set aside a tithe for the support of the Levites who gave themselves to serve in the Temple. The book of Numbers records: “I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting.” (Numbers 18:21) The Levites received no other inheritance in Israel but what was given them through the tithes of the

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<sup>94</sup> Kolb and Wengert, 577.

<sup>95</sup> Moser, 14.

people. Tuition, while it is a required amount, is a sum agreed upon for the joint support of teachers and the operation of the day school.

Neil Sandfordt, former Education Executive of the Nebraska District, in his book Tuition states that he was previously opposed to the assessing of member tuition for day school funding. He states:

It is time to rethink the premises of school funding. If, however, any plan we develop either violates the mission of the Church or ignores biblical stewardship principles, I believe that we are building our plan on an unsound foundation, and the long-term effects will be negative.<sup>96</sup>

It would seem from this comment and the experience of these schools that a combined approach is needed. Tuition cannot be the only answer to the funding problem of Lutheran schools.

Previously, Neil Sandfordt believed that congregations should provide for the financial support of their schools and not place the responsibility upon parents of students. He based that upon such passages as Leviticus 27:30-33 and Malachi 3:8-10 that supported the Biblical concept of tithing; returning to the Lord proportionately (I Corinthians 16:2 and Luke 12:48b); and also with the response of generous giving as St. Paul mentions in II Corinthians 9:6.

What changed his mind were the changing attitudes and practices of congregations. Some of the changes included deficits that continued from year to year, as well as a decreasing number of people bearing the financial burden. Traditionally congregational offerings covered the cost of day school operation, today this has become a greater challenge and a new approach for funding is needed. In his mind, he came to the conclusion that this approach must also include tuition for member parents if the school is to remain properly

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<sup>96</sup> Neil Sandfordt. *Tuition*. (St. Louis: Department of School Ministry, 1999), 1.

supported today. The implementation of tuition is not a substitute for support by congregational offerings. Both support through congregational offerings and member tuition are needed for successful day school funding today.<sup>97</sup> I agree with Sandfordt's observations for school funding. I don't believe that we can only depend upon congregational contributions to fund the operation of our day schools. With rising costs for education, changing attitudes, as well as escalating expenses through insurance and utilities, member tuition must be a part of the total funding package for Trinity Lutheran School and other Lutheran day schools today.

The Congregational Stewardship Workbook, in the booklet *Financing Lutheran Schools* points out this responsibility:

Lutheran schools usually require tuition because of a relatively higher than public direct cost of (Lutheran school) education. These congregations find that parents are willing to help provide for this Christian education through tuition. In this way, congregations can provide Christian education that would be cost prohibitive for the congregation alone.<sup>98</sup>

Because congregations struggle with financial stewardship and day school operation, various congregations use varying levels of tuition payment for both members of the congregation and community. Regardless of congregational approaches toward school operation, it is important to see this approach not only as a requirement for day school funding but also the exercise of financial stewardship.

In all of this, the tension exists between "fund-raising" or causing people to grow in their financial stewardship and overall Christian stewardship. The booklet, "Growing Christian Stewards" summarizes:

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Congregational Stewardship Workbook. *Financing Lutheran Schools.*, 3.

If you see your work as forming people who will manage their lives for God's purposes, then you will focus on the spiritual growth of people so they will live under Jesus Christ in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness.<sup>99</sup>

The Lutheran day school, as part of the larger congregation, is in need of the ongoing Christian stewardship of the members of the congregation. Finances play a very important part in this endeavor, but it is the entire stewardship life of the congregation that is ultimately important for its operation, maintenance and growth.

As this project began, Trinity Lutheran Church charged no tuition to member families with students in its day school. In June of 2002, tuition was instituted to assist in the operation of Trinity Lutheran School. While traditionally day schools were operated from congregational support alone, today it is Biblically defensible to charge tuition for support of the school and also as a means of encouraging sound financial stewardship in the life of the congregation.

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<sup>99</sup> *Growing Christian Stewards.*, 9.

## CHAPTER 4 PROJECT DESIGN

This project is designed to study the most effective way for Trinity Lutheran Church of Springfield, Illinois to fund the operation of its day school. Over its extensive history, Trinity Lutheran School has operated with expenses being assumed by the congregational budget for congregational members. A tuition has been charged to those students whose families were not members of Trinity.

While this has been the practice of many Lutheran day schools throughout the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, recently there has been a change. As the operation of day schools occupies larger portions of congregational budgets, congregations have changed their philosophy regarding the payment of tuition by member families. Some have seen the assessment of member-tuition as a viable option so that the quality of their day school could be maintained, as well as providing for other school expenses, especially adequate salaries for the school administration and teaching staff.

At the beginning of this project, Trinity Lutheran Church charged no tuition to congregational members. This project was initiated to study the subject of Lutheran day schools and financial stewardship in order to evaluate the policy of the congregation by means of comparing it with other schools and congregations of similar size. At the time of the initiation of the project, the other three Lutheran day schools in Springfield, Illinois charged tuition to members of the congregation.

In order to do this, the first step was to research the purposes of Lutheran day schools as they applied to Trinity Lutheran School. Biblical and Confessional principles of Christian stewardship as they related to the Lutheran day school were also examined. In order to fairly evaluate the practice of Trinity Lutheran Church regarding day school funding, twenty-two

(22) Lutheran day schools throughout the Midwest that were similar in size to Trinity were surveyed. A response was received from ten (10) schools, a forty-five percent response rate.

The method of surveying used was to send typed surveys (Appendix A) to the administrators of the selected day schools accompanied by a cover letter explaining this project. After several days, follow-up phone calls were made soliciting participation in the project. Follow-up conversations to elaborate on submitted information were conducted as needed. The following day schools are included in the evaluation of this project:

St. Paul's Lutheran School  
St. Philip Lutheran School  
St. John Lutheran School  
St. Paul's Lutheran School  
Immanuel Lutheran School  
St. John Lutheran School  
Holy Cross Lutheran School  
Redeemer Lutheran School  
Messiah Lutheran School  
Salem Lutheran School

Munster, Indiana  
Chicago, Illinois  
Rochester, Michigan  
Des Peres, Missouri  
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin  
Champaign, Illinois  
Wichita, Kansas  
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio  
Independence, Missouri  
Affton, Missouri

By examination of these day schools, I will attempt to make application to the funding practice of Trinity Lutheran Church and the operation of Trinity Lutheran School.

## CHAPTER 5 ANALYSIS OF DATA GATHERED FROM SURVEYS

### **Size of the Congregational Membership**

In order to analyze the funding of the operation of Trinity Lutheran School, ten day schools of similar size were examined through a survey sent to administrators of these day schools. In addition to size, a second qualification of these day schools was that they were situated in the Midwest, since cost of operation for these schools would be similar to those of Trinity.

An important part of the analysis of school cost of operation is the size of the congregation. If the congregation is larger in size, then a case could be made that it could more effectively fund the operation of the day school. The larger the membership of the congregation would logically imply that more people could be involved in funding the operation of the day school via contributions.

The congregations that were surveyed averaged 1,760 in baptized membership and 1,306 in communicant membership, compared to Trinity at 1,800 baptized and 1,350 communicant members (Appendix B). The size of the congregations varied in baptized membership from 789 to 2,809. The day schools ranged in enrollment from 165 students to 423 students, with an average of 245, compared to Trinity at 220 students. The respondents provide a good comparison to Trinity when average size is considered..

A large spread is evident when worship attendance is tracked. A spread of some 900 attendees is noted with the lowest average worship attendance being 157 and the highest being 1,068. The average attendance of 666 per service compares with Trinity's average of 650. Traditionally it was assumed that the congregation could bear the cost of day school

operation as part of its normal budget. This was assumed because the day school was considered to be part of the ministry of the congregation and was not something that was paid for by member families utilizing the school. As shall be shown through this survey, there has been a shift in that attitude.

### **Congregational Revenue and Expenses**

At the center of the question of day school funding is the financial picture of the supporting congregation. When congregations experience a large difference between what they receive and what they spend, solutions to compensate for the difference are sought from various sources. One way to compensate is increased voluntary financial contributions. Another solution may come from services that are provided by the congregation, such as a day care operation. Into this equation enters the question of day school tuition for members or an increase of tuition if the congregation already has member tuition.

Six of the ten sponsoring congregations had revenue that exceeded the expenses of the congregation. In the case of these congregations, it appears that the financial operation of the day school does not seriously affect the total financial picture of the congregation. The income revenue for these congregations ranges from \$941,100 to \$3,552,472. Expenses of these same congregations ranged from \$930,000 to \$3,114,436. On the average, these congregations had a differential of \$257,000 revenue over expenses. Since all but one of these schools has an enrollment of 200 or more students, one may assume there is some financial apparatus in place that prevents these congregations from operating with a deficit budget. The average revenue for all ten schools surveyed is \$1,867,638 while the average in expenses is \$1,771,521.



If a congregation operates a day school, it may be assumed that the school operation and funding will consume a fair share of the congregational budget. The exception to this might be if a large percentage of the student body is comprised of non-member children and are paying a higher tuition than member families. Virtually all of the schools surveyed, except St. Paul, Des Peres, Missouri, had non-member families far exceeding Trinity's 22 families. The average number was 102 non-member families. This can translate into an enormous difference in school revenue.

As the balance between revenue and expense of these congregations is considered, an important consideration is the amount of expenses that are attributable to the operation of the day school as well as any revenue it may generate.

### **School Revenue and Expenses**

In his monograph, Hearts and Treasures: A Design for the Study and Improvement of Financial Support for Lutheran Schools, former Nebraska District Education Executive Neil Sandfort states regarding the funding of Lutheran day schools: "The annual cost of educating a child in a Lutheran elementary has increased from \$600 to \$2,600 in just 20 years."<sup>100</sup> This speaks to the changing nature of funding Lutheran day school operations in congregations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

On the average, the ten schools surveyed accounted for almost sixty percent of each congregation's expenses (59.90%). Six of the ten schools were over this average with the highest percentage being 78.77 percent. The lowest of the ten schools was 34.70 percent. The difference in these figures could be due to the amount of tuition charged to members or a larger percentage of the student population in the day school coming from outside the

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<sup>100</sup> Sandfort, 1.

congregation. In addition, the percentages may be affected by the method used for allocating building mortgage payments. In the case of the lowest expense percentage figure, the day school has an enrollment of non-member children at ten percent of the total day school population. Tuition for non-members is over two times that charged to members of the congregation, a difference of \$2,600. In the case of the day school receiving the highest percentage of the congregational budget, non-member students total forty percent of the total enrollment, but there is only a \$1,100 difference between tuition for members and non-members.

The revenue generated by the ten schools ranged from \$557,628 to \$2,146,328. In the case of the largest total, it comprised 60 percent of the congregation's total revenue. Tuition is not the only means that the ten day schools used in accumulating revenue toward the congregational budgets. On the average, tuition accounted for 32.32 percent of the total revenue generated by the day schools. In addition to tuition, several of the schools contributed revenue through capital campaigns. Other fees and revenue programs contributed an average of 7.5 percent to the total of day school revenue in each of the ten congregations.

### **Implementation of Member Tuition**

Member tuition has been the greatest change in the last twenty years in Lutheran day schools for several reasons. As mentioned earlier, costs have escalated during this time period. Increasing salaries and benefit costs certainly figure into this equation, but another factor has been the level of giving in congregations that operate day schools. Neil Sandfort, stated in 1999 regarding this change:

Twenty years ago, 70 percent of average school budgets came from congregational support. Today, about half comes from the congregation. The percent of schools that charge member tuition has grown steadily—61 percent in 1997-98. On the average,

tuition now covers 48 percent of elementary school budgets, while 45 percent comes from the congregation and the remaining 7 percent comes from a variety of other sources.<sup>101</sup>

These figures quoted by Sandfort point out that while many congregations may believe that the day school is a ministry provided by the congregation, a change in funding philosophy has developed. A congregation may feel that it is proper for the day school to be funded by members of the congregation. However, in order for the congregation to maintain a day school today, help from member parents in the form of tuition is increasing.

All of the schools surveyed charged tuition to members with the exception of one school, and that school was giving serious consideration to implementing tuition to its membership. The rate in tuition charged by these nine day schools ranged from \$690 to \$2,556 for one child. Some of these day schools had separate rates for first, second, and third children. Two of the schools did not charge per child, but rather per family. In that case it does not matter how many children are enrolled in the day school because the one family rate covers them all.

One of the criticisms made of congregations charging tuition to members with children in the day school is that once tuition is instituted there is a continual rise in the amount charged. Some see this increase as being a natural progression once tuition is instituted for the membership of the congregation. On the average, the nine day schools with tuition have increased member tuition at the rate of 14.17 percent annually. It has not been the same with non-member tuition as that has been raised 7.05 percent on the average annually. This may be due to the fact that the amount of tuition charged to non-members was considered to be large enough. Non-member tuition in all schools surveyed ranged from

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

\$2,300 to \$4,576.

Four of the nine congregations surveyed who charge tuition to members have instituted tuition since 1997. This speaks to the fact that this is a recent trend in these sample congregations that operate day schools. While congregational members may be philosophically opposed to tuition, they also recognize that this is the reality of the situation of funding day school operation today. Neil Sandfort states:

For many years I have been an outspoken critic of charging member tuition. I have been troubled by the concept of congregations shifting the financial responsibility for making disciples through Lutheran schools from the congregation to member parents. The words of Jesus in Matthew 6:19-21 trouble my conscience when I compare the benefits of member tuition with the disciple-making mission of Lutheran schools: 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also.'<sup>102</sup>

Yet, he goes on to say that while Biblical stewardship education is important in this process, it cannot be the only component of day school funding.

### **Other Funding Solutions**

While the trend in funding of day schools has recently moved towards tuition, schools are assisting that method of funding with other solutions as well. Two of the day schools conducted capital funding drives that brought in \$24,148 and \$120,000. Both of these day schools do this on an annual (not every three years) basis. Five of the schools were also funded by endowments and bequests. One of these was as large as \$75,423, while the smallest was \$2,168. On the average, all the day schools raised 7.5% of their funds through other revenue sources.

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

These schools use various means to supplement their income. One school nets \$16,000 per year by is called a “jog-a-thon.” A number of the schools are involved in matching funds programs with Thrivent. Other avenues for fund raising were golf tournaments, auctions, garage sales, and a bike-a-thon. Day schools are looking for creative ways to provide for funding of their operation, generating funds that are not required to be covered by contributions and tuition. The question that needs to be raised is: Can these methods replace the funding vehicle of member tuition? There does not appear to be a clear answer on that question. It does not appear to be an “either-or” but rather a “both-and.”

One consideration mentioned by a least one principal is the idea of funding a director of development or someone on staff who gives considerable time to fund raising for the operation of the school. Some Lutheran high schools have them, which raises the question, why not day schools as well? Another principal stated that because of expanding ministries of congregations, third source funding would be inevitable, and in larger day schools such a position may soon become a reality. One of the schools has also entered into a relationship with a fund raising organization that is teaching the school administration the process of grant writing.

As these day schools are analyzed, it is clear that in most cases member tuition has been needed to aid the funding operations of these day schools. It should be stressed that it is necessary for congregations to continue biblical stewardship education to aid this process. While we live in a society that believes people pay for services rendered, this cannot be the only solution to the funding of day school operation in congregations but part of the total funding solution.

## CHAPTER 6 ANALYSIS OF DATA GATHERED FROM TRINITY LEADERS

In order to evaluate the financial stewardship implications of day school operation, three leaders or associates were chosen from Trinity Lutheran congregation. The three leaders were Lewis Rodgers, principal; Adrian Harless, chairman of the Board of Christian Day School; and Edward Schoenbaum, member of the Board of Christian Day School. The Board of Christian Day School oversees the operation of Trinity Lutheran School.

Each associate was interviewed with identical questions that examined the financial situation present in Trinity Lutheran Church and the role of Trinity Lutheran School in this financial picture. Consideration was given to the recent implementation of member tuition and its effect upon both the day school and the congregation. Solutions were also examined that might improve the financial outlook of the congregation and the future of Trinity Lutheran School. Associates were asked the following questions:

1. *What are your thoughts as to why Trinity is having such a difficult time financially? What role does the school play in this regard?*

Over the last several years, Trinity Lutheran Church has submitted a deficit budget to the voters' assembly in the annual meetings of the congregation. In some years the projected deficit has been as high as \$100,000. Participants were asked to analyze that shortfall.

Reasons given by the associates were the rising costs of health insurance for employees and utilities and that the giving of the congregation has not kept pace with the economic factors. During the last several years there has also been a decrease in congregational membership, as well as a declining enrollment at the day school. It was mentioned by one of the participants

that the membership of the congregation is not fully aware of the day school's operational costs.

Because of these financial difficulties, a tension has developed between day school families and non-day school families. Because the congregation provides a service that is used by the members of the congregation, the financial stewardship of day school families has been questioned. Because of this, it was the opinion of one of the associates that member tuition served as a scape-goat for the financial difficulties of the congregation.

Trinity congregation has maintained a philosophy that the day school education should be provided for by the congregation. There is a strong sentiment for this throughout the congregation and especially the faculty who believe that assessing a tuition from member families takes the day school from the realm of being a parochial school to the realm of becoming a private school.

Salaries make up a majority of day school costs in the congregational budget. The day school costs make up approximately seventy per cent of the congregational budget. While this is a large percentage, the day school was viewed by the participants in this interview as having a positive effect on the congregation.

2. *Trinity instituted tuition in the school year 2002-2003. What are your thoughts as to the institution of tuition as a means of helping relieve the financial burden the congregation is currently experiencing? What long-term effect will this have on the operation of Trinity Lutheran School in your opinion?*

In the summer of 2002, member tuition was passed by the voters assembly of Trinity Lutheran Church. It was agreed that rather than assess a tuition per student, a family tuition

would be instituted. The congregation's reasoning was that since congregational offerings were based upon the family unit, tuition should follow the same pattern.

There were several concerns that surfaced with the institution of tuition: 1) How many families would be lost because of tuition and 2) If members of the congregation were being charged a tuition, would they have different expectations of the day school? Since tuition began in September of 2002, neither one of these concerns has been realized. No students have been lost because of parents' concern that they could not afford the increase in cost. It was the consensus of the three participants that member tuition interfered with the mission of the day school, but they accepted it as a decision of the congregation and as a way of life today. However, they did see a potential for problems in the future.

It was their opinion that tuition could not take the place of financial stewardship education. They were concerned that tuition would be seen as the solution for financial difficulties in the future. One of them termed the institution of tuition as a "slippery slope". The idea of the "slippery slope" is that once it is begun, where does it stop? As member tuition increases, then the scenario exists that there could one day be little difference in the tuition between members and non-members. One of the associates also termed the institution of tuition as a dangerous economic tool.

When tuition was instituted in 2002, it was the decision of the voters' assembly that the rate of \$750 per family would remain in effect for two years. During the third school year it was raised to \$900 and again the decision was reached to keep it at the same level for the next two years. It was the opinion of the associates that if tuition increases were gradual and reasonable, then the long-term effect would be positive rather than negative. An important



part of this process would be the education of the congregation, as well as comparative costs with other Lutheran day schools in the area.

3. *The tuition was set in 2002 at \$750 per family and remained at that level for two years. In the last school year, tuition has been raised to \$900 per family, still far below the average member family tuition level of \$2,000 of Lutheran day schools similar in size to Trinity. What would be the benefits you could see from an increased tuition? What problems do you see with an increase?*

It was the consensus of the participants that there should not be a great increase in the member tuition presently charged at Trinity. They overwhelmingly saw problems as opposed to benefits with an increase in tuition. The potential benefits the associates saw were an immediate increase in revenue for the day school and the congregation. One of the associates saw this as a benefit if the educational achievements of the school would be promoted. If the tuition for member families were to be increased it would be deemed as an easier way of controlling costs according to one of the associates. He reasoned that if that were the case then money could be available for other ministries in the congregation.

Questions were raised as to what effect this increase would have upon the families of the congregation. One concern was that this increase could drive families away from the school and the congregation. A related concern was that many families might not even consider Trinity Lutheran School if they deemed the tuition to be too high for them to afford. In that case, the associate reasoned, the congregation could face an unrealized loss of potential school families. Another question that he raised was whether the amount of money given in tuition would replace giving to the congregation.

Underlying all of these concerns was a conflict with the congregation's philosophy regarding a Lutheran day school education. It was feared that the ministry and extension of the church could be replaced with a "pay as you go" philosophy. If that were the case, then in the opinion of the associates, the possibility of a private school mentality might arise, as opposed to the congregation's current position that the school is a mission outreach.

4. *Trinity has a student body that consists of over eighty per cent members of the congregation. Currently there are twenty-two non-member families. The survey of ten others schools indicated an average non-member proportion of approximately thirty five per cent. Why do you feel Trinity's non-member proportion is lower than these other schools? How would you explain this in light of the additional fact that Trinity's tuition appears lower in comparison to these same surveyed schools? What do you think could be done to bring in other non-member student families?*

Associates of this project saw several reasons for the high percentage of school families that hold membership in Trinity Lutheran Church. One reason given was that it is considered a closed system. It is perceived as a day school provided for the membership of the congregation only. Families of the neighborhood do not see Trinity Lutheran School as an option to public education. Part of the reason was also seen as a natural progression: A family chooses the day school for its education. They have no church home and therefore join Trinity because they like what the congregation provides through the day school.

The addition of the Trinity Learning Center has changed the make-up of the lower grades at Trinity Lutheran School. There are greater number of students in these grades that are not members of the congregation. Trinity Learning Center is an all day long, all year long

early childhood education center for three and four year olds. Many of the families making use of the Learning Center are not members of Trinity Lutheran Church.

Another reason that was cited was that in comparison with other Lutheran day schools in the city, Trinity has the lowest tuition rate for member families. Trinity Lutheran School has a long-standing tradition in educational excellence and thus serves as a draw for families and their affiliation with the congregation. The day school is centrally located in Springfield, and, therefore, is a convenience for working families whose employment is in the downtown area. Trinity also has a history of intergenerational attendance at the day school.

Advertising the day school to the neighborhood and community is something that needs to be done in the minds of all three associates. This is because enrollment at Trinity is not as inviting as it could be to families in the neighborhood. Because of this fact, it was thought that methods of promoting the day school would be helpful to the addition of more non-member families.

Recently, the day school has done more in the area of advertising on radio. Several public relations approaches have been made. Families who are members of sister Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregations with no parochial school have received discounts on tuition. The same is true for families of pastors of sister congregations. In the last year more mailings have been sent out to the neighborhood and community. At both Christmas and Easter, congregationally produced CD's have been sent out to both members and households in the community. These CD's contained Scripture readings and hymns plus an invitation to the congregation and its worship services. As part of this promotion, information regarding the day school is included inviting those listening to inquire about the school.

5. *Several of the day schools surveyed reported significant amounts of “other program revenue” and “other revenue sources”. Trinity has started the Learning Center as an example of one of the other revenue programs. What are your thoughts as to other events/programs that could be held to increase revenue for the school/congregation?*

As associates gave their input to the final interview question, responses were given that could be termed first and second tier revenue sources and programs. The primary sources would be methods that would produce revenue for both the day school and the congregation. The second tier would be events that would bring people into contact with the day school and its facilities.

A number of fund raising options were suggested by the associates of the project. Several suggestions were made regarding appeals to graduates of Trinity Lutheran School and their families. The idea of foundations, booster clubs and appeal to businesses were also suggested.

Second tier suggestions that were made included making better use of the Parish Hall at the day school location for community events. In its four years of operation, several city meetings have been held there as well as church related activities involving membership from sister congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in Springfield as well as throughout the Central Illinois District area. A suggestion was made for outreach of families with young children ages birth to three years as well as expansion of Sunday School and Vacation Bible School outreach.

While all three associates supported the congregation’s decision to implement member tuition, it was felt that tuition could not be the only answer for funding the operation

of Trinity Lutheran School. One associate, who is active in the public education sector, stated that money was available for the asking. He believed that it was a hurdle that the congregation needed to overcome in its fund raising efforts. As people give to needs, the importance of a solid Christian education as provided by Trinity Lutheran School would have a definite appeal.

## CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRINITY

### **The role of the Lutheran day school in the congregation**

Throughout the history of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the day school has played a vital role in the life and growth of congregations. At the beginning of its history, it was considered so important that each new congregation was also encouraged to operate a day school. Today only 1,031 congregations operate day schools. This is due to costs, size of congregational membership, and other factors. However, that number has been on the rise in the last decade.

The operation of Trinity Lutheran day school has played an important part in the life of Trinity congregation. Trinity Lutheran Church was established in 1841 and the day school in 1860. Many present and past members of Trinity Lutheran Church, as well as people in the Springfield community, have benefited from the education that Trinity Lutheran Church has provided for its membership and the community. Like other Lutheran day schools, Trinity faces the financial crunch that affects the operation of its school.

Trinity Lutheran Church has traditionally held to the philosophy that a Lutheran day school education was a ministry of the congregation. It was provided for the membership of the congregation and for families in the Springfield community. In June of 2002, after much discussion throughout the congregation, a family tuition was implemented as a partial solution to the financial shortfall in Trinity congregation.

## **Financial challenges facing Lutheran day schools**

When Trinity implemented its first tuition in 2002, it became the last of four Lutheran day schools in Springfield to do so. Operating under the philosophy that a Christian education was something that should be provided rather than paid for by families who desired the education provided by Trinity Lutheran School, no member tuition had been assessed at that point. While the congregation had a desire to maintain that position, it also realized that action was necessary to reduce the financial shortfall in the overall budget, without cutting educational quality or congregational services.

There are several factors that contribute to the financial shortfalls experienced by congregations operating Lutheran day schools. In recent years insurance costs for employees have continued to rise by double-digit percentages, as well as the cost of utilities. It is difficult for congregations to compensate for that increase through offerings, since these costs have risen steadily. Lutheran day school teachers are trained professional educators who should be fairly compensated for their work. The Apostle Paul's words speak to this issue when he says, "The worker deserves his wages." (I Timothy 5:18) Congregations that operate Lutheran day schools have a responsibility to provide adequately for their workers rather than allowing low salaries to supplement the funding of day school operation.

Given this challenge of financial shortfall, two solutions suggest themselves for consideration. One of them is to improve financial stewardship in the congregation. Over the last four years, the Board of Christian Stewardship has engaged in a conscious campaign in educating the membership of Trinity Lutheran Church on Biblical Stewardship principles. It has done this through articles in the newsletter and bulletin. The pastors have been encouraged to make the connection between Biblical texts and their application to the larger

picture of Christian Stewardship. Quarterly letters have been mailed to the entire congregation reminding them of God's blessings to them and that stewardship encompasses more than offerings, but that it is all of life as the child of God.

The Board of Stewardship has been active in analyzing the decreasing worship attendance in recent years in order to bring this reality to the leadership of the congregation. It has made suggestions for improvement in this area of congregational life and developed a telephone committee for the purpose of calling members who have become infrequent in their worship attendance. In addition to the regularly appointed members of the committee, volunteers have been enlisted to help in the area of stewardship for the entire congregation. Two years ago a detailed survey was taken of the congregation regarding what members perceived as the strengths and weaknesses of the congregation. This has all been initiated to develop a continual emphasis of stewardship that touches the entire life of members of the congregation. Flowing from that educational process is also an encouragement for financial stewardship based upon God's providing for members of Trinity congregation.

The other solution is to provide for additional revenue through various means within the congregation. Many times this is accomplished through implementation of tuition or the increasing of an already existing tuition. The periodical, Lutheran School Funding Models, gives examples of eleven day schools ranging from a day school that assesses no tuition to one that has all its costs covered by tuition and fees.<sup>103</sup> Tuition certainly cannot be seen as the only method to meet financial challenges, for there are other means of funding. In recent years tuition paid by member families has become more customary.

It was because of this concern that the first tuition for member families of Trinity

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<sup>103</sup> *Lutheran School Funding Models*. Carl Moser, editor. (St. Louis: Board for Congregational Services, 1996)



Lutheran School began in the year 2002. The congregation and leadership continues to maintain a traditional approach toward day school funding, with the understanding that a minimal tuition is necessary in order to fund the operation of a quality Lutheran day school education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Recommendations for Trinity Lutheran Church**

As this project was started, Trinity Lutheran Church was deeply involved in the discussion as to whether it should maintain its traditional practice of charging no tuition to the membership of the congregation. After much discussion, a compromise was raised. Rather than charging a tuition assessed for each child, tuition was charged to the family unit. That tuition was locked in for two years and recently raised for the same period of time. While this tuition has helped the financial shortfall somewhat, the congregation continues to experience financial difficulties.

As the ten schools were compared with Trinity Lutheran School, there were initially nine of the ten that assessed a member tuition. Since the initial research, the tenth day school has since implemented tuition for members. In comparing Trinity Lutheran School's present annual tuition rate of \$900 per family unit, it is significantly lower than the average \$2,000 charged by the other day schools of comparable size. My first recommendation is for the congregation to study this as it assesses further tuition increases.

In the past it was thought that congregations sacrificed mission for the implementation of tuition. In the last decade there has been an attitude change in Lutheran day schools. Those who previously opposed tuition for members have accepted it as a fact of life in the day school. Therefore it cannot be automatically assumed that day schools are no longer interested in mission when they assess tuition to members.

In an even greater way, I believe that Trinity must look at other means of funding in addition to tuition. Five of the day schools surveyed have used other means to raise revenue to aid in financial operation of their day school operation. One day school operates a jog-a-thon that nets \$16,000+ annually. Other day schools use garage sales, auctions, trivia nights, and serve concessions at major league ballparks. A certain amount of fund raising has traditionally happened within the school.

Other, more long-term, solutions should also be sought. Trinity has established a Foundation for the purpose of building a base for a solid financial future for the congregation. The leadership of the congregation should look to expanding knowledge of the Foundation and its ability to assist in estate planning and better utilization of bequest funds. The congregation is blessed with members with varied gifts. Members include attorneys, financial planners, accountants, not-for-profit managers who are trained in grant writing that can assist in developing long-term strategic plans.

As Trinity considers strategies toward meeting budgetary shortfalls, it is important that a variety of methods would be employed. Trinity's professional staff is presently paid below Central Illinois District salary guidelines. In the past, both the Board of Christian Day School, that oversees day school operation, and the voters assembly have set goals to raise salaries, but has had difficulties attaining those goals. I believe that one of the financial goals of the congregation should be to raise salaries to an acceptable level and fund operation of the day school through other means.

Foundational to any discussion of funding needs to be a sound approach of Biblical financial stewardship. In recent years the Board of Christian Stewardship has begun an active educational process termed "Whole Life Stewardship". This is an educational process that

needs to continue for the entire life of the congregation, not just day school operation.

Through this process, the members of Trinity Lutheran Church are taught to understand that stewardship is not only what is given financially, rather it is a way of life. As this is continued, growth in faith and financial stewardship response can continue to be an active part of the life of Trinity Lutheran Church under God's providing.

**APPENDIX A**  
**SURVEY**

**Lutheran Day School Survey**  
**Rev. Thomas G. Radtke**

School Name \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_  
 Survey Completed By: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

1. The following congregational information should be completed using 2002 (or last fiscal year) data.

Total congregation baptized membership	
Total communicant membership	
Total contributions for 2002	
Average weekly worship attendance for 2002	
Total actual revenues	
Total actual expenses	

2. Breakdown of revenue attributable to the school (using 2002 or last fiscal year data):

Congregational Funding	\$
Tuition	\$
Capital Funding Drive	\$
Other Fees assessed (registration, book fees, sports, etc.)	\$
Other Programs (extended care, lunch program, etc)	\$
Endowments & Bequests	\$
Other Revenue sources (identify: _____ )	\$
Other Revenue sources (identify: _____ )	\$
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$</b>

3. Breakdown of expenses attributable to the school (using 2002 or last fiscal year data):

Administrative (Principal, secretarial) salaries & benefits	\$
Faculty expense (salaries & benefits)	\$
Mortgage payments or rent	\$
Building expense-Utilities/Trash/Supplies/Repairs	\$
Telephone/Internet	\$
Educational supplies/books/equipment/sports	\$
Faculty development	\$
Other expenses	\$
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$</b>

**Lutheran Day School Survey**

4. For the tuition listed above, what was the charge for members vs. non-members for the last completed school year and how many non-members were enrolled last year?

Members      \$ \_\_\_\_\_      Non-members      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

How many non-members were enrolled that paid tuition?    # \_\_\_\_\_

Are there requirements for members to receive a Member Tuition Rate?

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5. Have you made changes since the 2001-2002 school year to your tuition/fee schedule? If so, how has it changed?

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6. Do you have a regular capital funding drive specifically for the school?

Yes       No

How often do you initiate these funding drives and what period do they generally cover (i.e.-three years, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Do you have any other major sources of funding that would be of interest to other congregations?

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8. Do you have a development officer or anyone on staff that has the duties of a development officer? If so, what are their responsibilities.

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**Lutheran Day School Survey**

The following two questions are for schools charging tuition:

9. When was tuition instituted? Year-\_\_\_\_\_
10. If a tuition charge has been instituted in the last five years, what was the effect of instituting this charge? For example, did enrollment decrease, did contributions decrease in relationship to the charge for tuition?

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The following question is for schools not charging tuition:

11. Have you given consideration to instituting tuition and, if so, what has been the reaction of the school families and the congregation?

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For all participants:

12. Please feel free to comment below on any suggestions/innovative ideas or other areas relating to the funding of parochial schools. Your thoughts are appreciated.

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***Thank you for your time in completing this survey!***

***Please return in the enclosed envelope to:***

*Rev. Thomas Radtke*

*Trinity Lutheran School*

*515 S. MacArthur*

*Springfield, IL 62704*

*Phone: (217) 546-2347 Fax: (217) 787-1145*

*E:mail: tls.radtke@springnet1.com*

**APPENDIX B**  
**STATISTICS**



**LUTHERAN DAY SCHOOL SURVEY  
SYNOPSIS OF TEN RESPONSES**

<b>Congregational Demographics</b>	<b>Trinity Springfield, IL</b>	<b>Messiah Independence, MO</b>	<b>St. Paul's Munster, IN</b>	<b>St. Philip Chicago, IL</b>	<b>St. John's Rochester, MI</b>	<b>St. Paul's Des Peres, MO</b>
Baptized Membership	1,800	945	2,230	789	2,809	2,132
Communicant Membership	1,350	754	1,648	545	2,104	1,585
2002 Total Contributions	\$ 932,167	\$ 441,460	\$ 1,086,670	\$ 403,700	\$ 1,726,163	\$ 2,222,978
Average weekly worship attendance	650	390	822	157	1028	1068
Total actual revenues	\$ 976,519	\$ 1,061,899	\$ 1,949,985	\$ 1,064,434	\$ 3,202,320	\$ 3,552,472
Total actual expenses	\$ 1,063,220	\$ 1,167,234	\$ 2,001,885	\$ 1,052,351	\$ 3,525,943	\$ 3,114,436

<b>Breakdown of Revenue Attributable to the School</b>	<b>Trinity Springfield, IL</b>	<b>Messiah Independence, MO</b>	<b>St. Paul's Munster, IN</b>	<b>St. Philip Chicago, IL</b>	<b>St. John's Rochester, MI</b>	<b>St. Paul's Des Peres, MO</b>
Congregational Funding	\$ -	\$ 150,391	\$ 417,997	\$ -	\$ 698,550	\$ 494,596
Tuition	\$ 42,533	\$ 407,237	\$ 493,225	\$ 567,884	\$ 1,119,495	\$ 463,271
Capital Funding Drive	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 24,148	\$ -	\$ -
Other Fees Assessed	\$ 48,000	\$ -	\$ 83,350	\$ 6,329	\$ 142,690	\$ 19,229
Other Programs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 25,635	\$ 5,344	\$ 113,980	\$ 62,908
Endowments & Bequests	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 75,423	\$ 2,168	\$ 6,000	\$ -
Other Revenue Sources	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 13,697	\$ 36,021	\$ 65,613	\$ 14,747
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 90,533</b>	<b>\$ 557,628</b>	<b>\$ 1,109,327</b>	<b>\$ 641,894</b>	<b>\$ 2,146,328</b>	<b>\$ 1,054,751</b>

<b>% of Total Congregational Revenue</b>						
Tuition	4.36%	38.35%	25.29%	53.35%	34.96%	13.04%
Capital Funding Drive	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.27%	0.00%	0.00%
Other Fees	4.92%	0.00%	4.27%	0.59%	4.46%	0.54%
Other Programs	0.00%	0.00%	1.31%	0.50%	3.56%	1.77%
Endowments & Bequests	0.00%	0.00%	3.87%	0.20%	0.19%	0.00%
Other Revenue Sources	0.00%	0.00%	0.70%	3.38%	2.05%	0.42%

**LUTHERAN DAY SCHOOL SURVEY  
SYNOPSIS OF TEN RESPONSES**

<b>Congregational Demographics</b>	<b>Trinity Springfield, IL</b>	<b>Immanuel Wisc. Rapids, WI</b>	<b>St. John's Champaign, IL</b>	<b>Holy Cross Wichita, KS</b>	<b>Redeemer Cuyahoga Falls, OH</b>	<b>Salem Affton, MO</b>
Baptized Membership	1,800	2,370	1,230	1,665	998	2,432
Communicant Membership	1,350	1,789	786	1,267	777	1,808
2002 Total Contributions	\$ 932,167	\$ 71,000	\$ 931,643	\$ 2,224,280	\$ 450,000	\$ 909,075
Average weekly worship attendance	650	675	585	880	450	608
Total actual revenues	\$ 976,519	\$ 1,201,626	\$ 1,358,906	\$ 2,987,163	\$ 941,000	\$ 1,356,573
Total actual expenses	\$ 1,063,220	\$ 1,302,712	\$ 1,291,180	\$ 2,114,867	\$ 930,000	\$ 1,214,603

<b>Breakdown of Revenue Attributable to the School</b>	<b>Trinity Springfield, IL</b>	<b>Immanuel Wisc. Rapids, WI</b>	<b>St. John's Champaign, IL</b>	<b>Holy Cross Wichita, KS</b>	<b>Redeemer Cuyahoga Falls, OH</b>	<b>Salem Affton, MO</b>
Congregational Funding	\$ -	\$ 354,983	\$ 400,000	\$ 283,605	\$ -	\$ 393,086
Tuition	\$ 42,533	\$ 331,660	\$ 502,000	\$ 605,450	\$ 435,000	\$ 368,374
Capital Funding Drive	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 120,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other Fees Assessed	\$ 48,000	\$ 52,490	\$ 2,500	\$ 54,445	\$ 15,000	\$ 34,860
Other Programs	\$ -	\$ 55,656	\$ -	\$ 61,098	\$ 14,000	\$ 12,581
Endowments & Bequests	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11,000	\$ 50,000	\$ -
Other Revenue Sources	\$ -	\$ 45,422	\$ -	\$ 7,426	\$ 170,000	\$ 8,323
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 90,533</b>	<b>\$ 840,211</b>	<b>\$ 1,024,500</b>	<b>\$ 1,023,024</b>	<b>\$ 684,000</b>	<b>\$ 817,224</b>

<b>% of Total Congregational Revenue</b>						
Tuition	4.36%	27.60%	36.94%	20.27%	46.23%	27.15%
Capital Funding Drive	0.00%	0.00%	8.83%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Other Fees	4.92%	4.37%	0.18%	1.82%	1.59%	2.57%
Other Programs	0.00%	4.63%	0.00%	2.05%	1.49%	0.93%
Endowments & Bequests	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.37%	5.31%	0.00%
Other Revenue Sources	0.00%	3.78%	0.00%	0.25%	18.07%	0.61%

**LUTHERAN DAY SCHOOL SURVEY  
SYNOPSIS OF TEN RESPONSES**

<b>Breakdown of Expenses Attributable to the School</b>	<b>Trinity Springfield, IL</b>	<b>Messiah Independence, MO</b>	<b>St. Paul's Munster, IN</b>	<b>St. Philip Chicago, IL (1)</b>	<b>St. John's Rochester, MI</b>	<b>St. Paul's Des Peres, MO</b>
Administrative	\$ 58,704	\$ -	\$ 98,000		\$ 257,125	\$ 105,471
Faculty expense	\$ 523,556	\$ 533,966	\$ 702,142	\$ 660,889	\$ 1,184,018	\$ 710,645
Mortgage payments or rent	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 58,942		\$ 219,490	\$ 118,369
Other Building Expense	\$ 70,522	\$ -	\$ 144,571	\$ 77,189	\$ 274,539	\$ 4,501
Telephone/Internet	\$ 3,686	\$ -	\$ 6,256	\$ 4,521	\$ 15,761	\$ 61,089
Educational Supplies/books/equipment	\$ 20,000	\$ 23,662	\$ 90,978	\$ 5,443	\$ 182,937	\$ 8,723
Faculty development	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 8,438		\$ 6,000	\$ 71,936
Other expense	\$ 102,951	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,333	\$ 72,071	\$ -
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 779,419</b>	<b>\$ 557,628</b>	<b>\$ 1,109,327</b>	<b>\$ 749,374</b>	<b>\$ 2,211,941</b>	<b>\$ 1,080,734</b>

(1) Used the ratio of school salaries to total salaries to break out other categories-no actual numbers were available.

<b>% of Total Congregational Expense</b>						
Salaries/Benefits-Admin/Faculty	54.76%	45.75%	39.97%	62.80%	40.87%	26.20%
Mortgage Payments	0.00%	0.00%	2.94%	0.00%	6.23%	3.80%
Other Building Expense	6.63%	0.00%	7.22%	7.33%	7.79%	0.14%
Telephone/Internet	0.35%	0.00%	0.31%	0.43%	0.45%	1.96%
Educational Supplies/books/equip	1.88%	2.03%	4.54%	0.52%	5.19%	0.28%
Faculty Develop & Other	9.68%	0.00%	0.42%	0.13%	2.21%	2.31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>73.31%</b>	<b>47.77%</b>	<b>55.41%</b>	<b>71.21%</b>	<b>62.73%</b>	<b>34.70%</b>

**LUTHERAN DAY SCHOOL SURVEY  
SYNOPSIS OF TEN RESPONSES**

<b>Breakdown of Expenses Attributable to the School</b>	<b>Trinity Springfield, IL</b>	<b>Immanuel Wisc. Rapids, WI</b>	<b>St. John's Champaign, IL</b>	<b>Holy Cross Wichita, KS</b>	<b>Redeemer Cuyahoga Falls, OH</b>	<b>Salem Affton, MO</b>
Administrative	\$ 58,704	\$ 63,623	\$ 80,000	\$ 159,542	\$ 97,000	\$ -
Faculty expense	\$ 523,556	\$ 574,290	\$ 463,000	\$ 659,182	\$ 400,000	\$ 597,345
Mortgage payments or rent	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 120,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other Building Expense	\$ 70,522	\$ 100,519	\$ 131,500	\$ 74,092	\$ 83,000	\$ 57,690
Telephone/Internet	\$ 3,686	\$ 3,088	\$ 1,500	\$ 9,027	\$ -	\$ 2,853
Educational Supplies/books/equipment	\$ 20,000	\$ 49,836	\$ 136,000	\$ 50,781	\$ 40,000	\$ 86,157
Faculty development	\$ -	\$ 4,823	\$ 6,000	\$ 10,797	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,464
Other expense	\$ 102,951	\$ 44,032	\$ 79,000	\$ 48,603	\$ 60,000	\$ 12,064
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 779,419</b>	<b>\$ 840,211</b>	<b>\$ 1,017,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,012,024</b>	<b>\$ 684,000</b>	<b>\$ 759,573</b>

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<b>% of Total Congregational Expense</b>						
Salaries/Benefits-Admin/Faculty	54.76%	48.97%	42.05%	38.71%	53.44%	49.18%
Mortgage Payments	0.00%	0.00%	9.29%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Other Building Expense	6.63%	7.72%	10.18%	3.50%	8.92%	4.75%
Telephone/Internet	0.35%	0.24%	0.12%	0.43%	0.00%	0.23%
Educational Supplies/books/equip	1.88%	3.83%	10.53%	2.40%	4.30%	7.09%
Faculty Develop & Other	9.68%	3.75%	6.58%	2.81%	6.88%	1.28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>73.31%</b>	<b>64.50%</b>	<b>78.77%</b>	<b>47.85%</b>	<b>73.55%</b>	<b>62.54%</b>

**LUTHERAN DAY SCHOOL SURVEY  
SYNOPSIS OF TEN RESPONSES**

**Summary**

**Congregational Demographics**

	<i>Trinity</i>	<i>Average of 10 Surveys</i>	<i>Median</i>
<i>Baptized Membership</i>	1,800	1,760	1,899
<i>Communicant Membership</i>	1,350	1,306	1,426
<i>2002 Total Contributions</i>	\$ 932,167	\$ 1,046,697	\$ 920,359
<i>Average Weekly Worship Attendance</i>	650	666	642
<i>Total Revenues</i>	\$ 976,519	\$ 1,867,638	\$ 1,357,740
<i>Total Expenses</i>	\$ 1,063,220	\$ 1,771,521	\$ 1,296,946

**Breakdown of Revenue  
Attributable to the School**

	<i>Trinity</i>	<i>Average of 10 Surveys</i>	<i>Median</i>
<i>Tuition</i>	4.36%	32.32%	31.28%
<i>Capital Funding Drive</i>	0.00%	1.11%	0.00%
<i>Other Fees</i>	4.92%	2.04%	1.71%
<i>Other Programs</i>	0.00%	1.62%	1.40%
<i>Endowments &amp; Bequests</i>	0.00%	0.99%	0.09%
<i>Other Revenue Sources</i>	0.00%	2.93%	0.66%

**Breakdown of Expenses  
Attributable to the School**

	<i>Trinity</i>	<i>Average of 10 Surveys</i>	<i>Median</i>
<i>Salaries/Benefits-Admin/Faculty</i>	54.76%	44.80%	43.90%
<i>Mortgage Payments</i>	0.00%	2.23%	0.00%
<i>Other Building Expense</i>	6.63%	5.76%	7.28%
<i>Telephone/Internet</i>	0.35%	0.42%	0.27%
<i>Educational Supplies/books/equip</i>	1.88%	4.07%	4.06%
<i>Faculty Develop &amp; Other</i>	9.68%	2.64%	2.26%
<i>Total</i>	73.31%	59.90%	62.64%

## 2002 School Data

Tuition	Trinity Springfield, IL	Messiah Independence, MO	St. Paul's Munster, IN	St. Philip Chicago, IL	St. John's Rochester, MI	St. Paul's Des Peres, MO
School Enrollment	220	183	282	221	423	273
Tuition for members						
Individual	\$ 750	\$ 712	\$ 1,442	\$ -	\$ 2,486	\$ 1,735
2nd child	\$ -	\$ 712	\$ 937	\$ -	\$ 2,237	\$ 1,450
Per family	\$ 750		\$ 3,100	\$ -		
Recent increases in tuition	0.0%	62.2%	15.0%	\$ -	3.5%	19.3%
Tuition for non-members	\$ 2,450	\$ 2,850	\$ 3,440	\$ 2,800	\$ 4,576	\$ 4,335
Recent increases in tuition	0.0%	15.8%	15.0%	0.0%	3.5%	0.0%
Number of non-member families	22	130	92	120	219	28
Requirements to receive member rate:						
Church attendance	66%	50%	None	None	None	50%
Year tuition instituted	2002	1998	Prior to 1998	2003	1972	1997

## 2002 School Data

Tuition	Trinity Springfield, IL	Immanuel Wisc. Rapids, WI	St. John's Champaign, IL	Holy Cross Wichita, KS	Redeemer Cuyahoga Falls, OH	Salem Affton, MO
School Enrollment	220	259	213	209	221	165
Tuition for members						
Individual	\$ 750	\$ 690	\$ 1,752	\$ 2,556	\$ 1,200	\$ 2,160
2nd child	\$ -	\$ 690	\$ 1,752		\$ 960	
Per family	\$ 750			\$ 2,556	\$ 2,160	\$ 2,160
Recent increases in tuition	0.0%	15.0%	6.7%	3.0%	5.0%	12.0%
Tuition for non-members	\$ 2,450	\$ 2,300	\$ 2,920	\$ 3,555	\$ 2,860	\$ 3,770
Recent increases in tuition	0.0%	9.5%	6.7%	3.0%	5.0%	12.0%
Number of non-member families	22	110	86	62	130	44
Requirements to receive member rate:						
Church attendance	66%	None	None	None	Regular attendance	40%
Year tuition instituted	2002	1988	2001	1970	1970	1985

**Summary of 2002 School Data**

	Trinity	All Others-Average
School Enrollment	220	\$ 245
Tuition:		
Individual	\$ 750	\$ 1,473
2nd child	\$ -	\$ 1,092
Family	\$ 750	\$ 1,995
Non-member	\$ 2,450	\$ 3,341
Recent Increases in Tuition:		
Member	0.0%	14.17%
Non-member	0.0%	7.05%
Number of Non-member families	22	102
Non-member families/enrollment	10.00%	41.69%



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