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SHORT TITLE

Luth. Youth Confirmation Instruction

A thesis prepared in the Faculty
of Concordia University, St. Louis,
Department of Theological Studies
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

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THE EMERGING OBJECTIVES OF INSTRUCTION
FOR CONFIRMATION AS CURRENTLY PRACTICED
IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
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by

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND METHOD OF THIS STUDY

The instruction for confirmation is one of the important duties assigned to Lutheran pastors by the congregations which they serve. It is likewise made the direct responsibility of every Lutheran minister of Christ's Gospel involved in instructing young Christians by the Good Shepherd Himself, who says, "Feed My Lambs."

Since the instruction of catechumens is an intimate and singularly unique responsibility of every Lutheran pastor, it would have been presumptuous to attempt an exhaustive study of the complexities which are involved. We mention but a few: the pastor's personality, the ability and age of the students, the tradition of that particular local congregation, the home background, and the school experience pattern, whether parochial or public.

In this study our primary interest was to approach, study, analyze, and, wherever possible, resolve the basic problems attending the development of specific objectives for junior confirmation instruction in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

The problem confronting the individual pastor as he set himself the task of determining his personal aims for his confirmation instruction was primarily one of a basic confusion involving an inability to distinguish between objectives and methods and materials. There was also an inclination to bulk instruction for confirmation in the general area of Christian education without a definite goal and objective for this particular educational activity.

That such confusion existed became apparent when one studied some of the research in areas of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod pertinent to the subject matter at hand. One such analytical study involving a section in Minnesota pointed up considerable confusion in establishing objectives for instruction for confirmation.¹

Since the matter of objectives was noted to be fluid in nature and rested at least in part on changing needs within the church, one could not be dogmatic nor rigid in stating them. On the other hand, it was equally dangerous not to articulate and specify objectives and risk the danger of being lost in a maze of indefinite material without focus or direction.

The problem, then, was to specify and articulate as exhaustively and precisely as possible the specific aims and objectives of confirmation instruction which were unique and germane to this specific religious educational activity.

In order to limit and specify this study, a definition of instruction for confirmation for our purposes was the instruction of adolescents for confirmation as conducted by the pastors of parishes of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod within the presently established, designated districts of the United States of America.

From the Lutheran Reformation down to the present time the shifting emphasis upon confirmation and the instruction preceding this church rite was evaluated. Thereupon the study proceeded to focus and synthesize the instruction for confirmation by examining specific statements and

¹Robert T. Koehler, "A Survey of the Confirmation Instruction of the Children Within a Pastoral Conference" (May, 1948), pp. 13-18.

presentations with official and semi-official standing within The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

The research revealed that The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod felt that it had found at least a partial answer in its religious educational institutions. Not only does it maintain Sunday schools, Saturday schools, and Vacation Bible schools, but it has established the most extensive elementary and high school system in Protestantism. It is in this framework of general Christian education, then, that this church body continued to re-examine and evaluate the religious educational institution of confirmation, predicated on one to two years of intensive and carefully focused religious instruction. Included in the attempts to view the instruction for confirmation as a specific and focused activity in the total religious educational picture of this synod are the present efforts to define and articulate a general Lutheran philosophy of education. As this exacting task proceeds and nears completion in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, the insights and evaluations relating to the confirmation instructional practices will be defined and focused correspondingly more clearly.

A practical consideration arose when it was realized that research in religious education relating to specific institutions in the structure of the church body could not fulfill a function unless the general conclusions were by some means made available to the pastor and the parish wrestling with the problem. However, the pastor with the multiplicity of detail in the modern church operation would not be as cognizant of the problem as he should be. Hence, it was expedient that the awareness of the pastor be sharpened and heightened by conference papers and material

emanating from district and synodical boards of education. This cycle had been aptly established in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod to the extent that the research and interest in religious education generated on the higher levels of administrative boards and commissions has presently reached down into the individual churches and pastors. One could detect a rising interest in educational principles as well as methods and materials throughout this growing church body.

The study showed that a well-directed, meaningful, and profitable course of instruction for confirmation was usually possible only after the individual pastor established the policies, planned the curriculum, and declared the current objectives to his congregational board of parish education.

To this end it would be of great benefit to the individual pastor of this Lutheran synod to receive in his professional journals stimulating and provocative material and conclusions from synodical specialists. More courses in this important pastoral function might be provided in synodical graduate schools. The excellent workshops in confirmation could be expanded and multiplied in established summer schools. A religious educational activity of such importance requires much thought and study on every level from the individual pastor to the important synodical boards with a national responsibility. Such study, analysis, and foundation of clear, precise objectives will bear fruit in meaningful and rewarding instruction periods for both the catechumens and their pastor and will result in well-trained workers for The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod reducing the alarming defections of Lutheran youth to Christ and His Church.

CHAPTER II

TRACING THE HISTORY OF CONFIRMATION IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AS THIS PERTAINS TO THE PRESENT DAY INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD

A brief statement with a wide historical sweep concerning the matter of catechetical instruction provided a provocative introduction for our survey.

Leaders of the early church took Jesus' command to "Go teach" literally. This was especially true in preparing catechumens for church membership. Instruction preceded and followed admission into church membership in the post-Apostolic church. Materials used were the Bible, the Didache, works of Clement and Origen, and other resources. Before the Reformation three elements were taught in catechetics: The Ten Commandments, Creed, and Lord's Prayer.¹

In a paper presented to an Inter-synodical group, Gustav K. Wiencke described the practices in the Early Christian Church in the following manner.

Confirmation today preserves elements that were originally part of primitive Christian baptism. This is true because, as the Christian Church grew and won converts from paganism, it had to safeguard itself by admitting to baptism only those who had been carefully prepared and instructed. Catechetical teachers were provided for this purpose by special schools set up by the bishop. During this period the catechumens were admitted only to the preaching service. Special acts of consecration used to admit "hearers" (catechumens) to the prayers of the church (genu flectentes). These acts are the beginning of the present rites of confirmation. Not until just before baptism were the words of the baptismal confession (Apostles' Creed) revealed. Catechumens were received by the laying on of hands, exorcism, and presentation of sanctified salt. Following a rigorous period of

¹"Planning Your Catechetical Program," Board of Parish Education (Philadelphia, Pa.).

prayer, fasting, confession of sins, they were solemnly baptised (generally by immersion), and admitted to the holy mystery of the eucharist.²

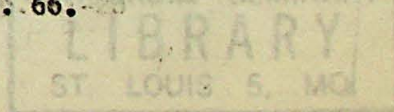
A few general statements sufficed to demonstrate the development of confirmation as an ex opere operato sacrament within the church. The seven scrutiny masses, of which one was part of the baptismal ceremony of the infant, demanded that the sponsors be properly instructed and speak for the children. The sponsors received instruction in the Apostles Creed and the Lord's Prayer, committing them to memory and reciting them in the sight of the children, and finally promised to make both the Apostles Creed and the Lord's Prayer the basis of the God-child's education. In addition the parents were exhorted to instruct the children accordingly. An ecclesiastical concern in this matter involved the bishops. On their regular visitations the bishop inquired whether the local priests had meetings with families for the instruction of the young and whether the priests' libraries contained necessary instructional materials.³

The following statement from a liturgical source summarized the final action in accepting confirmation as the second sacrament of the Roman Catholic Church.

The sacrament of confirmation which was first identified by Victor of St. Hugo as the second sacrament was given a church definition in the decree of Pope Eugene, IV. "Pro Armenis" at the Council of Florence, 1439, was officially accepted as the second sacrament of the Church. We can see the direct connection

²Gustav K. Wiencke, "Confirmation Instruction in Historical Perspective," The Lutheran Quarterly (May, 1955), pp. 99-113.

³M. Reu, Catechetics or Theory and Practise of Religious Instruction (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1918), P. 66.



and development between the externals of the sacrament and the original laying on of hands after baptism by the bishop.⁴

Embodied in the sacrament of confirmation were the anointing, originally associated only with baptism, and the conveyance of chrism by the laying on of hands. The oil (a mixture of olive oil and balsam) for the anointing was usually prepared on Maundy Thursday by the bishop with the assistance of priests, usually numbering twelve, and used throughout the ensuing year. This preparation involved prayer, exorcism, and "breathing upon" (Anblasung--insufflatio, halitus) and was completed with the reverent cry, Ave Sanctum Chrisma.⁵

The age of the children considered ready for the sacrament varied between the Roman and Eastern churches. In the Roman church the age of the confirmand varied between seven and twelve, and in the Greek church the children were confirmed as soon as feasible after baptism. Only in the Roman church was a special time of the year set aside, that being usually at Pentecost coinciding with the feast of the bishop. Confirmation in the Roman and Eastern churches had little or nothing to do with the catechetical instruction of the catechumens.⁶

From the time that confirmation was considered the second sacrament by Hugo of Saint Victor (died 1144) and generally accepted at the time of Eugene the Fourth (1439) it was performed preferably not before the seventh year of the catechumen. (Synod of Cologne, 1279; Synod of Liege, 1287). In addition, the injunction of the Fourth Lateran Synod (1215)

⁴Dr. G. Rietschel, Lehrbuch der Liturgik, Die Kasualien (Berlin: Verlag Von Reuther und Reichard, 1909), II, 141-142.

⁵Ibid., p. 142.

⁶Ibid., p. 143.

directed that all Christian children were to go to confession at least once a year after they were seven years old. Unless one would consider such confession instruction of youth for confirmation, formal instruction for confirmation with but a few exceptions virtually ceased to exist. In the awakening of the Renaissance and the immediate pre-Reformation Period there were those among the pre-Reformers conscious of the spiritual decay in the Roman Church who desired to reinstate the religious education of all Christians, including also the youth of the Church. The Waldenses made use of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and short theses on the Trinity, the Church, the Sacraments, and works of mercy. Catechumens were required to memorize, among other things, the Gospels and Epistles of the Church year to acquaint them with the Scriptures.⁷

Although Wiclif never wrote specifically for the youth, the tracts written for the Christian home, including the Creed, the Decalogue, and the Lord's Prayer undoubtedly exerted a strong influence on the adolescents coming under his influence. Hus also did not write specifically for the young. However, many of his general writings were included in the first Hussite Catechism (between 1420 and 1436) and the contemporary Raudnitz Catechism edited by the Moravian Brethren (Boehmischen Brueder) and were published in Bohemian and German. All these catechisms contain identical developments on a three-fold division of faith, love, and hope, and indicate a growing awareness of the need to educate the youth of the Church in spiritual matters.⁸

⁷Reu, op. cit., pp. 76-82.

⁸Ibid.

The reformers, led by Luther himself, vehemently objected to the concept of confirmation as the second sacrament. Because of this firm rejection of the Catholic acceptance of confirmation, confirmation as a rite in the Lutheran Church gained slow acceptance among the reformers. Since the objection of the reformers stemmed from the very cogent observation that there was no Scriptural authority for the Catholic concept of confirmation, and because the Romish rites were permeated with superstitions and unscriptural ceremonialism, very few of the church regulations (Kirchenordnungen) of the earlier reconstruction period of the Reformation contain any provisions for the rite of confirmation. For years the Lutheran Church hesitated between these objections to the Roman Catholic sacramental views of confirmation and the necessity of regulating, in accord with proper church discipline, the admission of young people and new members to the Lord's Supper. The leaders of the church began to see the practicability of using the custom of confirmation and retaining it as a churchly rite. However, in the subsequent period of the Interim, coupled with suggested compromises with Rome culminating in the Ratisbon Colloquium, much that originated in this early period was viewed with grave suspicion by loyal Lutherans of later periods.⁹

Luther (died 1546), as early as 1522, in his sermon on matrimony, referred to the Roman rite of confirmation (Firmelung) and called it an "apish foolery" and a "plat of lies" (Gaukenspiel). Luther continued by stating that one could confirm if confirmation were maintained as a rite founded as a convenient human ordinance. The reformer used Titus 3:5

⁹C. Theodore Benze, Lutheran Liturgical Association Memoirs, edited by Luther Reed (Pittsburgh, Pa.: The Association, 1907), III-VII, 9-13.

as evidence that the Apostle Paul states implicitly that the Holy Ghost is bestowed only in baptism and makes no mention of confirmation, although he always favored and advocated the instruction of Lutheran youth before they were declared eligible for the second sacrament and adult membership in the Lutheran Church.¹⁰

The Augsburg Confession rejected confirmation as a sacrament of the church by implication. The Smalcald Articles (a confessional statement by Luther and Lutheran theologians in the city of Smalcald) stated,

We have spoken of ordination, which alone, as Jerome says, distinguished bishops from other elders. Therefore there is need of no discussion concerning the other duties of bishops. Nor is it indeed necessary to speak of confirmation, nor of the consecration of bells [nor other tomfoolery of this kind].¹¹

In quoting a translation of Schmucker, Benzé summarized the Lutheran development of that day.

At the Ratisbon Colloquium, Melancton, Bucer, and Pistorius proposed (1541) "That Confirmation comprise reminding, admonition, prayer, blessing, and thanksgiving and be administered only to those of sufficient age, who had been well instructed before their first approach to the Lord's Supper. Thus constituted, they could and would readily consent that it be retained, and also allow the imposition of hands and the use of the sign of the cross in the blessing, as both these were unobjectionable observances and might suggest many good thoughts." In the Wittenberg Reformation (1545) prepared by Melancton, assisted by Caspar Cruciger and George Major, with Luther's approval demand was made for a thus purified order of confirmation and provision made for its observance.

At the Augsburg Interim (1548) confirmation was declared a sacrament, its necessity conceded and the apostolic institution of it and the right of bishops alone to administer it were maintained. To this the Lutherans objected vigorously and at last at the Council of Trent, Lutheran confirmation was condemned.

¹⁰ibid., p. 13.

¹¹"The Smalcald Articles," Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 525.

Naturally the Lutheran theologians defended themselves and among much written at that period, nothing sets forth the Lutheran position so clearly as Martin Chemnitz' statements in his Examen Tridentini (pt. 2 L. 3 De Confirmatione). He declares there that the Lutherans, after freeing the rite from all superstitions and useless superstructure insist on a thorough indoctrination of the catechumens, after which they are to be presented to the bishop and the Church. Then follows first, the admonition concerning the efficacy of holy baptism and the sealing of the promises therein by the entire Trinity, by which act was included a renunciation of Satan, a profession of faith, and a promise of obedience. Second, by the catechumen himself, a personal public profession of this doctrine and faith. Third, a thorough examination in doctrine. Fourth, an admonition that this implies a dissent from all heathen, heretical, fanatical, and unholy opinions. Fifth, a weighty exhortation to persevere in the baptismal covenant. Sixth, public prayer, that God should be pleased by His Holy Spirit to govern, preserve, and confirm them in this profession. To this prayer might be added the imposition of hands, without any superstition.¹²

Gradually emerging from the confused picture of the Reformation and the Interim and slowly recovering from the deadening effects of the Thirty Years' War, the Lutheran Church made determined efforts to use the instruction of the youth prior to the rite of confirmation as a valuable instrument of indoctrination, as well as a coordinated and controlled effort of the Lutheran Church to provide proper Christian education for its youth. Where there was no confirmation, the children were indoctrinated through Christenlehre and other means. Although the special act of confirmation was not accepted by all as a formal rite of the Lutheran Church, the use of the catechism and thorough instruction before admission to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and membership in the Church was accepted without controversy from the very beginning of the Reformation.

¹²Benze, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

Geographical differences are identified in an article by Schmucker, as recorded by Benze.

The original Lutheran churches (gnesio-Lutheran), that is, those of middle Germany distinctively, except Mansfield, know nothing of confirmation as a special rite; it is found only in northern, western, and southwestern Germany, and there is not of universal acceptance. In Austria, in addition, it is found standing alone through the personal influence of Chytraeus and with much opposition from congregations and pastors. In North Germany it was carried from Pomerania by Bugenhagen to Stralsund and from Brandenburg by the relation of the reigning houses to Brunswick, where afterwards Chemnitz secured and enlarged its prevalence. From Brunswick it passed to Hoya (Hannover). In the western countries it owed its acceptance partly to the Reformation of Cologne, but preeminently to Hesse, which under the influence of Strasburg, and especially of Francis Lambert, tended toward a Reformed type. Waldeck, Nassau and Lower Saxony received their order of Confirmation from Hesse.

The efforts for the restoration or introduction of confirmation began here and there early in the seventeenth century and increased in energy until in and after Spener's time, they so influenced the action of the Church as to effect its official adoption in one land after another. Among its early advocates were Telesman Heshusius, Aeg. Hunnius, Polycarp Lyser, Leonh. Hutter, Fred Baldwin, Jno. Tarnow, Jno. Gerhard, Conr. Dietrich, Geo. Calixtus, Theoph. Grossgebauer, Martin Heinsius, and preeminently in practical efficiency, Jacob Spener.¹³

An accepted authoritative source of information for Lutheran confirmation was a church regulation for confirmation prepared for the church in Hesse. This church regulation for the rite of confirmation was used first in 1539 and from Hesse spread to many other congregations with the exception of Pomerania. This confirmation rite was established and developed by Bucer. It stressed not only some features which had been used by the Bohemian brethren already in 1450, but also seemed to have been influenced by Calvin's Institutes of 1536. Together with the catechetical features, and in addition to a public examination in doctrine,

¹³Ibid., pp. 16-17.

the willingness of the candidate to submit to the discipline and the guidance of the congregation was made a part of the profession of faith.¹⁴

Several rites of confirmation stressed and emphasized the catechetical features of confirmation. The regulations of Pomerania (1563) and Braunschweig-Wolfenbützel (1569) were such.

After Luther's death during the Philipistic controversies which cast grave suspicion on the Melanctonian compromises, the gnesio-Lutherans categorically rejected all rites of confirmation. However, when Martin Chemnitz rendered his fully rounded exposition on catechetical instruction and the rite of confirmation, it gained better acceptance even in conservative Lutheran circles. For some time the special act of confirmation was regarded as an adiapharon. Ofttimes during this period the catechetical instruction was carried on well beyond the first participation in the Lord's Supper, and some held that at this time children as young as ten years of age were admitted to Communion. In the Sixteenth Century then, despite the positive views of Melancton and Chemnitz, there was no uniform practice. Most provinces, and in some cases even individual congregations, went their own way. In general, two emerging developments might be traced. Where Brenz and Bugenhagen were influential, there was no official rite of confirmation, but catechetical instruction culminated in a final examination in public before the congregation or in private in the presence of elders and parents. Where Melancton, Chemnitz, and Bucer were the spiritual leaders, the rite of confirmation was introduced to close off the catechetical instruction. The primary goal in both

¹⁴Paul Graff, Geschichte der Auflösung der alten Gottesdienstlichen Formen in der Evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1936), II, 314-315.

instances was a proper preparation for the first communion. As the rite of confirmation was developed in certain areas, some Romanizing tendencies appeared, such as the laying on of hands, the light slap on the cheek, and certain phrases reminiscent of sacramental statements taken from the Roman Catholic Pontificale. Although when correctly understood there was nothing wrong with such practices per se, nevertheless in those troubled times they created new suspicions.

The catechetical instruction patterned after Luther's famous principle of memorization, explanation, and application was the most popular. Since not many text books were available, the memorization of essentials was necessary. In most instances the instruction was by telling, namely the lecture method.

The publication of the Book of Concord in the year 1580, the fiftieth anniversary of the presentation of the Augsburg Confession to the Diet in 1530, marked the completion of German Lutheranism. Included in the Book of Concord are the Small and Large Catechisms of Luther. The Concord Movement, although it drove many of the followers of Melancthon into the ranks of Calvinists, nevertheless served to systematize the dogmatics of the Lutheran Church.

According to some historians, the Orthodox movement became so strong that it seemed to place intellectual accomplishments and systematized confessionalism above the Bible. Some consider this the Melancthonian Blight. This was a shift away from Luther himself, inasmuch as the reformer centered his faith in a personal relationship with God through Christ Jesus while a tendency of the Orthodox movement was to center assurance in truth as expressed in pure doctrine and grasped by the intellect. In this same period an undercurrent of mysticism appears in the Lutheran Church.

These movements had their impact also on the catechetical instruction, giving a rising emphasis to intellectual attainment.¹⁵

The influence of Pietism, extending through Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and especially the Scandinavian countries, was given impetus by Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705).

Spener, Francke, and the pietists used the existing confirmation ceremony, as well as an instruction period in the worship service known as Christenlehr or Kinderlehr, but gave new meaning to the three forms: sacramental, church discipline, and catechetical. The instruction became a means, not the goal. The confirmation vow was confused with the enthusiastic feeling of conversion and thus became solely a personal commitment to Christ. The method of instruction involved primarily a word analysis of the catechism. Pietistic instruction became homiletical, sentimental, and hortative. The over-stimulation of emotions with an unwholesome subjectivism marked this period.

The Age of Rationalism introduced a new problem. How could the instruction for confirmation be correlated with the religious instruction in the public schools? The chief goal of rationalism was to make religious truth a convincing reality on the basis of reason itself. Through the Socratic method they reversed the traditional Lutheran order of presentation. First, plain and specific questions were put to the children to stimulate their thinking on the subject and their desire to find an answer by themselves. Usually the subject matter was presented in clear and appealing formats. The content and substance of Christian Lutheranism, however, was lost. The strict adherence to Scriptures associated with

¹⁵Reu, op. cit., p. 146ff.

the Reformation was endangered in this period. A raging interest in the confessions and almost no interest in preserving the pure doctrine of Scripture caused Rationalism to shift the emphasis of catechetical instruction to three main ideas--God, virtue, and immortality. Instead of a deep religious experience and a transfer of completed religious insights and knowledge to the mind and heart of the child, the Rationalist instruction was a cold, intellectual exercise. Confirmation was merely a vow pledging the child to loyalty to an outward institution, the Church.

Thus from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries we followed the ebb and flow of catechetical instruction of the youth in preparation for the rite of confirmation. There were no set patterns--the time of the church year, the period of catechetical instruction, the age of the confirmands, the customs pertaining to the actual rite of confirmation, the methods of instruction were by no means established. Despite some good features in this period of Rationalism, particularly the method of instruction, the Lutheran position was virtually forfeited, and elaborate customs surrounding the rite of confirmation itself were developed. It was in this period that the confirmands were arrayed in theatrical positions and the entire service was richly embellished with many customs, some of which persist to this very day. It was Rationalism, then, with its abuses and extremes that led the Saxon Lutherans to America, there to plant the banners of conservative Lutheran Christianity in the soil of America.

Three views emerged in the Lutheran Church in regard to the rite of confirmation. One, the sacramental view, which stressed the prayer of the congregation and the laying on of hands, emphasized the ritual and solemnity and stressed a peculiar bestowal of grace and salvation. This

viewpoint inclined toward the pietism of Spener and the later Schleiermacher, and considered confirmation as a completion of the sacrament of Baptism.¹⁶

Another view, the catechetical, considered indoctrination most important. Its proponents sought to convey to the child the complete religious insights and knowledge based on Scriptures as defined by Luther's Small Catechism, by which means the candidate then pledged himself to the scriptural faith of the Church and was prepared to receive the Lord's Supper on his own responsibility. In this view the preliminary examination in doctrine and the profession of faith by the confirmand were stressed.¹⁷

The third view, that of church discipline, emphasized church membership and referred primarily to the vow. Participation in the organizational life of the congregation was required and willingness to submit to church discipline and policy was made obligatory.¹⁸

These three views summarized the varied views held by the Lutheran Church in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

To bring these historical considerations up to date and place them in a proper frame of reference, it was necessary to study the history of the Saxon immigration as this related to the instruction of youth in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (established 1847).

The beginnings of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod are usually traced to the immigration of the Saxons to Missouri in 1839, the Franconians to the Saginaw Valley in Michigan in 1845, and the mission work of Friedrich

¹⁶Wiencke, op. cit., p. 113.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

Conrad Wynecen (1810-1876) in Indiana. Although Lutheranism in America antedates the time of George Washington and was already in flower during the Revolutionary War, this study concerned itself primarily with The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. The arrival of the Saxon Lutherans was removed only forty-nine years from the inauguration of George Washington as the first President of the United States. The state of Missouri had opened its first public school in St. Louis, a two-room institution, one year before, 1838. The first teacher training institution in the United States was opened in the town hall of Lexington, Massachusetts on July 3, 1839. The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod had formal teacher training as early as 1843, and more particularly in 1846, far in advance of the majority of the States in the Union.¹⁹

The early founders of this synod of the Lutheran Church in America realized the importance of Christian education. Already in that early period of organization they stated emphatically and repeatedly that wherever possible congregations should be fortified and strengthened by a formal educational institution for children, known as the Lutheran parochial school. From the very outset then, obvious also in its historical development, The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod structured all educational processes, including also the instruction of youth for confirmation, in the broad framework of an implied Lutheran philosophy of education. In that early period, catechetical instructions were a part of the regular school curriculum.

Usually the pastor was also the teacher of the school. Where this was not the case, the pastor would then take those children who were in

¹⁹A. C. Steilhorn, "The Period of Organization, 1838-1847," 100 Years of Christian Education (River Forest, Illinois: Lutheran Education Association, 1947), pp. 3-5.

their last year in the school for specific catechetical instructions. The formal grading of pupils was not introduced until later years even in the public schools. Such Lutheran schools observed a three-division approach to grading: lower, intermediate, and upper classes. In those days elementary schooling usually extended over six years. Children began school considerably later than now. In the Lutheran schools the last year was completed with confirmation, which was considered tantamount to graduation and many times ended the formal education of the children.

The subjects taught in the catechetical format were catechism and Bible history. Some time was also spent on memorizing favorite hymns. Since the founders of this synod had left Germany because of Rationalism, they were also suspicious of the encroachments of Liberalism in the extant American Lutheran circles as well as in American Protestantism. As a result these Lutherans maintained their German language and a strongly indigenous educational format.

In addition to the development of an educational system which embodied also catechetical instructions, The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod had established the Middle-European custom of Christenlehre in the regular worship service. At a designated time in each service, the pastor would conduct a catechization of young people and, at times, also included the adults in a review of a section of Luther's Small Catechism.

At this time the synodical publishing house, known today as Concordia Publishing House, began to concern itself with issuing school texts, some of them German, some English. The widespread McGuffeys were considered dangerous by some, because they showed a mixed Calvinistic and Arminian

moral bent. In 1878 the Synodical Conference resolved to issue a joint English Catechism, with Professor M. Loy as editor, but because of doctrinal dissension and controversy within the Conference, the first attempt was unsuccessful.²⁰

Ever recurring questions which were posed more pointedly in this period than ever before, resulted in a re-evaluation of educational practices, which had its impact also on catechetical instruction. Were parents under obligation to send all their children to the church school? Was the trend toward compulsory attendance in the state schools morally binding for Christian parents, and would this exclude the establishment and support of Christian schools? Should girls as well as boys attend school for an equal number of years? If Lutheran boys and girls attended public schools, how could they be instructed for confirmation, since this instruction was usually carried out in the Lutheran school? With the tremendous expansion of the newly-organized synod in this period, following the immigration of many American Lutherans to the West and Northwest, it was impossible to carry out the original goals of the founders of establishing a school with every church. In addition, the increasing pressure of enforced public education made it impossible to maintain the original catechetical planning. Plagued by a shortage of professionally trained teachers, which exists to this day, as well as the recognized inability of pastors to teach school and carry on their increasingly complex pastoral duties, many a new Lutheran congregation, though desirous of having its own school, found it impossible. As a

²⁰Walter F. Nollbrecht, "The Period of Expansion, 1864-1894," 100 Years of Christian Education, p. 79.

result, the compromise plans, which are part of established practices in the synod today, were then put into operation. After-school hours, or Saturday mornings, were utilized for specific catechetical instruction. The subject matter remained much the same, using the catechism, Bible history, and hymnal.²¹

²¹Ibid., pp. 81-95.

CHAPTER III

COLLATION OF STATED AND IMPLICIT OBJECTIVES WITHIN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD UP TO THE PRESENT TIME

The formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States was completed in the year 1847. Although cast in the mold of middle European culture, this conservative branch of the Lutheran Church had achieved, already in those early days, its own individual, unique Lutheran philosophy of education. Although this philosophy was not satisfactorily stated in written form, nor evolved in proper philosophical terms, it was real and vital from the very outset. The verbal inspiration and accepted inerrancy of Holy Scriptures, the unconditional and uncompromising acceptance of Christ as God-man and the only Savior of sinful humanity, the loyalty to the unaltered Augsburg Confession and all the Lutheran confessional books contained in the Book of Concord marked the new synod as one of the most conservative on American soil.¹

As a result of this unwavering loyalty to the Scriptures and the Lutheran confessions, a militant program of Christian education became a part of its historical development. This new American Lutheran church body founded its own institutions of learning to prepare young men for the Lutheran ministry, and also founded its own teacher training colleges for young men and women who would then serve the ever-expanding Christian elementary school system, which fortified the educational program of

¹Abdel Ross Wentz, A Basic History of Lutheranism in America (Philadelphia, Pa.: Muhlenberg Press, 1955), pp. 209-211.

individual congregations also in confirmation instruction of youth the length and breadth of the land.

These Lutheran pastors, despite their good training in theology, still did not realize that, although the aims and objectives of Christian education in general apply also to the instruction of youth for confirmation, nevertheless specific aims and objectives must be developed for this important educational process.

In order to establish this broad framework of Christian education within which the objectives for junior confirmation were to be fitted these general objectives were listed.

- I. Understanding of the nature of God and man's relationship to Him (Relationship to God).
- II. A growing Christian character (Character).
- III. Love of fellow men, expressing itself in the application of Christian principles in all relationships (Love of fellow men).
- IV. A rich devotional life as a source of spiritual strength (Devotional life).
- V. Active participation in the life and work of the church (Christian life).
- VI. The dedication of time, talents, and treasures to God in a life of faithful stewardship (Stewardship).²

Arthur C. Repp restated the divine directive to pastors by urging each shepherd to an awareness and understanding of the objectives of the parish program of education. He stated further that unless pastors plan prayerfully, systematically, and intelligently, they cannot develop a necessary blueprint for their work which will enable them to serve

²Wm. A. Kramer, "Christian Education and Its Objectives," from Religion in Lutheran Schools (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1949), pp. 15-16.

effectively. The broad scope of Christian education was thereupon emphasized as reaching all age levels. Repp demonstrated some of the confusion of the day by citing the emphasis on organizations and methods to the virtual exclusion of aims and objectives. He quoted Scriptural exhortations: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20), and said further to make men "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15), and sometimes added, "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:17), and observed that these Bible passages are to be investigated in the light of the rest of the Scriptures or their full implications may be lost. Other passages stated, "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 2:18), and so that the "Word of God....effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thess. 2:13) established that the sphere in which a Christian lives relates not only to his own person but also to society. By this process Repp emphasized ← that in many instances objectives are too limited and subjective. The transformed, recreated Christian living in Christ must achieve a wide vision of responsibility and service. In condensing the aims of Christian education relating to the individual, the Lutheran educator stated,

I. The indoctrination in the Scriptural truths should be prosecuted for all members of the congregation in such a way that these truths make men grow in the knowledge of the grace of God in Christ Jesus and further their godly living (the individual's faith life).

For the sake of analysis, although they can never be separated in the educational process, Repp mentioned two sub-parts:

The Proper Relation of Children to Their Parents

1. Acquaintance with the Scriptural truths for all members of the congregation at the various stages of spiritual and mental maturity: elementary (pre-school and school age); secondary (confirmation and post-confirmation age); adult.

To substantiate this tenet two Bible passages were quoted:

(We) do not cease to pray for you and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. (Col. 1:9-10)

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (Col. 3:16)

Helpful subtitles illuminate this conclusion further:

Acquaintance with the Fundamentals of Bible History

Acquaintance with the Fundamentals of Biblical Doctrine

Skill in Handling the Bible

A Repertoire of Pertinent Portions of the Scriptures and Related Material (Catechism and Hymns) for Personal Comfort, Joy, Assurance, and Proof.

2. Functional Use of these Scriptural truths in the life of the individual.

The Habit of Daily Bible Reading and Prayer (Devotional Life)

Appreciation and Reverent Use of the Divine Services and the Sacraments.

Holy and Sacrificial Living According to God's Law as an Expression of One's Personal Faith

II. What does the teacher hope to accomplish in the individual so that he can take his place in society? Concerning the home we have formulated our objective in general terms as follows:

1. The nurturing of individual members to build and maintain a Christian home on the basis of Scriptural principles.

Preparation for Christian Marriage

The Ability of Parents to Bring Up Their Children in the Nurture of the Lord

The Proper Relation of Children to Their Parents

The Art of Christian Living in the Home

The Proper Use of Leisure Time By All Members of the Family

The second major area of living in our social relationship is, of course, the church. Here our objective is

2. The nurturing of individual members for greater participation and leadership in the work of the local congregation and of the church at large.

A. Acquaintance of the individual members with the work of the congregation, Synod, and the church at large, with a view to greater participation in this work.

B. Leadership training for the activities of the congregation and the Church (administration, education, missions, charity, etc.)

C. A sense of stewardship in cheerful and proportionate giving.

D. Acquaintance with, and appreciation of, the history of the Church, including that of the local congregation.

E. An understanding and appreciation of the liturgical heritage of the Church.

3. The nurturing of individual members in the evangelization of the community and the world at large as well as for Christian citizenship and community activities.

A. Evangelism

B. Christian Citizenship

An interest in the Welfare of the Community by Participation in Social, Economic, and Political Activities

The Realization of the Importance of Prayerful Use of the Rights of Suffrage

Loyal Citizenship

Love and Sympathetic Understanding Toward Persons of Other Races, Nationalities, and Religious Convictions³

It is out of this framework of general objectives of Christian education that the specific objectives of instruction of youth for

³Arthur C. Repp, "The Objectives of Parish Education," reprinted from Concordia Theological Monthly (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, July, 1948), p. 5.

confirmation were drawn. From this framework there emerged a thorough educational process for those who desired to become communicant members of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. A curriculum was constructed for this specific purpose, particularly for the young people who, according to tradition, completed their formal education on the elementary level at the ages between twelve and fifteen and were then considered eligible for communicant membership. The transition from the German to the English language, also in this phase of education, namely the instruction of youth for confirmation, was slow and gradual until America's entry into World War I. At the present time The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod is 95 per cent English. In this transitional period it became necessary to re-evaluate the catechetical procedures. Long before this time, of course, the pastors were faced with the problem of instructing not only those in the Christian day school but also the children of members attending the public schools, as well as children from the homes of the unchurched enrolled in Sunday School. Adequate provision was made to provide catechetical instruction outside of school hours. Because of the problems attending this important educational process of instructing the youth for confirmation, the need for a coordination of practices and for precise general statements of goals and objectives became more apparent.

H. D. Mensing, a Lutheran contemporary of these developments, spoke of the work of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod among its youth. A translation from the German of his views reads:

In this discussion belongs also the instruction for Confirmation. These are truly richly blessed hours during which the pastor (Seelsorger) instructs the children as he perhaps never again will have the opportunity. Our fathers have utilized this privilege

faithfully and conscientiously. Thereby they have used very wisely the best preventive to forestall the defection of youth.⁴

Mensing emphasized also the value of Christenlehre, referred to briefly in the previous chapter. Such Kinderlehre was a presentation of a section of the catechism on Sunday afternoon or during the regular service time in the morning, designed primarily for the candidates for confirmation, but extending also to the confirmed youth and the adult membership. Mensing said:

As our Synod then published the Agende, there was also presented the formula for catechism examination. Important are, therefore, the directions which read thus, "The Christenlehre will be held in the afternoon with careful planning, instead of the regular worship service, and this not only for school children and candidates for confirmation, but also for the confirmed of every age, for it is the experience of hundreds of years that in this way the knowledge of Christian doctrine and soul-saving truth is best planted in the hearts of youth and maintained and fortified in the hearts of adults."⁵

Mensing proceeds to decry the fact that Christenlehre seemed to be a dying custom. However, Mensing looked hopefully to the increased establishment of Bible classes on Sunday morning.

An increased awareness of the need to study this subject led to conference papers, convention presentations, and some few published articles. Perhaps the most complete and precise article for that day was the "Preparation of Confirmands or the Instruction of Catechumens," a reprint of an article in the Concordia Theological Monthly, by Herman A. Steege. This reprint was prefaced by a presentation of the "Objectives of Confirmation Instruction" by Paul Koenig. For the sake of completeness, these objectives are reproduced in their entirety. Since it is the first

⁴Prof. G. Metzger, Denkstein Fünfundsiebzigjährigen Jubiläum der Missourisynode (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), pp. 263-265.

⁵Ibid., p. 265.

thorough treatment of the subject matter and still accepted by many as a reliable guide in setting up their curriculum for confirmation instruction, the outline with a prefatory note provided the needed perspective.

By confirmation instruction we mean that special course of instruction given by the pastors to the candidates for confirmation or confirmands during the months immediately preceding confirmation.

Such confirmation instruction should presuppose previous religious training, such as is given in the Christian school. Where no such school exists or where children did not attend the Christian school, this previous training should have been given not merely in the Sunday-school, but also in a good Christian home, in Saturday-schools, summer schools, and, if at all possible, in a special training-class meeting regularly at least twice a week for a year previous to the confirmation instruction.

Confirmation instruction should give the pastor an opportunity for heart-to-heart talks with the children, for real Seelsorge.

Preparing adults for membership in the church requires special attention. Some are heathen when they enter our church-membership classes; others are former members of false churches, but are acquainted with the fundamental doctrines of the Bible. Many must first be baptized before being received into the church. By and large the above objectives can be applied also to adult classes. However, the necessary adjustments must be made as conditions may require.

Outline

- I. Thorough Indoctrination in the Fundamentals of the Christian Religion.
 1. To give the child a better understanding of the doctrine of sin.
 2. To impart a deeper knowledge of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

- II. Preparing for the Rite of Confirmation.
 1. To teach the child the meaning and appreciation of Holy Baptism.
 2. To enable the child to confirm his baptismal vow by renouncing Satan, his works and his ways, and pledging loyalty to the Triune God.

- III. Training for Intelligent Church-membership.
 1. To enable the child to make an adequate examination of his life according to the Ten Commandments.
 2. To teach the child the meaning and appreciation of the Lord's Supper.

3. To enable the child to judge Christian doctrine on the basis of the Word of God.
4. To cause the child to realize what church-membership implies:
 - a. Diligent church attendance;
 - b. A life of prayer;
 - c. Constant use of the Word of God;
 - d. Regular attendance at Holy Communion;
 - e. Willingness to give time, effort, and means for the support and the extension of the Church.

IV. Training for a Christian Life.

1. To enable the child to have a clear ethical judgment on all matters pertaining to every-day life;
2. To prepare the child for the duties of Christian parenthood;
3. In general, to lead the child to reduce to practise the teachings of God's Word.⁶

Drawing on the Scriptures and other available sources, Steege sketched the background of confirmation instruction. He pointed up environmental problems. Steege used three categories:

1. The child from the Christian Lutheran home attending the Christian School, well founded in Scriptures, catechism, Bible history and hymnody.
2. The child from the Christian Lutheran home not attending the Christian elementary school but coming to Sunday School faithfully and receiving Scriptural and catechetical training at home.
3. The child from unchurched homes having little or no religious background, except possibly the training in Sunday School.

Steege recognized the problem of dealing with all three groups and made the observation, particularly concerning the last category, "Such children, of course, present special problems and must be especially dealt with."⁷

Steege further stressed the importance of this activity of the Lutheran pastor, which is second only to his public preaching. He advocated careful planning, the practice of good common sense, a patient,

⁶Herman A. Steege, "The Preparation of Confirmands or the Instruction of Catechumens," Concordia Theological Monthly, III (May, 1932), p. 351.

⁷Ibid., p. 357.

loving, concerned approach to the students by every Christian pastor.⁸

This pamphlet was published by resolution of the Educational Conference of the Missouri Synod which met in Milwaukee, June 13 and 14, 1932. The following resolutions were passed:

1. To urge all District boards of education to bring the subject of confirmation instruction to the attention of the pastors of the District;
2. To this end to ask the District Presidents to discuss this subject with visitors and to encourage discussions at conferences;
3. To ask the Synodical Board of Christian Education to have a reprint of one thousand (1,000) copies made of Rev. Steege's article and to ask the District Boards to distribute this pamphlet with the understanding that the General Board be reimbursed for copies ordered.⁹

Herman Steege and Paul Koenig were among the first to attempt an articulated study of the specific aims and objectives of instruction of youth for confirmation in contrast to the general aims of Christian education itself. In the interest of orientation in this distinction the following statements of Steege were quoted.

Briefly stated, our aim is, by the help of God's Spirit, who exercises His power in the Word, to bring men to the Christian faith or to indoctrinate them so as to make them intelligent church-members, able to examine themselves and to be of service to their Savior, their Church, and their fellow-men....And this aim must ever be borne in mind while we are engaged in our catechetical work; it must, in fact, put its imprint indelibly upon the entire work, must give the proper direction to this work.

Our own members largely have the mistaken notion, too, that the chief aim of the instruction is confirmation.

....confirmation is merely a human rite, which could be dispensed with, while the catechetical instruction is divinely enjoined.

⁸Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁹Ibid., p. 20.

Further, our aim is not merely to prepare converts to the Church, but to prepare converts to, or members of, the Lutheran Church. We hold that our instruction must achieve a Lutheran consciousness in our confirmands.

Before admitting any one to communicant membership in the Lutheran Church, a pastor should assure himself of the individual's attitude toward Scriptural doctrine....We do not want to receive them into our membership merely as Christians, but as Lutheran Christians.

The ultimate aim of our indoctrination is directed, not at a class, not at numbers, but in every case at the individual. The individual's soul is to be saved, the individual's faith is to be purified and strengthened, the individual is to be provided with the necessary doctrinal equipment, so that there may be a tolerably intelligent understanding of Christian truth and an ability to meet the apostolic demand: "Let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup."¹⁰

Although one thousand copies of this presentation were printed, they did not enjoy wide distribution. Even though the work of Paul Koenig and Herman A. Steege were good for their day, they cannot be considered final nor adequate for today. This is a matter of major importance which needs constant reassessment and studied definition. To demonstrate some of the confusion prevalent in segments of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, the conclusions of a recent research project reveals,

A perusal of the aims as expressed by these pastors shows that they are vitally concerned in their aims to produce doctrinally educated laity. Practically all of them begin the statements of their aims by stating that they aim to give the children a good knowledge of the fundamental truths of the Christian religion. To the furtherance of this aim the pastors also aim to give the children a good treasury of Bible doctrine. It appears that this conference is keeping the high standards of the Lutheran Church in striving for a well-indoctrinated laity. Yet is it a question whether the methods they employed really achieved these ends. Unfortunately, a number of pastors were quite vague in stating their entire aim in confirmation instruction. One pastor left the entire section blank. An answer as, "To bring Christ to the child," although very true, does exhibit a lack of clear thinking or a lack of crystallization of the particular aims of confirmation instruction.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 13-14.

While the intellectual aims as expressed by the pastors did receive much emphasis, the personal relation of the child - the personal desire to be in communion with the means of grace and live a holy life - did not receive as much emphasis. A good number of the pastors showed that they were concerned about it, but only a small number showed by their aims that they clearly knew what they were aiming for. That few mentioned the instilling of love for the Scriptures, and familiarity with the Bible, that few mentioned a desire to hear the Word of God and participate fully in public worship, that few mentioned as an aim the desire to grow and the conviction of sinfulness, seems to indicate that the aims of a personal, emotional life of the catechumens are not what they should be.

A good number of the pastors show that they are interested in influencing the will of the child. They seem to be interested in influencing the future life of the child, very little stress is on the present. There was no uniform way of stating the aims. A good number of the pastors aim to encourage the child to stay with the church, support it, and attend services. Several pastors stress the instilling of the desire to stick to the church. The stress by a number of the pastors in instilling the desire to use the means of grace diligently is also a fairly good indication. Church attendance and communion attendance are mentioned frequently. Willingness to give time and effort to the church is also mentioned. But is this all there is to sanctification? It seems that the pastors really are not thinking of the sanctification of the heart, but only a few outward manifestations of church attendance. Perhaps it is significant that prayer life was not even mentioned once. There also could be more stress on the means of grace, since their use is the only thing which is able to keep the Christian faithful. There is a definite lack of clear thinking on the training in Christian living. With a few good exceptions, a lack of aims in instilling social ethics, duties of Christian parenthood, and an exemplary life, is painfully evident. Aims for training in mission work, a point stressed almost fanatically by the Baptists and Seventh Day Adventist, is also conspicuously absent. Of the pastors only one mentions that he aims to prepare the children to do also mission work of their own.

One writer has divided confirmation aims into these categories: Christian conduct, Christian character, Christian conviction, and Christian confession. (11) The aims which the pastors stated were good on the last two, but poor on the first two. Most of the pastors stated that their aim was by the help of God's Spirit, who exercises His power in the Word, to deepen, instill, lead into the knowledge of the Savior and their own sinfulness or to indoctrinate

11Paul J. Hoh, from Robert T. Koehler, "A Survey of the Confirmation Instruction of the Children Within a Pastoral Conference" (May, 1948), p. 50.

them as good church members, able to examine themselves, but they were not so sure what their aims were in causing the children to be of service to their Savior, their church, and their fellowmen.

Their aims were more intellectual than functional. The functional was limited quite often merely to more indoctrination, more passages, more doctrines to use than applications and a more thorough use of the Word and what the children had received. What were functional aims did not seem to strike at the heart of the matter - sanctification of the heart - but was satisfied with emphasizing worship, the means of grace, contributing to the church, all which makes for an outward, formal Christianity. The right attitude of the heart was barely mentioned. It sounds as though the pastors were emphasizing only the outward matters of support of the church in order to support the ministry. It could be a vicious circle if the pastors stress only these things and give the children the impression that the pastors only want to perpetuate those policies in order to continue the church and the need for their office. Again, the aims impress one as being intended for the distant future instead of the present. The pastors want catechumens who will be good church members, who will have a good foundation for life, who will contribute, and so forth. They say nothing about striving for catechumens who are good members. All is future, not present.¹²

In his evaluation of the results, Robert Koehler substantiated a statement made by Paul E. Kretzmann.

Our Church is in danger of suffering with a cold intellectualism, but the dignity and power of the Word of God will not be lost if we make an honest attempt to link its truths with the experience of our children and young people, lest they receive the impression that Christianity consists in knowing a given amount of Scripture facts from memory instead of a living faith resting in a living Christ and receiving from Him a daily and hourly measure of spiritual power.¹³

Illustrating the varied views of pastors within a single local conference, Koehler submitted the verbatim answers of these pastors.

AIMS Since aims are among the most important parts of instruction, the answers that each one gave to the question,

¹²Robert T. Koehler, "A Survey of the Confirmation Instruction of the Children Within a Pastoral Conference" (May, 1948), pp. 39-41.

¹³Paul E. Kretzmann, The Teaching of Religion (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), p. 51.

"What are the results you wish to achieve in the children?" will be indicated:

A pastor who is in a small town and has a medium-sized congregation writes:

Commit to memory six chief parts with explanation, Christian Questions and parts of the Table of Duties, all Books of the Bible, some selected hymn verses, about 150 Bible verses - selected from the Catechism. Ability to answer (not necessarily memorized) the questions under the Explanation of Luther's Catechism (Mo., new).¹⁴

Familiarity with the Bible and ability to use the same (find books and verses. Read it. Meaning and use of cross-references.)

Instill in them the conviction that they are sinners and that Jesus is the only Savior. Salvation is by faith alone, but that faith without works is dead. Convinced of the idea that God has given us only three means of Grace - must continue to use them.

Encourage them to stand on their own feet after confirmation as to Bible reading, church attendance, and support, especially attending and registering for Holy Communion. Be an example to others, even to parents.

The Pastor who has a small, new mission in the outskirts of the metropolitan area of the Twin Cities says:

The results that I wish to achieve are these: 1) a sound Biblical doctrine 2) a Bible-educated Christian 3) a church that has indoctrinated confirmands. The aims bind in with the results of the course. 1) to educate the child for his later church life, 2) to prepare child to meet the three great enemies of his faith, 3) to prepare child to do mission work of his own and thus aid the pastor in his work.

A pastor who has a fairly large church in a completely rural area writes:

To have them learn the majority of Scripture passages and Bible stories. Try to interest them in order that they will be interested to continue their religious education following confirmation. We aim to instruct them in Walther League meetings after confirmation.

¹⁴A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943).

A pastor who has built up a fairly large congregation in a northern Wisconsin town states:

1. To impart to them the fundamental truths of Christian religion. 2. To strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ their Savior. 3. To prove that faith by a life of godliness and holiness to the glory of God and the salvation of their souls.

This pastor who has an established congregation in a small town states:

To bring the children to Christ through the teaching of God's Word.

A pastor who is in a small, old congregation in a small, settled community says:

My chief aim is to teach the children to know the Savior and that we are saved through faith in Him alone. I tell them that their lessons are not the end of their learning the Bible, but only as an introduction to the wonderful truths, and that on the basis of what they have learned they should now listen to the sermons and search the Scriptures so that they can learn more of the Bible and then stand up for the truth at all times. I want to keep them steadfast in the faith through the operations of the Holy Ghost, and keep them in the church.

A pastor in a medium-sized, growing church in a mid-western town writes:

Not only to indoctrinate sufficiently for intelligent and active communicant membership in the congregation, but also to instill a desire to grow in such knowledge and understanding by continued private reading and church attendance, etc.

A pastor in a fairly large metropolitan church says:

Indoctrination. Preparation for Holy Communion. A love for the Word preached at public services.

The pastor who is in a small congregation in a completely rural area writes:

As comprehensive a knowledge of the Bible and its chief doctrines as possible as the foundation and the basis of their faith and the assurance of everlasting life.

A pastor who has a very large metropolitan church says:

To deepen the transforming knowledge of Christ in the heart and bring it into action in the life of the child.

To keep the instruction as unmechanical as possible, so as not to convey the impression that Christianity is a matter of rules but of life under the freedom of the Gospel, even for children. To impart and create a love for the Bible, an understanding and intelligence, as well as heartfelt participation in public and private worship. To lay the foundations for a life-long adherence to the faith and fellowship of Jesus Christ.

A pastor in a small congregation in a small community writes:

To instill in the child a proper fear, love, and trust in God. That this may be, they must learn to use, believe, where possible understand, and apply to themselves God's Word. Since the time is so short, they must be set on the right path with the hope and prayers that they may continue in it even unto death. The minimum aim must be to prepare the child so it can partake of the Lord's Supper to its benefit and be an active communicant with all the privileges and duties involved.

The City Missionary in the metropolitan area writes:

At Gillette (Hospital) children in three different wards are being prepared for confirmation. Results desired: Sufficient knowledge of the fundamental teachings of the Christian religion, especially giving the Holy Spirit an opportunity to work through the Word on the hearts of the children. Since the children are handicapped, they usually have not received a minimum of religious instruction, or even Sunday School attendance has been irregular or impossible in the children's respective home churches. Sunday School classes at Gillette, conducted by women from our Lutheran Mission auxiliary and several students from Concordia College, help augment the knowledge of Bible stories.

At the Boy's School (Totem Town) the older boys are taught once each week by the institutional missionary. Since these boys frequently come from broken homes, or have been handicapped by poor environments, it is evident that they have little knowledge of things spiritual. Results desired: To lead them into God's truth and to give the Spirit of God an opportunity to influence their hearts and minds. If the knowledge of the teachings of the Christian religion in certain boys is sufficient, and we are convinced that they may receive the Sacrament of Communion with blessing, they are confirmed in a public service in the institution in June.

A smaller group of boys, listed as Lutheran, are taught by a Primaner....Results desired: Bring knowledge of Bible stories and teach most important chief parts of the catechism. Bringing Christ to the boys is the aim.

The pastor in a very large metropolitan church with a parochial school writes:

An increased knowledge of Christian doctrine. A treasure of Scripture passages committed to memory. Ability to examine oneself preparatory for Holy Communion. Regular and attentive church attendance.

The pastor in a small congregation in a completely rural area writes:

To indoctrinate thoroughly enough that the child may know himself to (be) a sinner, whose only hope of salvation is in Christ Jesus, his Savior, whom he is to serve with a godly life, that he may know that a diligent use of the means of grace is the only thing that may keep him in the faith and help him to serve his Lord as he ought. In addition the child is to understand the work and worship and heritage of his church sufficiently for his age to induce him willingly and gladly to promise faithfulness to the Lutheran Church of the Synodical Conference.

A pastor who has a small mission in a small community writes:

To bring them to the point where they understand the plan of salvation as much as possible.

A pastor in a fairly large metropolitan church left the section on aims entirely blank.¹⁵

In some instances the pastor had well-defined specific objectives, but in most instances confused them with the broad objectives of Christian education in general.

The presentation by A. C. Mueller was perceptive and unquestionably a profound contribution to the ensuing meetings called to wrestle with the problems of confirmation instruction of Lutheran adolescents. In his introduction Mueller identified this junior confirmation instruction as the clincher. He said,

Confirmation instruction is basic in the Lutheran philosophy of education. We might call it the clincher. In the course of

¹⁵Koehler, op. cit., pp. 13-17.

growing up, every Christian must be taken through the discipline of intensive instruction so that he will know why he is a church member. Every Lutheran should know why he is a member of the Lutheran Church. A Christian school is also basic in the Lutheran philosophy of education, but unfortunately only 30 per cent of our children enjoy the advantages of a Christian school. To this day no Protestant Church has discovered a means of satisfactorily preparing children for church membership and for the Christian life through substitutes or part-time agencies. As a result, at least 60 per cent of the children attending Sunday School do not unite with the Church, and are lost unless they are regained later through revivals or evangelism. Children attending a Lutheran Sunday School receive an inadequate foundation in Christian doctrine, yet the Lutheran Church, or at any rate our Synod, has thus far succeeded in keeping the majority of its children with the Church. The likeliest reason for this is that confirmation proves to be the clincher.¹⁶

This lucid and perspective approach led to a fruitful and analytic evaluation of instruction of Lutheran youth for confirmation, although the essayist expressed his dissatisfaction in characteristic humility by stating, "I close this presentation with the conviction that I have not done justice to the subject."¹⁷

In an informal, easily-understood style Mueller then proceeded to define and limit what he meant by aims or objectives. His assertions were,

Aims or objectives are purposes indicating the things the teacher hopes to achieve through his efforts in the classroom. The aims may be so general as to afford little guidance to the instructor, or they may be one-sided with the emphasis on knowledge almost exclusively, and only a slight emphasis on the Christian life. Preparation for worthy reception of Holy Communion has sometimes been stated as the aim of confirmation instruction. However vital such preparation is, the aim gives the pastor very little guidance for his instruction. Scherzer says the goal of confirmation is the ground the learners in the truths of the Word. This, too, is vital, but it can hardly be accepted as a satisfactory statement of purpose. In seeking to ground children in the truths of the Word, the pastor may be so factual and

¹⁶A. C. Mueller, "The Objectives of Confirmation Instruction" (January 16, 1951), p. 1.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 10.

intellectual in his presentation as to leave the child cold and emotionally and spiritually unmoved. Any religious instruction that aims at transmitting knowledge for the sake of knowledge, and that does not take the nature of the child into account and minister to his present spiritual needs, is defective and will not achieve the full purpose of confirmation instruction.¹⁸

Mueller followed this with a sharp criticism of those who thought of youth confirmation instruction only in intellectual terms.

It is my conviction that we have so intellectualized faith as to lead many into the notion that faith is believing what the Bible teaches; believing that Jesus died on the cross to save sinners. The trust aspect of faith, and the aspect of power in transforming life, is not brought out into relief. Sanctification consists in daily repentance, in the daily struggle between the Old Man and the new nature, but we have brought up a generation of easy-going church members, who are scarcely aware of the struggle because they have not attained sufficient maturity in Christian knowledge and experience to recognize the struggle. I am not attributing this entirely to the inadequacy of our instruction, but in view of the weakness of the spiritual life in our midst we should in all seriousness and with unsparing criticism examine our methods of instruction.¹⁹

Thereupon Mueller favorably reviewed the statement of objectives by Paul Koenig with but one mild criticism. After he checked Reu's views, Mueller proceeded to sharpen and define his view of a major objective he called "training."

What is noteworthy in this statement of aim? (1) The keynote of instruction is training, not the mere transmission of knowledge. In order to train we must reach the emotions and the will as well as the intellect. (2) The instruction of our youth is broader than the Catechism. It includes training in worship, the use of the Bible, introduction to church history, to the work of the church, and to the history and problems of the local congregation and synod. (3) Due attention is given to the child's training for his personal life of faith and for participation in the life and work of the congregation. Too often our instruction has aimed, chiefly at imparting to the individual the truths of the

¹⁸Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 2.

Word with a view to his personal Christian life and with little — reference to active participation in the life of the Church. As a result, church work is restricted to a little group of faithful ones.²⁰

At this point Mueller introduced a modifying factor in the broad objective of sanctification. Although this was recognized as the work of the Holy Spirit, the essayist held that pastors must maintain efficiency. He stated,

We must make due allowance for factors which are beyond our control. We cannot create or increase faith. All we can do is to create the conditions most favorable for the operation of the Holy Spirit. When we have done our best we shall observe that the Word of God functions weakly in many of our members. But we are here to find out how we can improve our confirmation instruction, and therefore we ought to ask ourselves whether we are actually creating the conditions which are most favorable for the activity of the Holy Spirit. In other words, have we set ourselves clearly defined aims and have we employed methods that are consistent with those aims and calculated to lead to their achievement in a reasonable degree?²¹

The second major subdivision of the paper dealt with the desired modification or change of behavior.

Having looked at the objectives of confirmation instruction in their broader aspects, let us investigate the purpose or goal of the pastor for the individual study period. One of the most important terms that has come to the fore in present day education is modification or change of behavior....

The children who come to our classes are taking their first steps in the Christian way of life. They may have some right attitudes which need to be encouraged, and many wrong attitudes which need to be changed if they are to experience Christian growth. Our task is to bring the Word of God to bear on these children so that they will be sanctified more and more. We must never lose sight of the fact that being a Christian is a constant struggle between the old sinful nature and the new nature....

When we think of our task as working for modification of behavior, in other words, when we center our attention on the child and the

²⁰Ibid., p. 4.

²¹Ibid., p. 5.

changes that are to be produced in him, rather than upon the subject-matter and its transmission, we shall begin to question the heavy theological menu with which we have been trying to establish the child in grace. We shall free ourselves from the theological strait-jacket which intellectualizes instruction.²²

Mueller concluded this section with a searching question for every Lutheran pastor engaged in instructing adolescents for confirmation.

A question every pastor should ask himself before each class session is: How can I utilize this subject matter so that the class period will be another season of spiritual growth? Spiritual growth has to do with the total child, his intellect, his emotions and his will.²³

As a summary of this section Mueller stated,

We have said, then, that the aim of the pastor in his confirmation instruction is sanctification or spiritual growth. We want to ground our children in the knowledge of revealed truth, thus giving them a clear understanding of Christian doctrine and its implications for life. We want to train the child's emotions to the end that he will have a robust and healthy emotional life and develop and maintain those attitudes which are consistent with a living faith in Christ. And we want to energize the will so that knowledge of the truth will always be accompanied by doing or obedience to the truth.²⁴

In a third division of his presentation the essayist synthesized and systematized his personal views in three main points beginning again with a penetrating question stated precisely.

Now, if he is to teach elementary Church History, for example, is it not possible that some class periods will have a strongly informational tone and will, therefore, effect little or nothing in the way of spiritual growth? In answer to this question I would call attention to the influence the singing of a hymn, united prayer, and the warm spiritual atmosphere of the period should exert on the young. Besides, we can make use of the Word of God in teaching Church History or any other subject, and we are then employing the means of grace.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., p. 6.

²⁴Ibid., p. 9.

The question is, nevertheless, legitimate. Perhaps we shall find the most satisfying answer to it by making a three-fold distinction. We may say that confirmation instruction embraces (a) proclamation of the Word, (b) transmission of information, and (c) training.

Proclamation (Verkuendigung) is not only a New Testament concept, but it is a concept which has become firmly rooted in the theology of the Lutheran Church. The position of the Lutheran Church is that the Scriptures are God's revelation of the saving truth, that every human being is by nature ignorant of this truth, and that it must be brought to him, that is, proclaimed, or made known. Without minimizing the efficacy of the written or printed Word, The Lutheran Church has always considered the living witness or proclamation the most powerful means through which the Holy Spirit operates upon the human soul of persons who have reached the age of discretion. Christian pastors and teachers are "heralds" (Kayriges) of the King of Kings who proclaim the Magnalia Dei, the great things God has done for the salvation of sinners, and all teachers of the Word are so to regard themselves....

Secondly, confirmation instruction embraces the transmission of information. One of the purposes of confirmation instruction certainly is to take the children into the Bible, to teach them the mechanics of the Bible, to train them in the skill of handling the Bible, and to lead them into the very heart of the Scriptures, so that they will be able to judge doctrine, and learn the art of feeding on the Word. Here the informational aspect of instruction will be prominent. Again, the children are to become acquainted with the history of the church, with the story of the Lutheran Church and of their own Synod and congregation in particular. Here, too, the informational purpose predominates....

Thirdly, confirmation instruction embraces training. We have already discussed this matter, so I shall not enlarge upon it. I wish only to say that training is to go hand in hand with the proclamation of the Word and the transmission of information. We recognize Christian training as a shared task, the major responsibility resting upon parents.²⁵

The purposes of instruction of youth for confirmation in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod were stated in an organized fashion by a Lutheran educator in the St. Louis area engaged in secondary Christian education, Paul W. Lange. In a paper presented to the St. Louis Pastoral Conference

²⁵Ibid., pp. 9-10.

on November 9, 1953, Lange expanded the fundamental purposes and listed them in twenty statements.

1. Thorough indoctrination in the fundamentals of Christian religion.
2. To produce a personal decision for Christ and loyalty to His Word.
3. To make Christianity relevant to every situation in life.
4. To prepare them for proper participation in and appreciation of Holy Communion.
5. Training in intelligent church membership.
6. To show each individual the way to heaven through Christ.
7. To have each one understand and memorize a certain number of Scripture passages and a certain amount of the Catechism.
8. To lead them to everything in life that is good and noble.
9. Training for a Christian life.
10. Preparing for the rite of confirmation.
11. To bring the love of Christ closer to their heart.
12. To establish a spiritual bond between the pastor and the young people.
13. To lead the children into an ever fuller appreciation of God's love toward them in Christ Jesus, the Savior.
14. To teach skills in Bible reading and to lay the foundation for a life-long searching of the Scriptures.
15. To sharpen their conscience toward sin in their own lives.
16. To teach the love of God. Instill love for God. To live a life of love.
17. Demonstrate how religious truths are applicable to life.
18. To start them in the study of God's Word. To know and to apply God's Word. (I do find it difficult to apply some facts to the life of a child).
19. Help him to build a Christian home.

20. Make it live.²⁶

Since Lange, as principal of Lutheran High School in St. Louis, was involved in the Christian educational process which follows immediately after confirmation, he studied this matter carefully and was considered an authority in this field. In a critical manner, the educator examined the fundamental purposes, and found some too general and broad, oftentimes teacher-centered or subject-centered. Lange held that such objectives should be expressed in terms of the pupils and their behavior. Lutheran pastors as educators, no less than other educators, should concern themselves with the laws of learning, proper motivation, and anticipated wholesome reaction. In categorical directives the Lutheran high school principal maintained that good teaching is possible only after careful planning. Lutheran ministers must be open-minded and use the most effective strategies whereby they may achieve God-pleasing, Bible-founded objectives. With a graph to demonstrate, the Lutheran lecturer suggested that the subject matter to be taught be transmitted through an established continuity, preferably by the unit method, and then sequentially the doctrinal truths will penetrate the consciousness, the emotion and the will of Lutheran young people and ultimately integrate and relate the knowledge and action of the pupils to everyday life.

Lange stated further that knowledge is only a means to an end and not the end in itself. He asserted that Christian knowledge is almost meaningless without resultant observable Christian behavior. There must be an implication for daily living implicit in acceptable religious

²⁶Paul W. Lange, "The Objectives of Instruction for Confirmation," a paper presented to the St. Louis Pastoral Conference (November 9, 1953).

instruction. Lange listed fifteen proposed approaches.

1. Attempt to know and to understand the individual as a personal friend through frequent group meetings (3+ per week) and private visits and counselling periods.
2. Review Luther's Catechism.
3. Assign Bible readings and practice in use of Bible.
4. Apply the lesson each day to life situations.
5. Ask pupils to explain in their own words.
6. If unable to memorize but able to explain, we are satisfied.
7. Personal talks with individuals after class.
8. Reviewing Kurth's Catechetical Helps and work sheet.
9. Crafts, discussion, prayer techniques, films.
10. By inductive method to think through Biblical truths and to assimilate them in their thinking.
11. Develop a feeling of delight in the study of God's Word.
12. Problems approach.
13. Impart as much knowledge of God as is possible.
14. Work books as review.
15. Counsel with parents.²⁷

In dealing with the proposition of memorization, Lange reflected the opinion held by many pastors today in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, who recognize that verbatim repetition is not necessarily knowledge. ←
 Although memory could be a good tool for thinking, Lutheran youth must know the answer to the question "Why?" If Lutheran pastors desired to continue to use memory as a helpful tool, they would profit by the advice that much more is remembered in context than in isolation. In order to

²⁷ Ibid.

make memory work functional, pastoral educators gave to their young people gems of the Bible, the catechism, and the hymnal, which aided in fortifying their religious understanding.

An observation by Elmer Witt, Executive Secretary of the Walther League, the youth organization of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, indicated that there seemed to be a general lack of information and factual knowledge of faith perceptible among Lutheran adolescents. Witt stated, "Factual knowledge of our faith not very high. Is it because there is less and less memorization?"²⁸

Lange listed other problems which pertain specifically to the psychology of adolescents. How can one create a felt need for such religious instruction in the children? Other problems of adolescents were listed, such as their desire for acceptance and approval involving their fears of being different; anxieties concerning isolation; an exaggeratedly strong desire to belong to the gang. To these were added the problems of the perplexing inconsistencies which confuse young people today; the seeming lack of faith in adults (namely the shallowness of adults which interprets itself in a religion which is a mere exercise); the problem of current economic conditions, prosperity and the resultant availability of money; the difficulties attendant upon the period of instruction, either extending the school days of Lutheran youth several times a week or encroaching upon an otherwise free Saturday morning; self-consciousness resulting in a blase exterior to hide their insecurities; entirely new relations to parents and adults. In stating the objectives

²⁸Elmer Witt, "Accent on Youth," quarterly newsletter to pastors (January, 1955).

of Lutheran instruction of youth for confirmation, Lange made a provocative, stimulating contribution to the thinking of Lutheran pastors in the St. Louis area, but included therein also the fields of methodology and educational psychology.

Lange concluded with the observation that the instructor should hope to bring about significant changes in the student's behavior (thinking, acting, feeling). The pastor in charge would desire to identify the change he endeavored to make in the individual, perhaps along this line.

I. Student's acquisition of a sharper recognition and identification of the nature and gravity of sin as it applies to his life now and through eternity.

a. Content found in the doctrine of sin and the law.

b. Implementation is found in life.

II. The student should accept the Scriptures as the revered will of God and use it faithfully and willingly as his true norm of behavior over against God and man. (Behavior pattern--use God's Word daily. Catechism to be used only as a frame of reference.)

III. Student's gratitude to Christ. An earnest endeavor to live the life of love pleasing to God (doctrine of salvation combined with the doctrine of sanctification--good works).

IV. Significant lessons are assimilated over a long period of time. Rarely can this be accomplished in the short time devoted to catechetical instruction exclusively. Thus, for effective church membership, it is the church's duty to begin early and by all means to continue religious education beyond the point of confirmation.²⁹

Our examination of such formal and semi-formal statements led also to an older publication, Henry C. Boettcher's contribution, which, however, concerned itself more with methodology and psychology than with pure

²⁹Lange, op. cit.

objectives. Using the format of Boettcher's book, the aims of confirmation instruction were stated thus.

II. AIM

The aims for each unit have been stated in terms of the head, the heart, and the hand: knowledge, attitude, and habits.

A. Knowledge

The foremost objective is evidently still knowledge, understanding, insight. We dare not slight knowledge, lest we fall into emotionalism. Every pastor and teacher prays for well-indoctrinated members. Therefore, in this manual, the instructor is frequently reminded of basic principles of learning. He is encouraged to begin by proceeding from the known to the unknown, from the recent to the remote in time, from the near-by to the distant, from the concrete to the abstract, from that which is interesting to that which ought to be interesting, from the personally experienced to that which should be experienced....

B. Attitude

Religion has much to do with the heart. Those who are neither warm nor cold God threatens to spew out of His mouth. (Rev. 3:14-16) Therefore a special word of encouragement needs to be said in behalf of appealing to the heart of the learners....

For the purpose of the appeal, the admonition to Christian educators in 2 Tim. 2:15 is very important: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." Law and Gospel must be rightly divided and rightly applied....

Lutheranism is not an emotional religion. Perhaps that is all the more reason why we must constantly be on guard, also in the classroom, against sterile orthodoxy....

C. Habits - Skills - Behavior Patterns

Justification is the core of the Bible....In the light of this central Bible truth none dare boast and none need despair....The very purpose of Christ's redemptive work is often stated in terms of a sanctified life, for example: "He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:15)....

D. Sanctification

Faith in Christ, justification, joy in Jesus, comes first in time and first in importance.even as works which do not flow from faith are dead works, so also faith without works is dead. Intellectually is it necessary to separate the two. In life it seems impossible to separate one from the other....

While we are opposed to the social gospel, we ought not to be unmindful that the Gospel has important social implications.... "Not every man that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21)....

III. CURRICULUM MATERIALS

A. Bible

The Curriculum Materials are essentially those texts, Bible stories, Catechism questions and answers which are found in Luther's Small Catechism and the Synodical Exposition of that Catechism. Anyone using another kind of Lutheran Catechism will not find it difficult to change the question numbers to fit in with these units. The Bible stories which are found in the Catechism (SC) are marked with an asterisk. This section has been greatly enriched. This is in keeping with the trend in education to read extensively in connection with a unit of instruction. The popular titles for each story will help to make these interesting and more easily remembered by the pupils. All stories found in the Advanced Bible History (CPH) are included. The Bible Church will want its youth to be familiar with the Bible itself. Hence the importance of much actual Bible reading.³⁰

A theological statement in a synodically-accepted volume observed,

Confirmation is not a divine institution, but an institution of the Church. If rightly used, it proves to be a great blessing. Those who are to be confirmed should be thoroughly instructed in the Catechism and thereafter confirmed in accordance with the established usage in the Lutheran Church as prescribed in the Agende.

Historical Note.---The rite of confirmation was performed in the early Church immediately after baptism, both that of children and that of adults. Later it was observed as a separate rite and by the Roman Catholic Church was taught to be a Sacrament. Not until the seventeenth century was confirmation generally observed in the Lutheran Church.

The characteristic feature of confirmation is not the renewal of the Baptism covenant (this should be done daily), much less is it a necessary complement to Baptism, but the characteristic and essential feature of confirmation is that those to be confirmed are able to confess their knowledge of all the chief Christian doctrines and their Christian faith. The necessary prerequisite

³⁰H. C. Boettcher, Instructor's Manual for Luther's Small Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946), pp. XII-XVII.

of confirmation therefore is a thorough instruction in the chief doctrines of the Christian religion (indoctrination). Indoctrination itself is not optional, but is commanded by the Lord Himself. To prepare children (or adults) hurriedly and superficially for confirmation is not good for the individual nor for the Church. The chief doctrines of the Christian religion (according to the order of the Catechism) should be well learned on the basis of clear Scripture-texts in order that a Christian may have a sure foundation for his own faith, be able to defend it against the false teachers, and be able and encouraged to confess it. The principal Bible-stories of the Old and New Testament should be studied. It is desirable that a number of Christian hymns, preferably those of Lutheran origin, should be learned by heart.³¹

In the recently published Lutheran Cyclopedia The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod associated the specific aims of confirmation instruction with general objectives of religious education.

Confirmation instruction. - Confirmation is a rite by which the individual confesses publicly his adherence to the teachings of the Lutheran Church and enters into communicant membership of the Church. It is preceded by a course of instruction taught by the pastor, based chiefly on the Catechism. The instruction is a capstone to the elementary educational program of the church.³²

Such formal statements within The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod have been amplified currently by workshops connected with graduate studies, designed for both the teachers and pastors of this church body. Such workshops have been fruitful in stimulating thinking in the area of objectives and to a degree have borne fruit in articulate expressions of objectives in terms of the learners, rather than in terms of subject matter, lecturer, or congregation.

Most of the official statements, excluding only some in Koehler's study, agreed on the following essential aims for the instruction of youth for confirmation.

³¹John H. C. Fritz, Pastoral Theology (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1932), pp. 127-128.

³²Erwin L. Lueker, Lutheran Cyclopedia (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), pp. 783.

This instruction should enable the confirmand to examine himself according to Scriptural command, so that he could attend the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Preparation for worthy reception of Holy Communion was generally accepted as one of the primary objectives of junior confirmation instruction.

Another generally accepted objective stated in slightly different ways was a deepening and extending of Scriptural knowledge with a view to confessing this as faith and witnessing to others.

All statements are agreed to varying degrees that loyalty to the Lutheran faith and faithful participation in congregational life are desired outcomes in the confirmands. Some go so far as to insist on a dedication not only to the Christian teachings, but also the inculcation of a specific Lutheran consciousness.

In the general objective which was stated as a training for the Christian life, however, we were already slipping back into general aims of Christian education and not remaining with the specifics of junior confirmation instruction unless limited somewhat. At this point it was recognized that junior confirmation instruction in most instances continues aims which were previously accepted by the home and church and would continue to be pursued after confirmation, thus pointing up the developmental character of this Christian educational instrument.

Right here the views of the various writers began to diverge. Mueller proceeded to press the point that anticipated modification in change of behavior, even though sanctification is a variable, would indicate to some degree the successful realization of a major aim in junior confirmation instruction. This change of behavior as a desired outcome

of instruction for confirmation was described as a development and maintenance of those attitudes which are consistent with a living faith in Christ. Mueller held that energizing the will of the Lutheran confirmand, so that the knowledge of Scriptural truth would be accompanied by a doing or obedience to God's revealed truth, was an important objective to be ranked with worthy preparation for the second sacrament and readying for meaningful church membership. To this end Mueller suggested that the teaching pastor proclaim the Word of God, transmit the needed religious information systematized in Luther's Small Catechism, and train the youth being instructed through Christian discipline.

Boettcher's approach to this area was predicated upon a slightly altered categorization and lacked the precision of Mueller. The general statement of aims was made in terms of knowledge, attitude, and habits. In the section titled "attitude" Boettcher spoke primarily from the vantage point of the instructor and the conclusion, though valid, is not too clear. However, in this section a caution was voiced warning against a sterile orthodoxy which was recognized and opposed by the majority of other writers. Cold intellectualism was certainly labeled as a grave danger in formulating objectives for junior confirmation instruction. Under "sanctification" Boettcher developed the desired thrust into life and the community, but only in a limited fashion using the stilted, theological phrasing which wed sanctification and justification. Most of what was stated by Boettcher could relate to general Christian education and hence lacked the precision in stating specific aims for instruction of adolescents for confirmation.

Lange shared the awareness of the other writers in including the practical applications of such Christian instruction for youth. He spoke

not only in terms of intelligent church membership, preparing for the rite of confirmation, thorough indoctrination in the fundamentals of Christian religion, and preparation for a proper participation in and appreciation of Holy Communion, but he proceeded to wrestle with the same concepts as others in the realm of desired outcomes in terms of Christian behavior.

Thus was the fourth point of Koenig in his original presentation of aims expanded and focused. My only criticism of all these efforts shared Koehler's critique that aims stated were weak in the area of Christian conduct and character. In addition this study revealed one other weakness. Although there was a wooden attempt to keep the frame of reference by referring to Lutheran youth and confirmation instruction, the unique, developmental nature of this Christian educational activity was not formulated as precisely as it might have been. As most of the objectives were stated, they could well have been applied to Christian education in general, particularly in the category of sanctification. This finding sharpened the aim of this study which then attempted a more precise statement of objectives for junior confirmation instruction emphasizing especially the developmental, on-going nature of Christian education.

What should be included in our instruction course from each of the following fields:

1. Doctrine and Bible Study

2. Christian Music

3. Church History

4. Organization and Function of the Congregation

5. The Word

6. Practical Guidance and Directives in the Art of Christian Living.

7. Prayer

CHAPTER IV

SYNODICAL AND INTERSYNODICAL ATTEMPTS TO COORDINATE THE INSTRUCTION PRACTICES OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD

In recent years increasing consciousness of the need to compare notes within a rapidly growing Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod was noted, particularly on the official levels. A significant action and one of the first large scale efforts of its kind to begin approaching the problems of Christian education in the specific area of confirmation instruction was a Workshop in confirmation instruction, conducted on the campus of Concordia College, Fort Wayne, Indiana, in 1952.

Careful examination of the papers presented convinced one that this was a truly significant attempt to approach the educational problems involved with an open mind. Earnestly concerned educational leaders sought to find God-pleasing answers in a well-rounded, well-defined evaluation of this valid and valuable instrument for adolescent education in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

Of particular significance to our topic was the presentation by Erdmann W. Frenk and the papers read by Arnold C. Mueller. George R. Naumann stated,

What should be included in our instruction course from each of the following fields?

1. Doctrine and Bible Study
2. Religious Music
3. Church History
4. Organization and Function of the Congregation and the Synod
5. Practical Guidance and Directions in the Art of Christian Living.
6. Missions

- 7. Stewardship
- 8. Child Training¹

Much of the old material, such as the efforts of Paul Koenig and Herman A. Steege were reviewed and analysed. Conclusions were carefully drawn, and in some instances expanded. The focus was clarified and sharpened considerably. Many of these findings were then embodied in new publications. In a careful re-study of the Confirmation Instruction, by Paul Koenig, several significant changes were suggested. First of all, the scope was enlarged considerably. It was noted that the community consciousness seemed to be missing. Training the child in the art of public and private worship was suggested as a valid segment of instruction for confirmation. Skill in using the Bible was added to the major objectives. Personal evangelism became one of the primary goals. A significant addition was the desire to develop in the child a Lutheran consciousness. A criticism stated further was this,

The Objectives of Confirmation Instruction, by Paul Koenig, do not directly indicate the necessity of the pastor's concentrating in every class period on the spiritual growth of the learner. This is due, not to any inherent weakness in the statement, but to the brevity with which the objectives have been set forth!²

Some pressures were applied to The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod at this time which led them to the careful study of confirmation practices and pointed up the need for arriving at clear-cut objectives.

Since that time, in addition to its numerous other duties, the Board for Parish Education of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod had

¹George R. Naumann, "Content and Instructional Material for Confirmation Classes," paper presented at a workshop in confirmation instruction, Fort Wayne, Indiana (1952), p. 1.

²Arnold C. Mueller, "Objectives of Confirmation Instruction," presented in August, 1954.

been rendering service to the pastors of this church body relative to careful preparation of instructional materials and broadening the rather limited horizons of the pastors and teachers in establishing immediate and ultimate objectives for this important educational function.

Just a few words on the presentation by Erdmann W. Frenk. After a rather incisive historical survey, Frenk stated in outline form the following areas where improvement could be made.

1. The Extension of the Scope and Curriculum of confirmation instruction.

In addition to the Six Chief Parts, he suggests a survey of the history of the Church and the life of Martin Luther, an acquaintance with synodical missions at home and abroad, instruction in the actual operation of the local congregation, an appreciation of the various orders of service, including also that of the Lord's Supper, and a recital knowledge of Lutheran hymns. He would like to add to this certain disciplines, such as regular church attendance, prayer life and leading in prayer, self denial in the interest of church support, and daily Bible reading.

2. Chart and Balance the Program of Instruction in the Light of the Hours available.³

The observation was made that each pastor must arrange his own schedule according to the available hours. Certain cautions were voiced by Frenk.

Divide the ground to be covered by the hours available. Guard against misplaced emphases. A study of revealed religion must have the right of way over what is known as natural religion. Anything pertaining to the three absolutes in Christianity, namely, the Triune God, the Word, and God's plan of salvation must come first. There is no justification for spending one half of the year with a detailed study of the Ten Commandments and then skipping hurriedly over the other five parts of the Catechism. Neither is there much vision in making confirmation instruction exclusively dogmatic.

³Erdmann W. Frenk, "Improving Confirmation Instruction," Lutheran Education (November, 1949), LXXXV, 2.

3. Greater Emphasis on the Bible and the Use of the Bible.

Here we might note that the latest instruction materials, particularly the Workbook to the Growing in Christ Catechism has done a splendid job in encouraging the use of the Bible as a primary text.

4. Simplification of Instruction.

This was the problem with which Martin Luther wrestled when he condensed the doctrinal Scriptures, first into the Large Catechism and then into the Small Catechism. We must continue to wrestle with the problem of communicating in simple, easily understood terms and illustrations the necessary teachings of Scriptures.

5. Enlisting Parental (home) Support and Cooperation.

Confirmation instruction to be effective must be home supported and worship directed.

6. Maintaining a High Spiritual Atmosphere For Confirmation Instruction.

Naturally, this depends upon certain personality and physical factors.

7. Dress Up the Confirmation Service.

A public confession of Christ and identification with His Church must always be a happy, festive occasion.⁴

As one of the leaders of this workshop, A. C. Mueller, in his thought-provoking and scholarly manner, led the entire group into some very serious thinking concerning the proper use of confirmation instruction in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. Much of his paper was reviewed in the former chapter and was reflected in the findings and conclusions of Committee I at the Intersynodical meeting conducted at the DeKoven Foundation.

Since that time the Board for Parish Education, in conjunction with leading scholars from the seminaries and teachers' colleges, conducted

⁴Ibid., p. 3.

workshops in confirmation practices and instruction.

Such synodical studies of practices and objectives led The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod to see the need for comparing notes with other synodical bodies utilizing the same practices. Thereupon a Lutheran Intersynodical Committee on Parish Education was established.

By resolution of the Intersynodical Committee on Parish Education at its 1953 meeting, a Seminar on Confirmation and Confirmation Instruction is to be held at the DeKoven Foundation for Church Work, Racine, Wisconsin, in August, 1954.

The purpose of this seminar is to re-examine Confirmation and Confirmation Instruction in the light of the development of Lutheran parish education, specifically:

1. To study and evaluate factors involved in youth confirmation instruction.
2. To set up some general guiding principles based on such re-examination.
3. To indicate implications for curriculum, methods and materials, both with regard to synodical boards and local churches.
4. To summarize the findings and make them available to participating groups.

In lining up the procedures it was resolved that the project was to be cleared with the respective Boards for Parish Education. This has been done and the correspondence indicates that almost all Boards have ratified participation of the project as of February 10, 1954.

Participation was to be made on the basis of general size of the group. Originally the following representation was suggested:

United Lutheran Church	- 12
Lutheran Church-- Missouri Synod	- 12
Evangelical Lutheran Church	- 9
American Lutheran Church	- 8
Augustana Synod	- 5
United Evangelical Lutheran Church	- 3
Lutheran Free Church	- 3

In a rich, focused and articulate program, leading scholars addressed themselves to the varied problems involved in confirmation and confirmation instruction. The establishment of seven committees, each with a

significant and specialized area of research, demonstrates the enlarging scope of effort and thought in this important educational function of the church. We list them:

- Committee I - The Aims of Confirmation Instruction
- Committee II - The Content of the Confirmation Course
- Committee III - Pedagogical Principles and Methods of Confirmation Instruction
- Committee IV - The Use of Activities in the Confirmation Learning Experience
- Committee V - Integrating Confirmation Instruction and Confirmation into the Total Christian Education Program in the Parish
- Committee VI - Evaluating Our Work in Confirmation Instruction
- Committee VII - Enlisting and Developing Parental Support and Cooperation During the Confirmation Instruction⁵

The subject at hand relates primarily to the report of Committee I. The committee was composed of A. C. Mueller, J. C. K. Preus, Theodore K. Finck, Martin J. Heineksen, and A. C. Streng. This report is significant in the development of confirmation objectives.

Confirmation is a rite established by the church which comes at the conclusion of a special period of instruction. In it, after preceding examination, the confirmand publicly professes the Christian faith in which he was baptized and as a maturing Christian promises to remain faithful in the profession of this faith and the practice of the Christian life as a member of the church. The assembled congregation prays for the continuing gift of the Holy Spirit upon him.

Some prefer to classify the goals of confirmation instruction according to knowledge, attitudes, and conduct. However, since all three are so closely interwoven, we prefer not to follow this procedure. The aims are, therefore, so stated as to presuppose that the total person is always involved.

We recognize that confirmation instruction is a part of the total Christian instruction and that, therefore, the aims will not differ essentially from those to be achieved by the total program. However, confirmation instruction does differ from other Christian instruction in that it is an intensification

⁵"Minutes of the Seminar on Confirmation Instruction," R. A. Vogeley, Secretary Pro Tempore, DeKoven Foundation for Church Work, Racine, Wisconsin (August 24-27, 1954), pp. 2-4.

and focalization of all previous instruction and prepares the confirmand for participation in the Lord's Supper and all the privileges and responsibilities of communicant membership. It also takes into account the varying background of the catechumens and seeks to insure that each one receives at least a minimum knowledge of the way of salvation. At the same time, for the large majority, the aims may be expected to be achieved to a greater degree than heretofore in accordance with increased maturity.

In general, confirmation instruction aims to train and nurture the individual for his own personal life of faith and to prepare him for more active participation in the full life and work of the mature congregation.

More specifically, this involves the following aims:

I. Personal Commitment to Christ

- A. Increasing love of Christ as Savior; fellowship with the Triune God; acceptance of total discipleship.
- B. Appreciation of the sacraments
 - 1. Understanding of the purpose of baptism
 - 2. Use of baptism in daily living (Rom. 6:3-4)
 - 3. Appreciation of the regulation of confirmation to baptism.
 - 4. Understanding and regular use of the privilege of the Lord's Supper.
- C. Growth in personal devotional life
 - 1. Effective practice of prayer
 - 2. Devotion to Christian truth
 - 3. Impulse toward lifelong growth under the Holy Spirit's guidance
- D. Growing in joy in the fellowship of Christ in good seasons and bad

II. Understanding of the Chief Doctrines of the Christian Faith

- A. A deepening acquaintance with the historical bases of Christianity
- B. Understanding of the divine plan of salvation in and through Jesus Christ.
 - 1. This involves an overview
 - 2. How the parts fit together
 - 3. How they are intimately related
- C. Knowledge of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier

- D. Warm and humble personal appreciation and acceptance of these holy truths by the help of the Spirit of God for holy living.

III. Desire and Ability to Use the Bible with Skill and Profit, by

- A. Attainment of a good working acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures and a deep love of its saving contents.
- B. Growth in the understanding of the Word and loyalty to the revelation of God's purpose and plan of salvation.
- C. Increasing willingness to accept and obey the will of God as expressed in Holy Writ and as preached and taught in the church.
- D. A growing appreciation of the blessings of regular use of God's Word in private and family devotions.

IV. Understanding of the Nature and Purpose of the Church, and Active Participation in the Life and Work of the Church

- A. Knowledge of the history of the church, church body, and congregation as a prerequisite for the enjoyment of the church's privileges and the fulfillment of one's duties as a church member.
- B. Such interest in the spiritual welfare of others as will lead to personal soul-winning, to prayer for the expansion of the church, and to generous giving.
- C. Faithful church attendance and diligent use of the Means of Grace.
- D. A growing interest in the work of the local congregation and readiness to participate according to opportunity and ability in this work as a teacher, officer, member of congregational organization, or in any other capacity.
- E. Acquaintance with the liturgy, hymns, and prayers of the church, and ability to use them with intelligence and profit.
- F. Awareness of the church as a spiritual fellowship consisting of the saints on earth and in heaven, and a growing anticipation of eternal blessedness as the ultimate destiny of all who remain faithful to their Savior unto death.

V. A Greater Measure of Fulfillment of the Law of Love in Daily Life in the Relation to the Fellowman in the Home, the Community, the State, and the World

- A. Realization that love is the fulfillment of the law
- B. Devotion to the building of true community
- C. Understanding and practice of the universal priesthood of all believers
- D. Understanding and practice of the Christian calling
- E. Understanding and practice of Christian stewardship
- F. Proper attitude and conduct in regard to sex and family living

The following material has in part served as the source of the above statement of aims. It is preserved here upon the request of the members of the workshop and will be found usable by pastors and those who prepare catechetical materials.

In more detail the aims of confirmation instruction may be stated as follows:

- a. An acquaintance with the historical basis of the Christian faith and its central doctrines; an understanding of the divine plan of salvation in and through Jesus Christ; knowledge of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.
- b. An acquaintance with the moral law as summarized in the Ten Commandments and the ability to distinguish between right and wrong; a sensitized conscience enlightened by God's Word, restraining from wrong-doing and helping in the fulfillment of duties.
- c. A knowledge of the difference between salvation by grace and salvation by works; trust solely in Christ's merit; prompted by love and gratitude to live a life of holiness and good works; the awareness that the knowledge of God's Word is useless unless it expresses itself in action and that faith without works is dead. The knowledge that love is the fulfillment of the Law and that the Christian life is to be motivated by the fear and love of God; awareness of the importance that Jesus attached to mercy, pity, and sympathy with the lost, the abandoned, the afflicted, and delight in kindness and mercy.
- d. The recognition of the value of prayer including intercession for others and the cultivation of the prayer life; some skill in the art of free prayer in the presence of others; the ability to follow the liturgy of the church; intelligently and to engage in public and private worship; the recognition of the value of God's Word as it is preached and taught in the church and of the privilege and duty of hearing the Word; the cultivation of the habit of regular attendance at worship.

e. A deeper understanding of the meaning of Baptism and the Baptismal covenant; the realization that at the root of sanctification is the struggle between the old man, or the sinful heart, and the new man in Christ and that watchfulness and prayer overcome temptation and win the victory (Rom. 6:3-4). A growing awareness of his continuing sinfulness, and a corresponding appreciation of God's grace and forgiveness and of the need of divine grace to overcome the flesh and live an uncompromising Christian life.

f. An understanding of the Sacrament of Holy Communion and the desire to receive it and to become a regular and faithful communicant.

g. The knowledge of being united with God and with Jesus, and the consciousness of the presence of God and of Jesus, the Friend of sinners; a fellowship with Jesus as an aid in keeping the heart pure and denying worldly lusts, in overcoming fears and worries and in living a godly life.

h. Skill in handling the Bible, the habit of regular Bible reading and the ability to find important Bible passages; the reading of the Bible for information, for the cultivation of devotional life, and as a guide for daily living.

i. An understanding of the meaning of the Christian priesthood and of stewardship; the realization that time, talents and money are given in trust, and are to be used in the service of God and call for self-denial and generous giving; the recognition of the need and value of work and the desire to serve God and man in a useful occupation; that diligence and faithfulness are to be practiced in work and study; the belief that God has a plan for his life and through daily prayer for guidance, asking for the direction of the Lord, this plan may be known.

j. Interest in the salvation of others, prayer for courage to win others, and personal participation in soul-winning; prayer for the conversion of sinners, for mission work and charitable endeavors.

k. Holy reverence for God and for things that are sacred in the sight of God; deep regard for God's Word, respectful behavior in church, and reverent and submissive behavior toward parents, pastors, teachers, and all God-given superiors.

l. Learning more and more as a Christian to control the emotions; that uncontrolled emotions injure health and undermine spiritual life; that anger, hate, envy, jealousy, fears and worries are sinful; that forgiving and peacemaking are desirable; that Christian joy grows out of God's promise of grace and the assurance of forgiveness; and that the child of God practices tongue control.

m. An elementary knowledge of church history, familiarity with the life of Luther, the Reformation, and the story of the Lutheran

Church. Knowledge of church and congregation make for deeper interest in its work, lead to Lutheran consciousness which makes possible an evaluation of other denominations and an appreciation of the Lutheran Church.

n. The knowledge that while suffering and adversity to believers as well as unbelievers, for believers they are a wholesome chastisement intended for spiritual growth and leading to submission to the will of the Lord and patience and cheerfulness in suffering.

o. An appreciation of the responsibility in maintaining a Christian atmosphere in the home.

p. A consciousness of the duty to set a good example as a Christian citizen, to take an interest in the community, and to help promote its welfare. The attitude toward persons of another race or color as one of love and sympathetic understanding and the removal of all prejudice.⁶

Although these aims did not represent the sole view of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, primarily because of certain conditions stated in these objectives, nevertheless this excellent summation was certainly helpful in defining and focusing the goals of this study. The statement is lengthy and ponderous, however, making it somewhat impractical. In some instances it is too broad and lacks the precise statements needed for just one function in the Christian educational process. One valuable contribution made by this intersynodical statement was that there is a definite blending of the "traditional" and "developmental" views showing that they are not mutually exclusive as some argue.

⁶"Aims of Confirmation Instruction," Report of Committee I, Intersynodical meeting, DeKoven Foundation for Church Work, Racine, Wisconsin, August 24-27, 1954, pp. 1-5.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The attention of the general public has been drawn to the Lutheran custom of confirmation in varied popular articles, periodicals as well as newspapers. At times such articles are rather loose, disorganized, and misleading. Such an article appeared in an issue of the Post Dispatch.

To prepare himself for Lutheran Confirmation, Terry Thompson had two years of religious instruction in one-hour-a-week classes held by Pastor Wolf. This instruction centered around what is called the Small Catechism, drawn up by Martin Luther, out of whose teachings the Lutheran Church took form some 400 years ago. In it, Luther condensed the principal teachings of the Bible into a series of questions and answers, presented under five headings; the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and the Sacrament of Communion.

The Confirmation course also included a brief study of the Bible in its relation to secular literature, some church history and an explanation of the humanitarian work of the church and the duties of members.

As Confirmation day approached, Terry and the others in his class shared a feeling of rising excitement and anticipation. First there was the final examination before the Church Council. It proved easier than Terry had hoped, because the confirmands were asked only one or two key questions.

Pastor Wolf had explained to him that the stern old Lutherans of earlier days had required children to memorize the entire Catechism. On examination, they were brought up before the congregation and were required to answer questions fired at them by the members. Although the ordeal of examination is much easier today, Pastor Wolf pointed out, the reasons for it are still the same: to impress upon the child the seriousness of Confirmation and to make parents realize the necessity of religious instruction.

On the Saturday preceding Confirmation Sunday came the "rehearsal," when Pastor Wolf and the confirmands went through the entire ceremony.¹

¹Karl Kohrs, "A Lutheran Boy Takes His Vows;" "Coming of age in three faiths: no. 1;" "Parade;" St. Louis Post Dispatch (December 4, 1955), p. 9, Col. 2 & 3.

This was an unfortunately oversimplified account of confirmation instruction as a valid religious educational procedure within the Lutheran Church. Confirmation instruction was much more involved than merely teaching subject matter and custom. The confusion of methods and materials, as well as customs and personalities, beclouded the issue of desired outcomes in relation to adolescents.

A denominational newspaper article emphasized the interest and concern about confirmation instruction and demonstrated the complexity of the problem.

Your editorial "More on Liturgy" in THE LUTHERAN LAYMAN of May 1, 1955, stated: "During this past Palm Sunday confirmation season, many pastors apparently preferred to pledge their confirmands to remain loyal to Christ, the Christian church, or the teachings of the Bible, rather than to The Lutheran Church as stated in the agenda. Some seem to think it is not right to pledge a Christian to loyalty to a human organization."

May I add my humble comment? The vow of the confirmand as stated in our agenda, asks first: "Do you hold all the canonical books of the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, and the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church drawn from the Bible as you have learned to know it from Luther's small catechism, to be the true and correct one?"

And then: "Do you also, as a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, intend to continue steadfast in the confession of this church, and suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?" And the final question asks: "Finally, do you intend faithfully to conform all your life to the rule of the divine Word, to be diligent in the use of the means of grace, to walk as it becometh the Gospel of Christ, and in faith, word and deed to remain true to the Triune God, even unto death?"

These questions tell me that the promise of the confirmand and of members of the Lutheran Church is one of loyalty not to a human organization, not to the Lutheran Church as such, but to those confessions of our church which are drawn from and based upon the clear teaching of Holy Scripture.

We have every reason to be proud of the confessions of the Lutheran Church because of their clear statement of the teachings of the Lord Himself and because they breathe the spirit of eternal truth. But the confirmand at our altar gives a vow of loyalty first to

the Triune God and to His Word and--then--to the confessions of the Lutheran Church because they accurately profess the teachings of God.

Should the time come, God forbid, that the Lutheran Church should stray from its beautiful confessions and from God's Word, I for one would encourage those who made their primary allegiance is to the Word and to those confessions which voice God's Word rather than to a church body. I am confident that I would be one in a multitude of Christian people who would take that same view.

Your statement that the agenda pledges confirmands "to remain loyal...to the Lutheran Church" indicates a danger in the agenda's wording, unless it is carefully explained. I took the liberty to discuss this matter with a number of our fellow Lutherans who, I found, held the same view your editorial reported regarding the meaning of the vow as stated in the agenda.

I believe that we ought not take chances on a matter as important as this. It is essential that Christian people--and certainly also Lutheran Christians--focus their loyalty aright, directing it to God and to His sacred Word. Our pastors ought certainly instruct confirmands carefully regarding their vow. Perhaps an amendment to the agenda's wording might help prevent innocent but dangerous misinterpretations. If so, such an amendment would be much worthwhile.

I believe that the interest and the discussion that was evoked by this topic in THE LUTHERAN LAYMAN has been a fine thing for the church. We commend you for all THE LUTHERAN LAYMAN has done in furthering the Lord's cause and we bespeak God's continued blessings upon you and your service to His Church.²

Another rather well-written article in a magazine granted the popular reader a deeper insight as to the significance and background of confirmation with its intensive instruction. The very first paragraph indicated the sensitivity and awareness of the reporter.

Nearly all Christian churches have some kind of ceremony to admit young people into "communicant" membership. It is a status in which they have the right to participate in the Lord's Supper. In the Lutheran Church, as in most others,

²Rev. Paul Spitz, "Letters to Layman offer clarification," 'Confirmation Vow,' The Lutheran Layman (June 1, 1955), p. 5, col. 1.

this right is conferred by confirmation. Carl Tryggestad, pictured on these pages, confirmed his faith in the presence of his family and the congregation of Concordia Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. He was one of a class of 19 boys and girls. Having received instruction over the years since their baptism, they were welcomed as communicants by the Rev. C. S. Lystig, their pastor, in a ceremony that is at once festive and solemn. Lutherans think of the rite, not as mystic or magical, but as a lifelong source of inspiration and strength and an enduring spiritual treasure. The members of Carl's confirmation class, all between 14 and 15, learned the tenets of their faith through the "small" catechism, propounded in the 16th century by Martin Luther. The small catechism is not a substitute for the Bible, but is intended to help a young person understand and love the Bible more. It presents a summary of the truths and doctrines of the Divine Word as recorded in the Scriptures, and is offered to a child as a primer in his education in the realities of sin and grace. The period of special indoctrination by the pastor varies, but usually lasts about two years. Without such preparation, Lutherans feel, the confirmation service would be reduced to a mere formality.³

One of the general observations to which we were drawn was the complexity of the subject at hand. Objectives have a way of remaining nebulous and obscure, unless they are definitely related to a specific existing structure within the church. To this end it was essential for the individual researcher, as well as officially directed boards of education, to determine their present position in terms of the professional training of the pastors carrying on confirmation instruction, time available to the modern American adolescent, as well as to the church in its program, the materials made available by specialists in the field, and the cooperation of the home in attaining the goals established.

Another inference which was drawn was the possibility of variation. Certainly there were differences noted in approach and resolution of problems dependent in part upon the personalities involved, as well as

³Chester Morrison, "A Boy Confirms His Faith," Look (March 19, 1957), pp. 91-92.

the physical factors of the individual congregation. There were, however, certain basic concepts and essentials on which there should be general agreement, and these were best formulated and articulated by educators and theologians of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod in close consultation with men from the field.

Since religious education, as all educational processes, was to a degree fluid and changing and must be re-evaluated and re-studied periodically to meet changing conditions and resolve new problems, it was essential that no dogmatic or rigid structure be established which was considered sacrosanct and unchangeable.

It was certainly desirable that the confusion and bewilderment still somewhat apparent among the pastors of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod be reduced and minimized by a precise, carefully articulated, yet sympathetic proposition emanating from workshops and official sources.

The program of developing objectives for confirmation instruction was progressing satisfactorily on official levels. However, before completely satisfactory objectives could be formulated and promulgated, there should be a clarification and statement of a Lutheran philosophy of education. Rian observed,

However, neither the Lutherans of the Missouri Synod, nor any other Lutheran body so far as we can discover, have an integrated, unified and complete system of educational philosophy such as the Roman Catholic philosophy of education. There are some books which deal with pedagogy and which elaborate upon Martin Luther's educational principles, but not a single volume exists which attempts to do what A Catholic Philosophy of Education, by Redden and Rian, does for Romanist education. This is a sad lack which should have been remedied long before, especially since the Missouri Synod has been engaged in Christian education for one hundred years.⁴

⁴Edwin H. Rian, Christianity and American Education (San Antonio, Texas: The Naylor Company, 1949), p. 205.

At the present time The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod had undertaken a two-fold task. It proceeded by laying the groundwork for establishing a definitive Lutheran philosophy of education, both from the synthetic and analytic viewpoint, and thereafter proceeded to fit into the proper place the various religious educational processes involved, including instruction of youth for confirmation. In the interim, however, it was to the advantage of every pastor and congregation to attempt a reasonable formulation of specific objectives stated in terms of desired outcomes in the life of the adolescent students, in order to chart and prepare a focused curriculum and make profitable use of the excellent lesson materials available.

To this end we concluded the study by a statement of specific objectives as they might be currently used. Although the problem was complex, the statement of objectives was to be as concise and as simple as possible and was stated in terms of the adolescent student, as well as the subject matter.

This personal statement of objectives for junior confirmation instruction rested heavily on the findings of a workshop in confirmation instruction conducted in the summer sessions of Concordia Seminary by Repp, 1956. This personal statement follows.

In its historical framework in the Lutheran Church, confirmation instruction had usually been considered an essential part of confirmation. It was maintained to this day as a required prerequisite for the churchly rite of confirmation. The theological reasoning for such instruction was sound. In order to be declared eligible for participation in the second sacrament, the young adult must be able to examine himself. Hence, the

confirmand must be conversant with the Scriptures. In this situation Calvinists pressed for an emotional awareness of conversion. In the Lutheran Church, however, certain goals were established in terms of knowing the Scriptures as contained and condensed in Luther's Small Catechism.

Through the years confirmation instruction had become more than a preparation for the second sacrament. It was also an agency which drew together and summarized for the adolescent all previous religious instruction, whether given in the home or in the church. Thus, the confirmation instruction is a focalization, intensification, and extension of religious knowledge which would serve as a starting point for an adult interpretation and application of spiritual tenets. Thus the confirmand as a more mature person will be equipped to meet his growing responsibilities in both the spiritual and the physical areas.

It might be noted here also that confirmation, neither as a religious educational procedure, nor as a church rite, could be considered a completion of Holy Baptism, other than that it fulfills an obligation accepted at the time of baptism, both by the sponsors and the church in the exhortation

that he (she) may be brought up in the true knowledge and fear of God, according to the teachings of the Lutheran Church and faithfully keep the baptismal covenant unto the end.

Or the alternate,

And be taught the holy Ten Commandments, the Christian Creed, and the Lord's Prayer; and that, as he grows in years, you place in his hands the Holy Scriptures, bring him to the services of God's house, and provide for his further instruction in the Christian faith, that, abiding in the covenant of his

Baptism and in communion with the Church, he may be brought up to lead a godly life until the day of Jesus Christ.⁵

The desired outcome of confirmation instruction should be that every confirmand as a child of God and professed believer in Jesus Christ have a more fully developed personal faith-life. He will be carefully and conscientiously prepared to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. As a maturing Christian he will be able to assume more fully his responsibilities as a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

To this end the catechumen will study the Word of God as contained in the Holy Bible, systematized and clarified in Luther's Small Catechism with its attendant workbooks and appendices.

Thus, he understands and appreciates more fully the importance and significance of the Scriptures to his life.

He has a more meaningful and deepened devotional life.

He recognizes to a greater degree his privileges and responsibilities as a member of a Lutheran congregation.

⁵The Lutheran Agenda (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House), pp. 4-5.

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