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A MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE EARLY
CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER FOR
EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH

Henry H. Biar

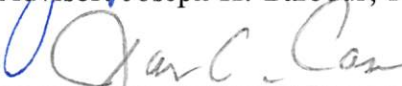
May 1994

Concordia Seminary
Saint Louis, Missouri



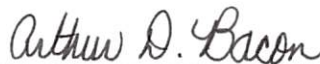
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**A MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE EARLY
CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER FOR
EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH**

Henry H. Biar

DEDICATION

This Major Applied Project is dedicated to the many pastors and congregations of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, who have an outreach dream for the work of the growth of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who as Luther states “calls, gathers and enlightens the whole Christian Church on earth.” It is my desire that this project be of help to these people and churches so that we fulfill our calling as witnesses of Christ to people who are either outside the Kingdom of Jesus Christ or who have wandered from the Kingdom. It is my hope that people will see that the Early Childhood Development Centers in our congregations can be seen not only as a place where parents are able to house their children during their working hours, but also a place where the love of Jesus is taught and shared with children and parents by the staff of these centers.

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PREFACE

The rationale for this project is that the Early Childhood Development Centers of our Synod are, I do believe, not being used to their fullest potential as outreach for the congregation's program of Evangelism. This is not to say that they are not appreciated by the pastor or the congregation in which these centers are housed.

There is indeed a need to help congregations in our Synod to be able to reach out to the unchurched in their centers. A questionnaire and the tabulated results are found in Appendix 1.

It appears that the majority of care centers were usually housed as a service to the community, and somewhat as a service to the membership of that congregation who work outside of the home and who want a Christian milieu for their children's day care. There are a number of pastors who believe that their centers help to bring people to their churches; however, they do nothing beyond housing the center or furnishing staff and materials. The pastors, as a whole, believe that their centers are used as a tool for outreach, but on a more passive than active basis.

As a result of this questionnaire, I came to the conclusion that some sort of outreach program should be made available to the congregations so that they might be able to make better use of their Early Childhood Development centers as tools for Evangelism through the training of those teachers in the center who would be open to participating in such a program sponsored and directed by the congregation.

There are important reasons for the Early Childhood Development Center's

existence, and why The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod is involved in having the centers in our congregations. This project presents a brief history of the reason for the birth of the Early Childhood Development Centers, the congregations in our Synod that house them and the importance of why we should seek to bring the Gospel message of salvation to those not in Christ who use the congregation’s Early Childhood Center.

Furthermore, I have shown how one is able to use the boards of Evangelism and Education in putting together a program that can be implemented to use the center as a more effective outreach tool through the teachers of the center. Those teachers who were willing to accept the challenge of being evangelists on behalf of the center were trained and shown how to be evangelists in the center on behalf of the congregation. There is an explanation of the procedure involved and the use of a training video that was devised and used to provide the training one needs to do outreach through Caring Evangelism. There is also a procedure that I set up which can be used to review and to correct the outreach program on an ongoing basis.

Abstract

This paper showed that the Early Childhood Development Center can be an effective outreach tool for Evangelism through staff members' involvement. This explanation was accomplished by giving an historical background of *why* the day center was created in the first place, and the way the center can be used for effective outreach by a staff trained for this purpose. This vehicle can be used as one of the many avenues for outreach. The staff members, when properly trained, will accept this possibility of assisting in Evangelism on behalf of the parish.

CHAPTER 1

GOD'S LOVE FOR THE WORLD

GOD'S LOVE SENT JESUS

God's love for the world was so great that He gave His one and only Son that people might come to know and believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16 [RSV]).

From the Scriptures we know that humanity has gone its own way, “We all, like sheep, have gone astray; each of us has turned to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6 [NIV]). “There is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:22-23 [KJV]). As a result there was no way back to God. It would take the love of someone outside of humanity to bring people back to God again, namely, the Father's great love for us, who sent this Jesus Christ to be sin for us. He knew no sin, but He took the sins of the world upon Himself on our behalf so that, through the perfect keeping of the Law by Jesus Christ, humanity might be made righteous in the eyes of the Father. This same Jesus Christ entered the world to die on our behalf so that we might not have to face the just decree of a holy God. Jesus Christ took the condemnation of humanity upon Himself. It is based upon “the fact that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;

for God made Him to be sin for us who knew sin, so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (II Corinthians 5:19-21).”¹ “It is the glad news that Christ was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification (Romans 4:25).”² Therefore, since God justified the world through Jesus Christ, there is peace with God:

We no longer look upon God as our angry Judge, but we consider Him our dear heavenly Father, who has received us into His household and will take care of us in time and in eternity.³

Yes, Jesus Christ became our way back to God. Through His suffering, death, and resurrection from the dead, the Father has cancelled out all our debts of sin and declared us to be righteous in His most holy eyes.

No longer are we a people who are on the wide road to destruction, but we have been called out of this darkness called sin into His marvelous light. Humanity has the promise of salvation in Jesus Christ both for now and for eternity. Therefore, all who believe in this Jesus Christ see and know Him as the One and only Savior.

Thus, Jesus Christ is known by Christians as the Savior of the world. There are a number of passages from the New Testament that state this to be true. “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10 [KJV]), as well as “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a

¹Theodore Laetsch, ed., *Abiding Word, Vol 1.*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), 119.

²Ibid.

³Theodore Laetsch, ed., *Abiding Word, Vol 2.*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), 254.

ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28 [NIV]). Also, “For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Matthew 9:13 [KJV]). These passages tell us that Jesus Christ came to make a difference in this world both for now and for eternity. He came to make the non-saved into the saved—to take those who were condemned sinners and to make them redeemed sinners. All who believe in this Jesus Christ are now a new creation, having a new relationship with God in Christ: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God . . . who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9. [NIV]). This means that people who believe in Jesus Christ are truly redeemed and made God’s people, having this new and wonderful relationship made possible by God through the Holy Spirit, who calls us into faith through the works of Jesus Christ. Luther states this in the Explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed:

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, My Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.⁴

THE MESSAGE OF LOVE MUST GO OUT

But who is going to do this? How will it happen? It is going to take place because Jesus Christ has given the Church the words of promise that He would never leave us nor forsake us, but would be with us until the end of time so that His Great Commission would be fulfilled: to bring people the Good News of salvation. In turn,

⁴Martin Luther, *Luther’s Small Catechism*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1943), 11.

the people would be kept in that salvation by teaching the words of the Scriptures throughout all generations.

Yes, Jesus has this mission for the Church to be in the world so that it might make disciples of all nations, to turn people away from the wide road to destruction to the narrow and holy way of eternal life. This is the Church's responsibility and privilege under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit as Jesus states in Matthew 28:19-20:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. [NIV]

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH–MISSOURI SYNOD GETS OUT THE MESSAGE

The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod's stated purpose, from its inception, has been, as shown in the Church Growth Strategy Task Force's definition of Church Growth, to "Preach the Gospel and make proper use of the Sacraments."⁵ The concept of "preach the Gospel" is a part of Matthew 28:19, which says: "Go and make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you" [KJV]. Towns, Vaughan, and Seifert state:

The first purpose of the church is to spread the Gospel and evangelize all who will accept Christ as Lord and Savior. It seems impossible to miss this clear directive of the Scriptures. Christ's command of Matthew 28:19-20 is in essence emphasized again in Luke 24:47-48;

⁵Church Growth Task Force, *Towards a Theological Basis, Understanding and Use of Church Growth Principles in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), 5.

Mark 16:15; and Acts 1:8.⁶

This simply means that the first priority of the Christian Church is to bring the Gospel to people who do not know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Dr. George Peters states:

In the light of the totality of revelation, evangelism is the central thrust of the Bible. God is minded to make Himself known and to have the good news of the salvation in His Son communicated to all mankind. For this purpose He encoded His message in the Bible by revelation and inspiration of the Holy Spirit in an infallible manner. For this purpose He also called out in the Old Testament the people of Israel and in the New Testament the Church of God. These are not institutions in themselves nor for themselves. They are institutions by the sovereign calling of God and for the purpose of His glory. This glory, however, manifests itself chiefly in the good news of the salvation in Christ Jesus, His Son, the only Savior and Lord. Toward this end the chief energies of the Holy Spirit operate. Herein lies the supreme mission of the Church.⁷

We, as God's redeemed people, are to be about the witnessing of the salvation of the world through Jesus Christ, by the way we live, through our worship life, at meetings where we are able to bear testimony of this wonderful gift of God's love in Christ.

George W. Peters wrote in *Contemporary Practices of Evangelism* . . . about the abiding principles and ideals in evangelism: "the Gospel must be orally communicated, the Gospel must be demonstrated in life and action, and the Gospel appeal must be made personal. It must be made intelligible, meaningful, attractive, persuasive, and inviting. Gospel communication must be directed towards a verdict . . . Every New Testament evangelism endeavor ought to face at least four basic issues:

1. Has the evangelism effort and endeavor brought renewal, revitalization, a new pulsation of the holy Spirit to the local

⁶Towns, Vaughan, and Seifert, *The Complete Book of Church Growth*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1982), 2.

⁷*Ibid.*, 248.

church communities?

2. Has the evangelism effort added new converts to the local church?

3. Has the evangelism effort eventuated in a movement or has it remained one great event in the community?

4. Has the evangelism effort facilitated the continued ministry of the local churches in the community?

. . . Ideal New Testament evangelism, while flexible and adaptable, is undergirded by a firm structure which rests upon definite principles: mechanics, dynamics, bridges, operation, evaluation.”⁸

THE LOCAL CONGREGATION RESPONDS TO THE CHALLENGE

The local congregation, under the Holy Spirit’s direction, is always to be about the works of making and sustaining disciples. Therefore, a congregation seeks to revitalize its ministry to meet changing needs. Obviously a congregation will, indeed, seek to make its own successes known to the church at large, when possible. *The Reporter* and *Lutheran Witness* give examples of what congregations are doing to spread the Gospel of Christ. Unless a congregation is making a positive impact, meaning that the Law and Gospel are meaningfully presented to the community, it does not help the Lutheran congregations to have a missionary effect upon the community.

The early Church was involved with personal eyewitness testimony. The Apostles were the eyewitnesses to all they said and did in their work. It was a work that spoke of salvation in no other than Jesus Christ, which was their only desire and the epitome of their efforts in all they spoke. These great spokesmen for the Gospel had a definite way of doing their work.

⁸ Waldo Werning, *The Radical Nature of Christianity*, (Ft. Wayne, IN: 1975), 126.

1. They worked from the center outwards . . . The policy of so much modern evangelism is to drag people from the outside inwards; their policy was the opposite—to move from the inside outwards and to evangelize, not on their own ground, but on other people’s.
2. They were involved, yet mobile. It is fascinating to find that in the early centuries of the church there was no division between those who told the Good News and those who only listened to it. All were involved in the mission . . .
3. They used their influence . . .
4. They exercised oversight. The apostles supervised their converts, they set up presbyters to look after them, they wrote letters to them they sent messengers to them, and they prayed for them . . .
5. They produced witnesses.⁹

These people had a message that was there to save people from eternal damnation. They did not want this message to go unanswered, nor did they want to waste effort; for the time was short, and there was much to do. This can be seen in the kind of effort that was put forth by the early leaders in the early Christian Church.

THE EARLY CHURCH SHOWS THE WAY

If one takes the time to peruse the book of Acts, one will find how active the early Apostles were in seeking to extend the Christian faith into all of the then known world. The Book of Acts begins with the Church being in Jerusalem. It ends with the Church in the far ends of the earth; i.e., Rome. Throughout the book of the Acts of the Apostles, we see that they were about the business of making disciples for the Lord’s Kingdom, whether in Acts 5:28 where it reads: “You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching” [NIV], or in Acts 5:14: “More and more men and women believed in the Lord, and were added to their number” [NIV]. These early Christians were truly seeking to facilitate the growth of the Church of Jesus Christ.

⁹Ibid., 127.

Paul, who became the missionary to the Gentiles, knew that the job of the Christian Church was to bring people to Jesus Christ. He states this in Ephesians 4 as well as in Romans 1:14-15, and also in other places when he states that people had the gifts to be evangelists so that people might be brought to Christ. Since people are not God's people by nature, "being spiritually blind, dead and enemies of God,"¹⁰ we realize that, without the Good News of the Gospel, we would all be lost to God forever. However, it is through Jesus Christ that we are able to be brought to the truth and thus made the disciples of God in Christ: "For there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12 [NIV]).

This calls for an action on the part of God's people, to evangelize those who do not know the way to the Lord's forgiveness:

When Christians are involved in evangelism, they are not manipulating, brainwashing or forcing people to change their minds. True evangelism is presenting the Good News—introducing Jesus Christ; who He is, what He's done, and what He does today. Evangelism sets the stage for the power of God's Holy Spirit to change people's hearts. It provides the context through which God causes people to repent. The power is not in technique or gimmicks. The power is always in the work of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul said it: ". . . no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord!' except by the Holy Spirit." 1 Corinthians 12:3.¹¹

Howard Hanchey writes:

The Christian Church has a story of love to tell. Many people in the world are anxious to hear about godly things. They want to know who God is, and how God acts, and they want practical insights into the

¹⁰Oswald Riess, *That I May Know Him*, (Detroit, MI: 1970), 35.

¹¹Kent Hunter, *Foundations for Church Growth*, (New Haven, MO: Leader Publishing House, 1983), 76.

difference that God makes in their lives.¹²

Yet, Douglas Webster writes:

In today's world it is most difficult to discern the difference between an American Christian and an American pagan for there is no simple and absolutely clear division between them.¹³

Therefore, it is the intent of the Church to present God as that living presence in this ever-changing world—one who is relevant to their needs, who can be a dominant force for Mission. In this rather troubled period, when the Christian churches have so very often allowed the world to write the agenda of their task, many nominally Christian churches have allowed themselves to succumb to a so-called secular Gospel. Thus, the significance of the God, who is beyond our narrow thinking, is some trivial entity, which connotes that the transcendent has faded and that we are identified as any other worldly organization.

A MESSAGE OF GOD'S LOVE THAT IS REAL

However, The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod does not believe in a lackluster Christianity. We know and believe that Jesus Christ is the one and only real Savior from real and condemning sin. We believe that this

Jesus is a personal Savior from sin and from the consequences of sin. As He sets the person free through repentance, forgiveness and the person of the Holy Spirit, a new life of personal liberty becomes possible. Still the great promise of the New Testament is true: “If the

¹²Howard Hanchey, *Church Growth, The Power of Evangelism, Ideas That Work*, (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1990), 51.

¹³Douglas Webster, *What is Evangelism?*, (London, England: The Highway Press, 1959), 25.

Son makes you free, you are free indeed.” John 8:36¹⁴

We know that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not some kind of figment of the imagination. Jesus tells us that He is the one that shows us God: “Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:21 [NIV]). Jesus and the Father are one. As a result:

People can believe that “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself,” because He was. It may be assumed that it is natural to believe in common-sense, material things, while to believe in God, prayer, and a life to come is strange and exotic. But if God and prayer to him are actual and life does continue after death, then not to believe in them is unnatural. It could easily seem unnatural to believe that there are people walking with their feet opposite ours on the other side of the planet, but our great encouragement in trying to persuade anyone of this is that those upside-down people are actually there. There are difficulties in persuading people that there is a God who loves them and wants them to love him; but more important than all the difficulties is the fact that it is true . . .

If Christ is real, then the life that is in harmony with him is natural; it is in accordance with the way things are. Any other sort of life is going against the grain. There is sometimes the feeling that evangelism tries to get people to do something unusual, like walking on their hands. It actually tries to set people on their feet, and it gets them to walking as they were designed to walk. It is not like trying to teach an elephant to fly; it is rather like trying to teach an eagle to fly. Evangelism does not try to make people into something strange; it tries to show them who they really are. Thomas Aquinas said that “Grace does not destroy nature but fulfills it” (*Gratia non tollit naturam sed perfecti.*) Evangelism makes normal persons out of abnormal ones.¹⁵

This is the Christ that we offer to the sin-sick world. We know the responsibilities and the joys that this Christ offers to all who come to the knowledge of God’s truth in

¹⁴Alan Walker, *The New Evangelism*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1975), 12.

¹⁵George E. Sweazey, *The Church As Evangelist*, (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1978), 216.

Christ. Jesus does indeed make all things right again, for we know from the Scriptures that the world was agonizing for the coming of the Messiah who would set things straight.

A SPECIFIC WAY TO SHARE THE MESSAGE OF LOVE

In order to grow the Church of Jesus Christ, there are a variety of means and methods which the Holy Spirit uses to do His work through the people of the Holy Christian Church here on earth, using Church Growth as one method of evangelism. What is Church Growth? Kent Hunter in *Foundations for Church Growth* defines Church Growth:

as that science which investigates the nature, function and health of Christian churches, as they relate to the effective implementation of the Great Commission to “make disciples of all nations . . .” (Matt 28:19). Church Growth is simultaneously a theological conviction and an applied science, striving to combine the eternal principles of God’s Word with the best insights of contemporary social and behavioral sciences.¹⁶

Again from Hunter’s book: “The power for church growth is the power of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁷ He states that the church can never grow unless this growth is accomplished by the Holy Spirit’s power. We know from the Third Article’s explanation of the Apostles’ Creed that it is the Holy Spirit Who does the calling of people to faith in Jesus Christ. Hunter also states that the Holy Spirit uses the Means of Grace as the way of calling and keeping people in the Christian faith:

The means of grace are the way in which God extends His love and

¹⁶Hunter, *Foundations for Church Growth*, 23.

¹⁷Ibid., 38.

forgiveness to His people. God's grace is His kindness, His favor for all people—even though no one deserves or merits it. The means of grace are His channels of forgiveness. They are real channels. They are concrete. They can be seen. They can be touched. They are the Bible, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.¹⁸

Church growth is a means whereby the Holy Spirit works through people to see to it that disciples are made. Here Hunter states:

The only proper motive for church growth is obedience to Jesus Christ. To be a church growth person is to take the Lord at His Word. Church growth comes from the desire to serve God and to serve fellow man. It is a characteristic of true discipleship. Church growth is God's will. The proper motive for being involved in church growth is obedience to His will. A church growth person is one who desires to be used by God in His plan of salvation for the internal and external growth of His Kingdom to the glory and honor of Jesus Christ.¹⁹

Church growth, as we have seen, is not simply some way to add numbers to a congregation, although, if we look at Acts 1:15; 2:41-42; 4:4, we see that the tremendous growth of the Church was given in numbers. It is not numbers for numbers' sake, but to grow the Church as Christ commanded in the Great Commission under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit. There is truly a "biblical concern for people. The goal is not only that people come to faith and become church members. The ultimate goal is that they continue to grow in discipleship."²⁰ Church growth involves principles that seek to work under the Holy Spirit in the work of Evangelism.

Church Growth emphasizes the New Testament of going. Evangelistic

¹⁸Ibid., 39.

¹⁹Ibid., 43.

²⁰Ibid., 20.

strategy is not limited to the church building and the pastor's Sunday sermon. In fact, in the early church, buildings were not important. Evangelism was a spontaneous chattering of the Gospel in the market place, in the streets, in homes and everywhere people congregated. The Good News was on the lips of every member of the Christian community. It was natural and unstructured in the sense that missionaries were planned, synagogues were targeted and churches were planted.²¹

The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod understands the implication of how to grow the Church under the direction of the Holy Spirit. According to Volume II of *Abiding Word*, we are to baptize.²² We take seriously this mandate of the Lord Jesus Christ found in John 3:5 and 1 Peter 3:18. We have been entrusted with this Means of Grace which is for all who believe in Jesus. Since we have been sent into the world, meaning all the corners of the earth as well as our local community, we know that we are not sent away empty. We know from the Lord Christ, Himself, that He has the power to make things happen. We are not dependent upon ourselves. As was stated above, the Holy Spirit is the One who ultimately makes people Christians, but He does use us as His tools to bring about the dispersal of the message of salvation to people. “We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10 [NIV]).

We are the people then that God, through the Holy Spirit, uses to fulfill the Great Commission of salvation. He has the power to do all things as He Himself states: “All power is given to Me in Heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18 [KJV]). Not only so, but He is with us through all of our efforts on behalf of the growth of

²¹Ibid., 76.

²²Laetsch, ed., *Abiding Word*, Vol 2., 395.

Christ's Kingdom here on earth. For He says: "Lo, I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20 [KJV]). We have a God who is so great that He is willing and able to see us through all of our human efforts to bring the Message of salvation to all people. We have no reason not to expect anything else, but that it will be accomplished through Christ in us.

THIS MESSAGE IS FOR ALL PEOPLE

The message of God's love for the world is not something that is to be held merely for one's own personal use. As we know, God so loved the *world*, people both near and far. Jesus saw His ministry of reconciliation (that is; His suffering, death and resurrection) as an act of love for the world, in that Jesus says: "As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you" (John 20:21 [NIV]). We are entrusted with this ministry. However, not merely entrusted. Rather we are assured by the Lord Himself that we are not alone in what we are doing. Jesus assures us of His presence when He says: "Lo, I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20 [KJV]). This truly makes our work God-blessed. We are also given the assurance that we are not dependent upon our own abilities, our efforts. Since He is with us, we know that we can truly do all the things that we need to do for the work of the Kingdom, under His holy guidance and direction; for He is working in and through us with His almighty power. As the Scriptures tell us: "Not that we are competent to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God" (2 Corinthians 3:4 [NIV]).

To the ones whom God uses to send forth the message of salvation, the Lord lets us know that we do not go powerless. The power of God Himself is with us in

our efforts to bring this message of salvation of God's love in Christ to a lost world. "All power is given to me" (Matthew 28:18 [KJV]). Not only do we have the assurance that Christ is there with His presence and the power, but we are likewise given the boldness to follow Christ's mandate to spread the Word of salvation. To witness is the sharing of the Good News of the Gospel under the direction of the Holy Spirit, who works through the Word. The Holy Spirit makes our witnessing possible, as the Scriptures tell us in Acts 1:8, where the Holy Spirit will come upon people. They are then able to witness the news of God's salvation to all of the people with whom they will come into contact: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" [RSV]. This is supported in Acts 2:5-9, where it states that the people present at the disciples' sharing of the Gospel, from all over the then-known world, were able to hear the message in their own tongue: "When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language" [NIV].

REASONS FOR THIS MISSION ZEAL

However, even though it is the will of God that the Gospel be brought into the world of people, and even though it is God whose love is shed into the hearts of people and is the dynamic motive for reaching out into our community, there are other reasons, such as the love of Christ, encouraging us. As a matter of fact, there are three other reasons for this mission zeal. The Apostle Paul tells us the first reason—that it is the love of Christ that encourages us to reach out into the world of

the lost:

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. (2 Corinthians 5:14-15 [NIV])

The second reason is:

The authentic will of God given us by the divine revelation, and that revelation tells us not only that God wants us to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles, but also that He wants us to do this because without the Gospel they are lost. To reject this motivation is to discount the will of God and the urgency of the missionary task. The dynamics of love as a missionary motivation is proportionate to the recognized need. This lays bare the confused motives that are crippling and retarding missionary enterprise today. If God's revelation of the sinner's danger and need is discounted or disbelieved, what is still acknowledged as the will of God will not be taken seriously, but humanistic and cultural.²³

Thirdly, we are there to bring the Gospel to people so that the Holy Spirit will convert them from Satan's clutches and eternal separation to make them a new creation in Christ Jesus. Steve Hughey, Director for Mission Interpretation of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, at a Missions Convocation on January 9, 1993, in Dallas, Texas, stated: "It is Christ's will that people be kidnapped from hell and be brought to the joys of heaven." This is to be done, not only as the organized Church in action; but, as Lavik says, it "rests also in a personal way upon the individual Christian, and belongs to the very essence of discipleship."²⁴ Jesus states it this way: "Everyone, therefore, who shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32 [KJV]).

²³John R. Lavik, *The Christian Church in a Secularized World*, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1952), 36.

²⁴Ibid.

CHILDREN NEED THIS MESSAGE OF LOVE

Children are an integral part of God's plan of salvation. Jesus wants children to be brought to Him, to be a part of Him, and to be blessed by Him, as He so beautifully relates to us in Luke 18:15-17:

People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have Him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them . . . But Jesus called the children to Him and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these" [NIV].

To our Lord, these little ones are as important to the Kingdom of God as are the adults. He stresses this with the following words: "I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child, will not enter it" (Matthew 18:2 [KJV]). Not only will children receive the Kingdom of God, for God's love is for the whole world. Rather, anyone who believes in Him should have everlasting life. We see from this passage that we have a responsibility to bring the Gospel's Good News of forgiveness and the hope of eternal life to children, no less than to adults. This we learn from Acts 2 that Jesus died for these little ones just as He gave His life as a ransom for adults. The promise is to adults and children in Acts 2:39: "The promise is for you and your children" [NIV]. Therefore, it is God's will and promise that children be brought into the Kingdom of heaven just as their parents.

The same sinful condition, however, exists in children as in their parents; and the same forgiveness is necessary for them as well. The Words of Genesis 8:21 read: "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" [KJV], with Psalms 51:5 stating: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me"

[KJV]. Thus, we have a responsibility of bringing the word of forgiveness and salvation to children, so that they too might walk in God's new kind of life.

All too often, however, we find that many who teach the Christian faith and who work in the area of Evangelism and outreach tend to place children as not quite that important to the overall Kingdom of God. An example can be seen in Harry Wendt's presentations at his Crossways workshops. I have used his Bible Study for ten years now. Whenever I attend a review workshop, invariably Wendt stresses the fact that adults were Christ's prime target and not children. The Lutheran Church believes that the Scriptures not only tell us that children need to be brought into the Kingdom of God because they are sinful, but also that God has such a concern for them that He has made an avenue for them, through which they are able to be brought to God and to the hope of eternal life in Him; namely Baptism, even for infants. Luther, in his Large Catechism, sets forth the following:

That baptism of infants is pleasing to Christ is sufficiently proved from His own work. God has sanctified many who have been thus baptized and has given them the Holy Spirit . . . Now if God did not accept the Baptism of infants, He would not have given any of them the Holy Spirit nor any part of Him; in short, all this time down to the present day no man on earth should have been a Christian. Since God has confirmed Baptism through the gift of his Holy Spirit, as we have perceived in some of the fathers, such as St. Bernard, Gerson, John Hus, and others, and since the Holy Christian Church will abide until the end of the world, our adversaries must acknowledge that infant Baptism is pleasing to God. For He can never be in conflict with Himself, support lies and wickedness, or give His grace and Spirit for such ends.²⁵

²⁵Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord*, (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 442.

Since there is to be such a concern for these little ones, our Synod has not only set forth the practice of baptizing them into the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, but has also seen fit to see to it that these redeemed children of God are not only brought to Christ in Baptism but are nurtured, according to the promise made by parents and Sponsors, in the love of God until they are ready for Sunday school. This is called the Cradle Roll. These parents are reminded throughout the child's first three years of life of God's love in Christ and are given help in teaching them the love of God. It is then that parents bring their children to Sunday school. This is the normal way that Lutheran congregations show their overall concern for the children that God gives to the parents who are within the Christian faith. Of great importance, though, is the fact that this same concern is to be shown also for those children and parents who are not in the Christian faith or who have been either lukewarm or wandered from the active involvement in the Christian Church.

It has been shown that those outside of the Christian faith are in need of the word of salvation, God's love, mercy and promise. This includes children, as well, who are to be made disciples; that is, brought to Jesus Christ. This means that children are brought to Jesus through a variety of outreach methods in which the Church seeks to seek and to save that which was lost. These wonderful gifts of God to parents are truly the responsibility of parents and of the Christian Church. Since the children in our center are in contact with our congregation, we have a responsibility towards the children, for whom Jesus Christ's love is so great. As he said in Matthew 19:14: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the

kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” [NIV].

This love for little ones is important on the part of the Church. We live in a world that is no longer oriented to the way children were viewed and cared for in generations past, which is to be treated in the following chapter on *The American Family and Its Attitude Change Towards Children*.

CHAPTER 2

THE AMERICAN FAMILY AND ITS ATTITUDE CHANGE TOWARDS CHILDREN

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN

In the beginning, God created not only the heavens and the earth; but, according to Genesis 1 and 2, He also created humanity. After God's creation of humanity, His desire was to continue the human race. Thus, He commanded them to reproduce and to fill the earth. In Genesis 4, we see that Adam and Eve did reproduce their own kind.

As we look into the history of humanity, we see that it was an embarrassment not to have children. Fertility was a top priority. No one wanted to be devoid of children, for children carried on the family name. Children guaranteed the human presence in the earth. As we look at the lives of Abraham and Sarah, Hannah and Elizabeth, we see that they were considered to be less than acceptable to their peers for lack of progeny. In Genesis 15, we see Abraham complaining to Yahweh that He still had not given him a son. He and his wife were beyond the child-bearing stage, and Abraham wondered, "What do you intend to give me? I go childless" [TJB].

A man named Elkanah was married to two wives, Peninnah and Hannah. Peninnah was able to bear children, while Hannah continued barren. Elkanah would give considerable goods and attention to Peninnah, while Hannah received very little.

The life of Hannah was quite difficult due to her being childless, while Peninnah was blessed with many children. Peninnah let Hannah know that she was not quite as good as Peninnah, due to Hannah's being barren (1 Samuel 1:1–8). In Luke 1:6–7:

Both were worthy in the sight of God, and scrupulously observed all the commandments and observances of the Lord. But they were childless: Elizabeth was barren and they were both getting on in years.
[TJB]

We see from the response of the people when John the Baptist was born that the people thought the baby would carry on the family name:

Now on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; they were going to call him Zechariah after his father, but his mother spoke up. "No," she said, "he is to be called John." They said to her, "But no one in your family has that name." (Luke 1:59–60 [TJB])

As we look into the Scriptures, we see that these children were to be brought up in the Lord. They were taught to respect and honor their parents according to Deuteronomy 5:16, and Ephesians 6:1–2. In Deuteronomy 6:4–7, fathers were given instructions to teach their children the Law of God, not only at home, but also when they were walking along the road and in other places as well. In Ephesians 3:21 and 6:4, parents were given the responsibility to see to it that children were not thwarted in their relationship with the Lord, but encouraged to grow in the Lord. Children were given to parents to rear them in the Lord; thus, children were important beyond helping to provide for the family needs. Parents were also exhorted to be responsible for their growth in the Lord and in His Word.

At other times in history, children were important to families. In the early history of the world, through the Industrial Revolution, they were a symbol of wealth

like horses or cattle. In most cultures, children were vital to the economy of the people. Children were the “work force” in many households. There was no such thing as modern farming equipment or modern industrial equipment. Children became the farmhands, the weavers’ apprentices, and other roles, so that the means of earning a living could be accomplished.²⁶

Typically, large families continued to live off the land of the family patriarch. The parents would have large tracts of land that were then given to the sons as they became of age. The family members continued to reside near each other; and, frequently, the parents would remain in the homestead with the oldest child residing in the home of his family, taking charge of helping to raise the children, being a model for the rest of the family.²⁷

HOW CHILDREN WERE VIEWED

In the North American venture, we see that children continued to be chattel. They were not only an important part of the home income, but they were also farmed out to others, or were put to work in the factories, working long hours, under very dangerous conditions.²⁸

A CHANGING VIEW OF CHILDREN’S CARE

Initially, during the Industrial Revolution, children were a beneficial addition to

²⁶Edith Grothberg, ed., *Two Hundred Years of Children*, (Washington, DC: US Dept of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1923), 289.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 45.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 65.

the family. With the onset of the industrial and technological revolution that began in England and Western Europe, there was a tremendous change fostered by the bringing together of science and industry. This, in turn, produced a revolutionary change in the way people lived all over the world. With this change, there was a dramatic difference in the way food, clothing, and housing were produced and distributed. There was an even greater modification in the very essence of the way we thought about family, and the values people placed on the size of the family.

During World War II, we see that there was a need for some kind of care for the children of those women who worked in industry while their husbands were off at war. But, when the war ended, the wives returned to their homes; and the child care centers were closed down.²⁹

Now that women are growing in economic, social, and legal rights, a considerable number of mothers have become involved in the work force outside the home. This was something that focused itself initially on older women, whose children were grown and gone from the home setting. These women needed personal positive affirmation beyond the child-bearing stage.³⁰

With the industrial and technological revolution spreading, there was an exodus from the rural setting into the urban world. Endsley and Bradbard state:

Today nearly all children live in urban America, and today's families, whether rural or urban, are obviously heavily dependent on others

²⁹Alison Clarke-Stewart, *Day Care*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 32.

³⁰Edward F. Ziglar and Mary E. Lang, *Child Care Choices*, (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1991), 21.

outside the home for nearly all their goods and services. Further, in order to produce these good and services, nearly all fathers and well over half of today's mothers leave the home each day for the factory or office.³¹

In the United States, the matter of care for children outside the home goes back to the 1800's when immigrant mothers had to have some place for their children to stay while they sought to eke out a living. Today we find that there is also the need for outside care-giving facilities due to grandparents not being available to do the work for their children's children.³² The growth of day-care centers is truly the result of the alarming rate of decrease in care givers who are available in a home setting. Today many older adults are continuing in the work force past the middle sixties. With the extended age of older citizens, changes will have to be made in the Social Security rules which will necessitate senior citizens remaining actively involved in the work force into their early seventies, (as already suggested by the Congress, Social Security authorities, in newspapers, magazines, television stories and radio shows). Thus, there is no one within the family available to be of help in taking care of the children, especially those under the age of five. There is a very small percentage of grandparents and relatives available to keep children for the working parents.³³

The traditional two-member parent structure is becoming almost an obsolete

³¹Richard C. Endsley and Marilyn R. Bradbard, *Quality Day Care, A Handbook of Choices for Parents and Caregivers*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1981), 13.

³²Ellen Ruppel Shell, *A Child's Place*, (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, & Company, 1992), 5.

³³Clarke-Stewart, *Day Care*, 16.

entity. This has been caused by a number of reasons. We are seeing divorces on the increase, which leaves the mother with the responsibility of raising the children on her own. She, thus, has the responsibility of working and raising the children at the same time, which becomes a real problem for her. We also are seeing an increase in illegitimacy with the mother keeping the children, instead of choosing abortion or adoption. Endsley and Bradbard state that “about one out of five children now lives in a single-parent home. Since most of these single parents, ninety-five percent of whom are women, must work, the demand for day care services for this group is particularly obvious and acute.”³⁴

We also have the factor of simply a tremendous increase in the number of child-bearing women. This is due to the population explosion that took place after World War II.

OUTSIDE OF HOME CARE BECOMES A NECESSITY

Endsley and Bradbard show that a compelling cause of the need for increased outside child care has been the “sixfold increase in the percentage of mothers that have entered the work force today as compared with 1940. In 1940, about one in ten mothers worked outside the home, today six in ten do.”³⁵ As more women have entered the work force outside the home, I believe this has probably increased to eight out of ten today since Endsley and Bradbard wrote their work in 1981. Shell states in

³⁴Endsley and Bradbard, *Quality Day Care, A Handbook of Choices for Parents and Caregivers*, 8.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 9.

A Child's Place, "By the turn of the century that figure will increase to seventy percent."³⁶

As the industrial community became more advanced in the use of modern equipment, newer, more advanced, and efficient operata were made available. As a result, children were no longer viewed as an important part of the family's income production; but, rather, they were considered to be a drain on the family's income, taking from but not adding to the overall family's benefit. This brought about a drastic change in the procreative process of American families. Instead of large families, the trend became to have fewer and fewer children.³⁷

It began to cost money to have children. They were in need of medical care prior to their birth; they were now being born in the hospital, not at home. Specialists known as gynecologists became a part of the birthing process. Pediatricians were necessary.³⁸ The cost of bringing children into the world was certainly an added expense for which there was no financial return.

As the world of economics impinged upon the family causing people to rethink their need for children, a very drastic way of dealing with the presence of children in the family was pushed into importance; that of abortion. Couples believed that one of the best ways to cut down on the possibility of too many children was the use of abortion as a form of birth control. With the *Roe vs. Wade* decision of the Supreme

³⁶Shell, *A Child's Place*, 4.

³⁷Grothberg, *Two Hundred Years of Children*, 43.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 84.

Court of the United States, abortion did become an “acceptable” form of controlling the number of children born to a family. Jean Garton, at Texas District Circuit Counselors’ Winter Conference, February 9–11, 1992, stated that there are now more infants aborted in a twelve-day period than there are children baptized in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod in a year.

Education now also began to go beyond what parents were able to pass on to their children. They were now sent to schools where they spent most of their daytime hours, coming home to do the required homework. With the addition of all of the new advancements, an ordered education was required, thus depriving the family of the use of their children’s time in helping to provide for the family’s financial and food needs.

It became difficult for families to have large numbers of children and to live at the desired level of comfort. This caused, in many instances, both husbands and wives to seek employment outside of the home. This was especially true when people tried to live on a middle-class level. On the other hand, there were couples who had low paying jobs; both were required to work so that they might make ends meet.³⁹

Needless to say, there was also the problem of having someone stay with the children while the parents went off to work. In prior centuries, the extended family was available to those who needed their help; but, now with the American family needing the energy of both husband and wife, there was a need to move away from the family circle into different cities and states and even countries. There was no one

³⁹Ziglar and Lang, *Child Care Choices*, 3.

there to help with the growing of the children.

There was also the concern of over-population. Due to the high population level in our country, there was fear that grave danger was imminent in regard to the environment as well as to the human population. With so many people taking from the land, could the land support such a continued assault on its ability to produce, even as the population increased through the twentieth century?⁴⁰

The designers of social living began to picture the normal family as having either one or at the most two children, or none at all. This behavior was suggested because it was believed that the idea of not having children would then bring about a decline of the population in the future. This would most certainly keep the world population down. Also, there would be less stress on nature. Husbands and wives would not be loaded down with such a tremendous responsibility as they would feel with large families.⁴¹

We have seen the tremendous cost of education, both in the public and private sector. For a child to attend a private college or church-related college, the cost now in many instances is between \$10,000 to \$20,000 per annum at such colleges as Incarnate Word College and Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, and Concordia College, Austin, Texas. This again requires that both spouses be employed outside the home, meaning that the mother is no longer available to be in the home environment with her children in their formative and teen years.

⁴⁰Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich, *Population, Resources and Environment*, (San Francisco, CA: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1970), 441-444.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 19.

There are other reasons for the change in the family structure in regards to the number of children. Today, there are more women than men; there are a number of one-member families, couples want to delay having children until they are older.⁴² We also find that young couples want to have the same social and economic success that their parents have had. The financial drain on these dreams is tremendous. This normally does not allow for a large number of children in the family. We are now seeing couples who lived in rural settings moving into the urban world. They were accustomed to allowing their children to run free. But now they are cooped up, so to speak, kept under lock and key. This makes for unhappy family relationships and bodes for smaller families.

There is also the fact that many women today are not “home bodies,” but are people who have worked since high school or who were employed while seeking higher education goals. They have been accustomed to being in the work force, not staying home with the children. They may well have children, but they will return to the work force as soon as possible. Some of these mothers will have a person come into the home as a babysitter, but others will prefer another setting for their children’s care.

All of this means that many infants and small children no longer have parents at home to raise them, to be with them, to give them the emotional, physical, and spiritual nourishment that is required. This means that some other system is required to take care of the children of those people who are now working outside the

⁴²Ibid., 253.

traditional home setting.⁴³

⁴³Clarke-Stewart, *Day Care*, 16-18.

CHAPTER 3

WHY LUTHERAN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTERS?

DAY-CARE ENTERS THE PICTURE

Children have been raised in a home setting since the beginning of time. However, with the advent of both parents or single parents having to work outside of the home, the total home environment has been transferred from the home setting to a different caring system. Nearly half of all American mothers have jobs outside the home. Nearly two out of every three working mothers have children under six years of age. Putting it another way, nearly eight million children under the age of six have mothers who work either part-time or full-time, mostly outside the home.⁴⁴ Who is going to be responsible for the maintenance and education of the children when both parents work or the divorced single parent is away from the children earning a living?

The term "maintenance and education" is used to describe the way children are taught the typical growth experiences that usually take place in the home setting. These now take place in the Early Childhood Development Center.⁴⁵ These experiences include socialization process, manual dexterity, learning of verbal skills, and,

⁴⁴Clarke-Stewart, *Day Care*, 18.

⁴⁵Bette J. Krenzke and Christine Lehl, "Childcare: The Church's Challenge," *Lutheran Education* 121, # 1, (Sep/Oct 1985): 126.

for Christians, learning the meaning of God's love in Christ. Also, the way a child learns life skills has been in the home. Typically the process was done without formal programs. Initially, there were those who made use of their family; grandparents, or other relatives were able to be used as care-givers for their children. But, as couples moved away from their home setting and family contacts, this became an impossible situation.

Then there were parents who used a private baby sitter in their homes. The person basically just "sat" the child, with no real involvement in the personal growth process of the child or children, but, when the ages began to be stretched with a six-month-old, a three-year-old, and a five-year-old, it was quite a strain on the sitter's nerves and abilities. Later on, children were seen as a financial boon by those persons who could keep a number of children in their homes for profit. Again, there was little in the way of helping the children to become socialized. The primary purpose of the business was creating a profit with no real concern for the child's overall personal advancement in life skills. Enrollment was limited to only a few children in this type of care-giving setting.⁴⁶ There was the need for a caring facility which was able to accommodate many children grouped by age and need.

Need gave rise to what we today call the day-care or early childhood development center—private, commercial and even religious. A day-center is usually defined as a facility that takes care of a number of children from birth through the age of about four or five on a full-time basis. Some facilities include before-school and

⁴⁶Clarke-Stewart, *Day Care*, 45-50.

after-school care for grades kindergarten through fifth. These centers are usually open from 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Monday through Friday. Due to the needs of parents and their work schedules, however, there are now more and more centers opening with flexible hours and days.

DAY-CARE CENTERS MORE THAN BABY SITTING

Many people look to the day-care center as merely some kind of extended baby sitting service. There are others who view it as a glorified nursery school. If one takes time to visit a care center for children, one will quickly come to the realization things are quite different today. In order to assist parents who must leave their children in a day-care center, more is needed than mere baby sitting services. A true day-care center is really a childhood development center, caring for the total needs of the child: the physical growth, the socialization, the emotional, the educational, and, in a Christian center, the spiritual growth of the child. When a center is open for new-born infants and younger children, emotional care is essential. Maslow has set up a needs structure called the "hierarchy of needs." These needs are "physiological needs, safety and security needs, love and affection needs, esteem needs, and self actualization needs."⁴⁷

Over the course of the first year of life, every home-reared infant in a normal family develops a strong emotional feeling for the person who cares for him, plays with him, and loves him. This feeling of attachment distinguishes the focal caregiver-playmate from other more casual social companions. The child wants to be near this person, especially in

⁴⁷Joseph Alderich, *Life Style Evangelism*, (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1981), 91.

times of stress, fatigue, or illness, to hold and be held by her, to keep her in his view or at least at his beck and call. He prefers her company and contact to anyone else's. If they must be separated, he is often distressed when she leaves. This fond feeling becomes obvious by the end of the first year and continues to be evident over the next several years. Most often, the first object of the child's affection is the mother. If a father or an older sibling is centrally involved in the child's life, the child soon develops attachments to these people too.⁴⁸

In an attempt to meet these needs, beginning with infants, the center starts to work with the children on growing experiences. Since most children attend the center from 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., these growth experiences must occur in a setting that resembles a home atmosphere. In most day-care centers, there is a daily plan that shows the teachers or care providers what is expected of a child at a particular age or stage of life, and how these adults can be a positive aid in this part of growth. In a Christian care center, the need to be loved is correlated with the Love of God in Christ.

In seeking to meet the over-all physical needs of the children, many centers provide two snacks a day as well as a noon-time meal. The children are required to get the necessary rest for their age; and, thus, afternoon naps are part of their regular care. Since the children are there for so many hours, a child-care center in many ways raises the children who are left with them each day. This implies that much of what the child is going to be learning is put in place, not by parents, but by the child-care center.

From infancy through age four, our staff at King of Kings keeps a daily diary or

⁴⁸Clarke-Stewart, *Day Care*, 71.

log on each child; such as, when a child first turns over, first begins to have teeth; when the child crawls and walks, etc. The toddler-through-age-four-years teachers teach socialization skills such as learning cooperation, neatness, apologizing for harming a fellow child, manners and so on. The teachers teach values—not to lie, not to steal, to help each other, and so on. Chapel services are held three times a week where Bible stories are used to make faith-life applications. The teachers seek to reinforce the lesson in the class sessions that follow.

In a Christian center, there is truly the desire to bring up the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Therefore, we advertise in the paper and in our bulletin for people who have a Lutheran background. We do expect teachers to be Christians. The Pastor meets with the care-giver to explain the basic Lutheran tenets and our expectations of that person as he/she interacts with the children in that person's care.

The family is the primary place of Christian nurture. The New Testament summarizes the task of Christian teaching in one comprehensive term; Christian nurture. The word nurture in Ephesians 6:4 is the Greek word, PAIDEIA. The Revised Standard Version translates this word "discipline". J.B. Phillips' phrasing is "Christian teaching," and the New English Bible uses "instruction." Good News for Modern Man renders this verse "raise" (bring them up) in the Greek EXTREPHO. It means "to nourish up to maturity." It includes all the environmental factors collectively to which the individual is subjected from conception onward.⁴⁹

THE IMPORTANCE OF LUTHERAN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

⁴⁹Roy Zuck and Robert E. Clark, *Childhood Education and the Church*, (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1975), 33.

This primary nurture by the parents is no longer the case with parents who work full-time outside the home and are with their children less than four waking hours per day. Thus, in the case of the Lutheran Early Childhood Development Center, we have a tremendous privilege and responsibility in dealing with the children entrusted to us. Yes, the Lutheran Church can become involved with the needs of children and parents as the parents work outside the home, allowing us to “care” for their children on a full-time basis. In many cases, the center staff is helping support the children’s health and development.⁵⁰

On the other hand, there are many parents who are either not Christian, not practicing Christians, nor members of any church. Knowing this, the church-care center provides quality day-care centers for these parents who are employed outside the walls of the home. Consequently, the church is to be responsive to the special needs of families who have added emotional or financial burdens, whether they are of the church or not. When we care for these parents and children, the resources provided by a caring community can be of enormous benefit to these families.

These parents do not always realize that the center’s beliefs and values are being passed on to the children in it’s care. In my estimation, over the past eighteen years of my working with day care, most of the child’s day is spent in the care center. It is vital that the Lutheran center be aware of the fact that in many cases we are raising the children of these parents. An example (one of many) of this was a mother and

⁵⁰Cheryl D. Hayes, John L. Palmer, and Martha J. Zaslow, eds., *Who Cares for America’s Children*, (Washington, DC: National Academic Press, 1990), 135.

father who had their child in the center from 6:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. One parent said, “We pick up our child at 6:00 P.M., drive for an hour, get home, fix dinner, clean up and put our child in bed. We really have no time with him.” In a Lutheran day-care center, the crisis of faith is a very important aspect of our work.

Christianity is the crisis of faith in a crisis age. One of the most obvious things we learn from the model of New Testament Evangelism is that when people were caught up in the midst of change, they were most responsive to the message of the Gospel.

The greater the change in our time, the greater the spiritual hunger brought on by the deep vacuum created in the hearts of people as a result of that great change.

Despite massive indifference and rampant materialism, the new cities of today have brought greater interest in spiritual things we have witnessed in our time. This attests to an overriding reality. The revolutionary social change which has accomplished the intensification of urbanization has created a vast spiritual void. With this has come a unique and challenging opportunity for evangelism and church growth. It was true in the New Testament times, it is true in our time.⁵¹

With so many working parents who have no particular religious beliefs or desires, we have this opportunity to see to it that the Gospel of Christ is made known to these parents as well as to their children. We have these children in our centers, quite often from birth. These are obviously important times in the life of these infants:

The early years, then, are the crucial years, and, of course, the home provides the context for these early years. Pine underscores this fact in this striking statement: “If a child’s educational achievements depend so heavily on what he has learned before the age of six, the home—not the

⁵¹Francis M. DuBose, *How Churches Grow in an Urban World*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1978), 120.

school—emerges as the major educational institution in the land.”⁵²

The term “school” here refers to the usual school setting beginning with kindergarten. Where are these children who are pre-school age? In so many instances today, they are not in the home, but in day-care centers. Here, we are not only able to be a part of the regular learning and growth stages of the children. We are also able to bring to the children positive nurture:

by setting very meaningful goals which will be of help in internalizing Christian values and “righteousness, true holiness and the fullness of the stature of Christ.”⁵³

One of the great difficulties that working mothers have is that they can feel acute guilt about their children.⁵⁴ A conflict sometimes occurs between an exciting, prestigious, well-paying job and the feeling that children need a full-time mother.

The inescapable fact is that the reasons a woman goes to work are often complex, subtle and not easily resolved. The challenge will be for the family to be sympathetic and understanding of the woman’s specific needs, and to be able to solve the entire family’s problems with sensitivity and understanding.⁵⁵

To have an understanding of the working mother and the child-care center, one must go beyond simply the issue of children and their care. There are many reasons, and complicated ones at that, which enter into the matter of our changing attitudes

⁵²Zuck and Clark, *Childhood Education and the Church*, 468.

⁵³Ibid., 23.

⁵⁴William and Wendy Dreskin, *The Day Care Decision*, (New York, NY: M. Evans & Company, Inc., 1963), 42.

⁵⁵Stevanne Auerbach, *Confronting the Child Care Crisis*, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1979), 22.

towards children and the working mother. There are such things as political, economic, and personal attitudes towards children and their parents:

Some of these are more subtle than others. Child care affects, at one time or another, all families—welfare parents, as well as middle- and high-income families; white parents, as well as black; Spanish, Chinese and all other ethnic groups—it involves everyone who is concerned about national employment stability, family support and the well-being of children. In the end, everyone including the employer, the political system and society as a whole, is affected by the availability or absence of child care. Without it, mothers cannot sustain themselves and children are damaged.⁵⁶

LUTHERAN EARLY DEVELOPMENT CENTERS SHARE THE MESSAGE OF SALVATION

Within the Church, there are difficulties with seeing the importance of the child-care center and its being housed in the church, because of considerations from the above paragraph. For many in the Church, and I am certain, in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, especially the clergy, there is a tremendous resistance to having an Early Childhood Development Center. Women should be at home with their children. There is no doubt that this would be the best of all worlds. However, women do work. Some of these are Christian mothers, while there are many others who are either non-Christian or from families in which faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ no longer exists. It is important that the Lutheran Church offer its services to this group of people, giving them the kind of care that is beyond that of most for-profit care centers. The regular for-profit care center has as its primary motive being in existence to make a profit. This involves staffing, equipment and other

⁵⁶Ibid., 6.

expenses, whereas, hopefully, the private Lutheran child-care center has a different reason for existence. Its purpose is to be of service to people and to give the kind of love and care that the Lord Himself offers to us.

When a child is in a Lutheran child-care center, there is the possibility that much of the needed love and other ingredients that are necessary for Christian development are available. A Lutheran child-care center is truly able to be of assistance in this kind of development:

Mature psychological development in a child provides the foundation on which mature spiritual development takes place. For example, the greatest psychological need of a child during his first year of life is for security and love. An environment that is filled with uncertainties, adult disagreements, and impatience creates insecurity for a child. Children in the first year of life need exposure to parents who are truly manifesting the fruit of the Spirit . . . “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” Galatians 5:22-23. The human being who manifests these characteristics make the children’s environment a secure place for him to grow in and to develop. In turn, a secure environment enables a child to develop those personality traits that prepare the way for biblical teaching and learning.

A child begins to learn biblical truth the moment he is born, but mainly at the non-verbal and emotional (affective) level. Here is an excellent example of McLuhan’s statement that “the medium is the message.” The environment in which a child lives is the Christian message itself. And if the environment radiates love and security, he immediately picks up these “signals”—though mainly at the subconscious level. His personality is being formed. The foundations are being laid for an acceptance of the biblical message at the conscious level. Conversely, if the environment reflects hostility, uncertainty, and insecurity, the foundations are being laid for a rejection of the biblical message at the subconscious level.

A profound proverb reads, “Train up a child in the way that he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6.⁵⁷

⁵⁷Zuck and Clark, *Childhood Education and the Church*, 469.

It is truly hoped and prayed for that these elements of the child's life are being engendered in the child's personhood at the center. For as it was stated above, the center, in a very real way, does truly replace the home for the majority of the child's waking hours. As a result, Christian care-givers, who have a true love for their charges, are able to help instill in the hearts and lives of their children Christ-centered attitudes and beliefs for daily living. Therefore, when a Lutheran congregation has the opportunity either to house or to operate a Christian childhood day care center, it should avail itself of this opportunity for more than just the community needs that might exist, but so that the Church might offer parents a care center that goes beyond just the physical needs of the child.

Within the Lutheran framework, a caring community is a must. In the *Christian Parent Series – Parents And School As Partners*, the author points out the importance of a caring community:

Jesus cared. He traveled, taught, preached, and practiced. He planned, presented parables, and walked the extra mile to demonstrate His genuine concern for people. Jesus communicated with the woman at the well, with Zacchaeus in the tree, with the tax collectors in the temple. He became involved—with Jairus, Bartimaeus, the Pharisees, Peter, Mary and Martha, and the five-thousand crowd. He held and hugged and told stories to the children, disciples, and followers. Through His actions and words, He was telling people, "I love you, and I care about how you feel." Jesus cared enough to become a leader, to be unafraid of others and what they thought of him. He defended the prostitute and ate with the outcasts. He healed the lepers and promised the thief eternal life. He died and rose again, so we may live now and eternally in His grace and love. He gives us His Holy Spirit to help us to be aware of others' needs, to actively fulfill others' needs, and to share

with other people our personal love for God.⁵⁸

As the people of God, a Lutheran congregation seeks to be imitators of Christ through ways that show care. In establishing an Early Childhood Development Center, the church seeks to establish an effective community of care for the children of the surrounding community, both for those who are Christians as well as those who are presently living outside of the pale of the Christian religion.

There may be a goodly number of families who come with little loving care in their families. Our Lutheran Development Center gives us an opportunity to show that we do care, and that we want to give this care for parents and children. On the other hand, there may be others who already have love in the homes of the children brought to the center. In both instances, the congregation wants to work at living out a caring love for the children and the parents involved in the center's use.

For those families who are in a caring community in their home, we intend to continue this as a positive framework for our work with the children in our center. The caring teachers are actively involved in loving the children brought by the parents. The caring staff person has a love for the parents as well. We want the parents to know that the Center cares for them in their total life.

It is so easy to simply be a boarding house for little ones during the work day—to be a nursery, and that's it. We do truly attempt to have the parents know that we are a caring community where they may entrust to us the life of their child while

⁵⁸ John Haas and Evrin Henkleman, *Christian Parent Series – Parents and School As Partners*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), 27.

the parents are at work. We want these parents to know that we have the total interest of the child at heart. It is for the benefit of that child that the center is in existence. We are, in a real sense, an extension of the home. And, yet, for those who are not Christian parents, we seek to fulfill God's Word which tells fathers to bring up their children in the ways of the Lord. Our Center is able to seek to fulfill this responsibility while the children are in our care each and every day.

The Education Board does seek, under the Holy Spirit's guidance and direction, to see to it that the love of Jesus Christ is brought to these children from infancy through fifth grade in the center. This caring attitude goes beyond that of the physical and emotional realm. We are concerned about the whole person: body, mind, and spirit. We know that the Scriptures tell us that as the heart is, thus is the whole body.

Through our teaching and caring staff, we endeavor to have the children entrusted to us receiving total care, and that means Christian education and the demonstration of Christian love for the little ones. As we shall show later in this paper, the whole matter of Evangelism is exactly that demonstration of a totally caring community; one that is not only concerned for the here and now, but also for the hereafter. Not only concerned for the parents, but for the whole family. Remember, little children belong to the Kingdom no less than the adults. We also have this same concern for the parents—that those who do not know the Lord may be given the care of God's forgiving love as well. We will show how this is done later in the paper.

In an early childhood development center, a Lutheran congregation can well see

itself fulfilling Christ's purpose for loving children:

Why have the churches become so deeply involved in child care? The physical, practical reasons are obvious. As a major property owner, the church has available space. During the lively construction era (the 1960s), many churches added classrooms, parish halls, and all-purpose rooms. Facilities originally designed for Sunday school have child sized fittings—the chairs, tables, toys, and changing tables essential for child care programs. Start-up costs are greatly reduced because the church already has, in addition to equipment, insurance and garbage collection. The church's tax-exempt status lowers operating costs. Finally, most importantly, churches have traditionally been located in the heart of their communities, either close to public transportation or along main roads. Churches are easy to get to.

Beyond reasons of convenience lies the social, moral impulse sometimes called "mission theology." This embraces not just a commitment to Christian education, but a wider concern for social justice and community service. As a New Jersey pastor wrote, explaining to National Council of Churches, his congregation's decision to provide child care, "It is a part of our sense of being good neighbors. We want to offer our neighbors help in any way we can. Right now they need a place for their day care center."

By the usual criteria of quality, church-sponsored centers rate high. Fully eighty-seven percent of the directors hold college degrees—well above the national average; over ninety-one percent of the teachers have some kind of training in early childhood development. Group size is kept low, usually under eighteen children and the adult/child ratio is generous (ninety percent of centers report ratios between one to two and one to six).⁵⁹

In order to fulfill the mission of Jesus Christ, there are six areas in which the Church seeks to fulfill in its everyday ministry: worship, education, witness, fellowship, stewardship, and service. As I mention these six aspects of ministry, two of them are of great value as the congregation fulfills its work as the people of

⁵⁹Fredelle Maynard, *The Child Care Crisis, Contemporary Family Issues*, (New York, NY: Viking Press, 1985), 78–79.

God—service and witness.

For a congregation to be of service to the community is powerful public relations, and is actually very scriptural. We are told to “Let our light so shine before men.” Also, when our brother has need of our help, we are to be of assistance to him. The Church is a caring community. We know again from the Scriptures that God wanted justice, not sacrifice. He had some very strong words for Israel when they did not take care of the widow, the stranger, and the orphan. Today, the Christian congregation has the opportunity to be of service to those in need of Christian care—not simply care, but Christian care. Children today are definitely in need of love and care. The congregation can truly be of help in this area by having an Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC).

As Dr. Ervin Kolb stated in a class lecture, “Service is also one of the functions of the church.” When parents bring their children to the ECDC, we are providing a service to these parents; one that, hopefully, gives the parents a sense of well being. In a Christian setting, these little ones are loved, are taught the meaning of Christ’s love, experience this love through loving care by the staff and the pastor, and are taught this love through song, chapel, and classroom teachings using Christ-centered educational material. This is truly a service for the community.

It is also a service to single-parent families who struggle to make a living due to the hardships involved. One of the excellent ways to witness is through the ECDC. There are a number of children in the center who are children of the congregation. However, if one follows the norm of most congregations, the majority of children are

from non-member families. When the Christian community reaches out to these people and offers the ECDC program to them, we are truly being of service to these people which would be related to the Old Testament admonition to care for the poor, the widows, and fatherless.

We see that the Church has a responsibility for service to those who are outside of the Church, when we look at Matthew 25:35 where Jesus speaks the words: “I was a stranger and you invited Me in” [NIV]. Here we are offering the ECDC program as a service to people who are not of the congregation, but, who are nevertheless a part of the greater community not families with the congregation *per se*. The Center is hopefully a safe haven for both children and parents during the time when the parents are away at work.

The parents need a place for their children while they work. The parents feel a sense of security with their children in a Christian center. We believe that the care is one that comes from living out the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, who says to us that we are to “Love one another as I have loved you.” Or as John writes:

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth. (1 John 3:16-18 [NIV])

These children are in the center, usually five days a week, except for those who are in the preschool three- and four-year-old classes or in drop-in care. (These are in the center for two or three hours for two or three days a week.) As a result, the center has the opportunity of reaching out to those parents who are not of the

Christian faith, or to those who have dropped away from the faith. As Jesus points out in His parable of the Sower and the Seed, there are those who were in the Kingdom, but have lost it due to outside influences:

Those on the rock are the ones who receive the Word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way, they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. (Luke 8:13-14 [NIV])

The children of these families would not hear the witness of God's love in Christ if they were in the traditional home setting. But, since the parents work and since they need a place for their children during the time they are away, the ECDC has that opportunity of witnessing the love of God in Christ to these children. There will be more on this in a later chapter.

We are obviously concerned with the physical and emotional needs of the children who are brought to the ECDC. We know that children are to be given the best education possible, especially one that shows that these children are being brought up in the "admonition of the Lord." This indicates that these children are also to be given an education in the area of Christian instruction. These children are taught the Word of God in their daily stay at the center. Those parents who are not Christian or who are lapsed Christians are witnessed to by the staff and pastor as we will present in a later chapter.

These little minds are being educated and developed in the ECDC. Rev. Thomas J. Sanders writes in *Lutheran Education*:

We have learned much about how children develop. By the time a child

enters Sunday school, he or she has already learned some basic lessons of life. They have a good grasp of what is right and what is wrong. They are seeking answers. Some of them are brave enough to come up for the “children’s sermon”. Pastors need to realize that most of these children know who he is (and hopefully like him). Even though we may not want to admit it, many small children begin to base their concept of what God is like on their pastor. If this is the case, then the pastor who can show an interest in and care for a child has done much to teach this child about our God who desires to be called “our Father,”—the God of all grace.⁶⁰

In the ECDC, the little eighteen-months and above are seeing who God is, as the pastor relates to them. When the pastor has chapel with these little ones, he is showing the love of the Father. Here they see the love of God as demonstrated by an involved pastor in the ECDC, as he has contact with the little ones on a daily basis and in chapel during the week. The staff of the center are guided and encouraged to be faithful witnesses as the pastor seeks to be of service to the staff in helping to “train up a child.” Through these contacts, the parents see what it means to have the love of God active in their own lives and may well be brought to Jesus Christ themselves. As we will describe later in this work, there are more possibilities of bringing people to Christ through the staff itself when it is properly trained to do so. Pastors are truly a vital part of helping little children come to the knowledge of the truth:

When our Lord walked on the face of this earth, He touched the lives of people in their daily situations. He told His disciples that He came for all people. To prove His point, He opened His arms to small children. We who are undershepherds need to take our cue from the Good Shepherd of the flock and “go and do likewise.” “Train up a

⁶⁰Thomas J. Sanders, “The Pastor is an Early Childhood Educator,” *Lutheran Education* 125, # 1, (Mar/Apr 1989): 250.

child” is not only an admonition to parents, but to the whole church. Training begins with birth.⁶¹

Consequently, the Church, including The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, has many child–care centers or Early Childhood Development Centers. We believe that not only are we making proper use of our facilities, but that we are also meeting the total needs of the children whose parents choose to send their children to our centers. When parents choose their care–giver, they want to be certain that what takes place at this institution will not only be good for their children, but that it will be a place which will give them the peace of mind so that they are able to go about the business of their employment without any worries or concerns for their children’s welfare.

Since parents want to be assured that they can leave their children in excellent care, an outstanding care center is more than a mere “baby sitting station:”

A center for young children is a place where children are engaged in interesting stimulating activities, relevant to their life styles, not a place where children just do “busy work.”

Each center for young children is unique. The type of program and the schedule planned for various activities depend on such factors as the educational philosophy of the staff, the amount of time the children spend in school, the special needs of the children enrolled, the physical facilities available, and the location in terms of climate. However, all centers aim to provide a happy place with opportunities for worthwhile play and work experiences so that children will grow and learn under the guidance of well–qualified teachers.⁶²

⁶¹Ibid., 251.

⁶²Leeper, Dales, Skipper, & Witherspoon, *Good Schools for Young Children*, (New York, NY: McMillan Publishing House, 1974), 145.

CHAPTER 4

THE DIFFERENT PURPOSE OF A LUTHERAN ECDC

A CHRIST-CENTERED APPROACH

The Lutheran Early Childhood Learning Center is one in which the children learn from an early age that God is the center of the world. The staff's philosophy is to be guided by this fact. Even though most parents will probably not have this concern, it is still of great importance that we witness this truth to our children. We have these little ones in our Center as if they were at home with their parents. Here they learn many of those important skills that help them to grow in all the areas of life. These children will receive better interaction time with the children in the center than will those who remain in a single-child home setting.

As we seek to be faithful witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Lutheran ECDC, we are to be able to help the parents deal with personal difficulties. These parents quite often are people who "typically . . . struggle with feelings of guilt, and the separation anxiety experienced between parent and child is equally stressful."⁶³ It is very difficult to leave one's offspring with a stranger, especially when one realizes that the care center staff will be assisting in raising this couple's or single parent's

⁶³Wayne Lucht, "Reaching Out Through Day Care," *Lutheran Education* 124 # 1, (Sep/Oct 1988): 210.

child. For the single parent, the divorce is itself a struggle; for there is a very high guilt level, plus possible anger, and other emotions. The children involved in this situation have some tremendous problems with which to deal, since they often believe they are the cause of the divorce.⁶⁴ Therefore, when a child is left with a care-giver, the child may well wonder if he/she has done even worse things and is being punished for these acts by being placed in a child care center.⁶⁵ The parent senses the child's pain and thus attempts to compensate for the inconvenience of the child's relationship situation. King of Kings Early Childhood Development Center has much to offer in the way of teaching forgiveness, love, and acceptance as part of the overall curriculum to help the child and parent with the problem.

There are parents who do choose a Lutheran childhood care center because they are aware of the impact made upon the lives of their children. They believe that the children will be taught some definite values, that they will learn manners, that they will learn to be giving and not taking persons, that they will have Bible stories read to them, chapel services where Christian songs are sung, and a message of God's love shared with their children on a regular basis. These are not necessarily Christian parents, but parents who want "good things" for their children. These parents are at times open to being evangelized for Christ. Later in this paper, this process will be shown.

We look at the Lutheran Early Childhood Development Center to see that things

⁶⁴Irving R. Stuart and Lawrence Edwin Abt, *Children of Separation and Divorce*, (New York, NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1981), 27.

⁶⁵Dreskin, *The Day Care Decision*, 30.

are a bit different from the non-Christian center. A typical problem that many church ECDC's have to deal with is that of making the child move faster than it would normally do. The centers want to do what is good and try so hard to give the best education possible that they overdo their learning situations.⁶⁶ On the other hand, the church related center is able to give help in an area which is not met by the typical non-church related care center. It is spiritual learning, occurring at the feeling level of both infants and toddlers, as well as of the older preschool children. The Day Care Book contains a diagram which depicts an example of what is called "I AM! I CAN! philosophy."⁶⁷

The four sides of the square represent the four areas of development. From the moment of birth until a human being draws his last breath a change is taking place in each of these four areas, and the most rapid period of growth occurs during the first six years. These are the years when a child develops feelings about himself.

The circle within the square shows how the I AM! feeds the I CAN! With each small success the I CAN! feeds back energy into the I AM! There is no beginning and no end, and so I have chosen to use a circle to demonstrate this process. The clockwise direction of the arrows indicates positive growth.

The whole process goes into reverse when an individual is made to feel

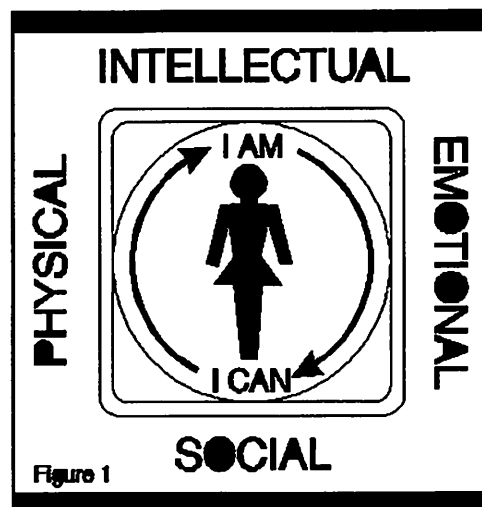


Figure 1

⁶⁶Marilynn Beccue and Janet Wilke, *In His Hands: A Manual for Beginning and Operating Lutheran Early Childhood Programs*, (St. Louis, MO: Board for Parish Services, 1993), 2.

⁶⁷Grace Mitchell, *The Day Care Book*, (New York, NY: Dyrin & Day, 1979), 24.

inadequate. Parents and teachers do this to children when they set unattainable standards, or when they constantly scold, nag, and humiliate a child. When this happens, instead of developing into secure, confident individuals who can make a contribution to society, children withdraw, refuse to risk failures, or in the extreme cases turn their energies to negative behavior.

When I evaluate the quality of day care, I look at what the program is doing to elevate or depress the child's I AM!; and then at the conditions that will develop his I CAN! or push it into obscurity.⁶⁸

All of this is great in humanistic theory and maybe practice; however, the most important component is missing—"spiritual development." The following diagram would be the kind given in a Lutheran ECDC:

God is the center of all that takes place in life. All that is done takes place as it emanates from GOD who is the center. The child's intellectual, physical, emotional, and social aspects are all governed by God's involvement in his or her life.⁶⁹ The Scriptures state it this way: "Bring up a child in the way that he

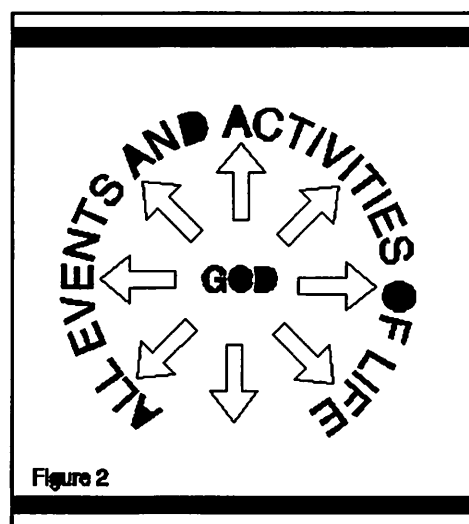


Figure 2

should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

MEETING THE WHOLE FAMILY'S SPIRITUAL NEEDS

People who have their child in a Lutheran ECDC normally are persons who

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Beccue and Wilke, *In His Hands*, 3.

should be made aware of the fact that we are there not only for their children's needs, but that we also seek to meet the needs of the whole family. The beauty of this is that a Lutheran congregation can offer this service to the families of the children in the ECDC on a daily basis. It is the same blessing offered to those members of the congregation who have children in the center.

We see that the ECDC is willing to have children of non-members in their program, but usually fail to move beyond that point. Kupier writes:

When the question rises whether the task of the church is to build up its own members in the faith or to bring the Gospel to those outside the church, some choose one of these to the practical exclusion of the other. That betrays a serious lack of balance.⁷⁰

Accordingly, a congregation is not to include either outreach or inreach to the exclusion of the other. It must be absolutely involved with the strengthening of the members' faith and belief that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. At the same time, the members must perceive that it is also the Church's task to see to it that others are brought into this same saving grace which is accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit uses the Church and its arm of Christian education and Evangelism. Thus, the Lutheran congregation is there to be of help so that parents' spiritual needs can also be met through the ECDC contact with them through their child's being in the center.⁷¹

As a Christian congregation ministers to the families of the center, there is to be

⁷⁰Earl D. Radmacher, *What the Church is All About*, (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1982), 360.

⁷¹Beccue and Wilke, *In His Hands*, 2.

the realization that the ministry of the congregation is truly the tool of the Holy Spirit in helping people. Scriptures declare: “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God prepared for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10 [NIV]). This was the nature of our Lord’s ministry here on earth. He was always dealing with people: forgiving, healing, feeding, admonishing, leading, and praying.

Therefore we see that:

The Gospel is for the people because Jesus Christ is for the people, and our Lord constantly related Himself to people . . . The key to people relatedness is genuine love for people, interest in people’s needs, their anxieties and anticipations, praying with and for people, humbly depending on the Holy Spirit and expecting that He can and will create that needed relatedness.⁷²

The ideal outcome is for a congregation to perceive the clientele of the ECDC in the same light of relatedness as they perceive visitors in general on Sundays or other times of worship. We see the church:

must be people related in message and service if it wished to capture the attention of the people and draw them into the fold of Jesus Christ. It needs to ask itself such questions as “do we grip and guide their conscience? Do we scratch where they itch? Do we bring a warning where they are negligent or indifferent? Do we bring correction where they are wrong? Do we rebuke where they are failing? Do we bring reconciliation where there is enmity? Do we bring peace where there is strife? Do we share liberally of our substance with the needy of the world? Is our presence, message and service related to the people? Would it be missed if it were to disappear?” To be people-related may be a costly game of life, however, it is a Christ-like life and will be a great force in reaching out to those parents whose children are in the Lutheran day care center.⁷³

⁷²George W. Peters, *A Theology of Church Growth*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervon, 1982), 227.

⁷³Ibid.

The result being,

the need for the church to be involved in the ministry to the families is apparent when we think of how Jesus did not condemn the world He came to save, provided His ministry to them. There are two major reasons why our Lutheran churches need to open classrooms and parish halls to provide day care for children of working parents. The first reason is that there are many children from our Lutheran families needing such care. We can assist parents in the work of a Christian education by providing a Christian environment that complements what is being taught in the homes. Secondly, there is a substantial number of children coming from unchurched or not currently involved Christian homes. We have a wonderful opportunity to share, in some cases for two or more years, the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to bring the salvation message to the children and their families.⁷⁴

We know that parents often look for additional help beyond simply the “care” of their children. Quite often, you will find that the center’s director is a counselor and trouble shooter for the parents. The pastor assigned to the center, if it is set up that way, is a person who has considerable contact with not only the children, but with the parents as well, as they attempt to sort out their own problems. A church center is also a wonderful vehicle to meet other needs of parents. An observant teacher or child care worker who is watchful can be of great help in steering that parent to the pastor for guidance and comfort, and in directing the parent to additional resources.

Lutheran Education states it this way:

We can provide an environment of quality Christian child care. We can meet the physical needs of these children and their parents. We can wipe their noses and hold their hand, provide stimulating environments where they can learn and develop their social and academic skills. More important, we have a built-in vehicle to teach Christian living to children who could so easily be in our care for ten hours a day.⁷⁵

⁷⁴Lucht, "Reaching Out Through Day Care", 210.

⁷⁵Ibid.

More important is the point that a Christian congregation is able to share the physical, emotional, and social strengths not only for the child, but for the entire family. Quite often, these parents, seeing that the congregation is helping to meet needs, also turn to the congregation for spiritual help as well. If a congregation is alert, it can truly capitalize on this outreach gift as it brings the Gospel to those people who are not presently in the Christian Church as well as to those who do not regularly attend a church at the present time.

We can train our staffs to minister to the whole child and parent, to comfort and encourage while sharing the love of Jesus. Where else do we get to have the opportunity to take young children in their formative years and give them firsthand experiences with daily worship, Bible study, prayers, confession and forgiveness, as well as role models of Christians interacting with Christians. Many of our elementary schools are now providing before and after school care because of the apparent need of such service. Again, there is an opportunity to continue the role modeling that was begun by the teachers, the molding of attitudes while providing a testing ground for experiencing Christian living.

For those who attend the local public school, the Christian after-school care provides a means for an adaptation of the weekday school or Bible-club, where the Gospel is again shared and lived out in daily experiences.⁷⁶

However, most churches do not think in these broad terms.

Asked about goals, church centers overwhelmingly cite a desire to provide warmth along with basic care, for the children of working parents. Also high on the list are independence, self-reliance, positive self-image, and sharing/cooperation. Interestingly enough, both school preparation and spiritual development are way down the list, in seventh place. Few programs include specifically religious material; ninety-nine percent of the church-sponsored centers are open to all members of the

⁷⁶Ibid., 211.

community, regardless of race or religious belief.⁷⁷

THE PASTOR IS INVOLVED IN MEETING FAMILY SPIRITUAL NEEDS

The Lutheran pastor takes upon himself the responsibility of seeing to it that Jesus Christ's message of salvation is a part of the Early Childhood Development Center. Hear what the candidate into the holy ministry takes upon himself:

“Go therefore, and be a shepherd of the Good Shepherd's flock . . . instruct, watch over, and guide the flock over which the Holy Spirit has placed you”. (Lutheran Worship Agenda, p. 214) With these words a ministerial candidate is dismissed at his ordination. Every pastor promises at his installation to “faithfully instruct both young and old in the chief articles of Christian doctrine”. (Agenda p. 250) From these rites, it is clear that the Church has taken seriously our Lord's admonition to Peter, not only to feed His sheep, but also to feed His lambs (John 21:15).⁷⁸

The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod has for many years been involved in outreach in one form or another. When we became a functioning group, we reached out into the Indian Community in Frankenmuth, Michigan. During World War II, we sought to relate to people who were English speaking, with the English District's birth. After World War II, the Synod was interested in reaching out to others; for, in the time span between 1948 through about 1958, our Synod became more and more oriented towards non–German speaking people. It was basically our greatest period of growth towards the outside.

Still, much of our ministry was “inward” with fellowship, education, edification, discipline, and the structuring of the organization. Our hymnody remained

⁷⁷Maynard, *The Child Care Crisis, Contemporary Family Issues*, 79.

⁷⁸Sanders, "The Pastor is an Early Childhood Educator," 250.

directed to those of Germanic background. We held tenaciously to the traditions from Germany. Obviously, there is nothing wrong with holding on to traditions, as long as these do not prohibit the carrying out of our Lord's Great Commission. We have somehow remained in the mode; that, if we are God-directed, we must remain inward directed.

In my opinion, the traditions and the carrying out of the Great Commission have been synonymous in our thinking. I believe that, if we are to be a Church that is desirous of being challenged to bring people out of Satan's hands into the hands of our loving and merciful heavenly Father, we must be Mission minded or Evangelism driven. Our traditions are our heritage. They are good only as they assist us in sharing Christ in a meaningful way in a diverse cultural setting of today. This is not to say that our theological education is amiss; but, somehow, it appears that many clergy have not transmitted this concern effectively. Yes, we are to have the correct theology. This means that we do accept the Scriptures as the Inspired inerrant Word of God. It means that we do believe in salvation by grace through faith in this one and only Savior, Jesus Christ. But all of this is meaningless if we do not have an Evangelism orientation in our church life.

If you examine the number of Baptisms and Confirmations from the "outside," you will notice that we have much that needs to be done in order to grow the Christian Church. It does not mean that we have to compromise our theology, our Christian education, or worship; but it most definitely means that we are to be a church that sees the world is dying without Jesus Christ. We see that world as a place

where we are to be in ministry. It may well mean that we as clergy and laity will need to realize that we talk to people before they talk to us; it may mean that we seek to define/identify the needs in the community where we live as a congregation and as a Synod. It may even mean that we will have to shed our German intellectualism for being godly human beings in our society. I believe we have been so concerned with our inward attitudes that we have missed what is going on outside. We have been involved with such things as fellowship, education, edification, and discipline. Again, there is nothing wrong with our being concerned with these important matters; however, in my opinion they are not to be an end in themselves. As a Synod, as well as congregations of the Synod, it would be wonderful for us to become more involved with Evangelism, service, instruction, with the intentional teaching of what Scriptures mean in the outside world which has no need for Jesus Christ.

The Great Commission Convocation of 1993, has produced some wonderful materials for outreach, which, I believe, are innovative and which meet the challenge that lies before us. No, we have not been all self-directed. However, it is important that we look at the unbelieving world for the work of bringing them the Good News of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. In our Synod, we have wonderful educational programs. We seek to bring our Gospel orientation to bear upon those who sit in the pews each and every Sunday. Our Synod has made some positive strides in changing its self-directed attitudes at the synodical level; but we have many congregations who, through their pastors, have not really seen fit to be outward directed. I am not so much faulting the Synod

as I am the clergy leaders who, either because they are oriented towards shepherding only or because they have not accepted the reality of sin's destruction, are not seeking, with any degree of strong will, to be about the business of bringing the message of Jesus Christ to unsaved people in the United States.

Shepherding is important, but we also need our pastors to help our people see that outreach is vital to the growth of the Kingdom of God. We are used by the Holy Spirit to fulfill the will of the Father that the Gospel be preached, that the Sacrament of Holy Baptism be administered, and that people be instructed in the words of salvation. We do, indeed, need to look to those people who have crossed the threshold of our doors with no real knowledge or belief in Jesus Christ. We have begun to see the importance of our being of service to others in our community. We see that we are housing day-cares and preschools. The Early Childhood Development Center can be a wonderful tool for our Church. Here are many parents who have little, if any, concern for their own or their children's salvation. We have the Good News of Jesus Christ to impart to them, but not necessarily in the old and tried ways; it may well mean that we will move into a new and interesting way of reaching out to people who come into contact with us, a way that may be considered beyond what we want to do.

I do believe that the Early Childhood Center, at least for a few more years, is going to be important for effective outreach. There may be a move to make day-care part of the public school-care system, as the move towards pre-school is now happening. However, there are still going to be people, even non-believers, who will

want to send their little ones to a private/Church-oriented Early Childhood Development Center. We have seen this in the parochial school system of the Synod. There are many people who send their children to our schools even though they have to pay tuition. Many of these people, at least in the larger cities, from what many of my fellow pastors have seen, are not church-going or Christian people. They might also be willing to pay for the services that are offered by a Church care center. We will therefore continue to have the opportunity of using these centers as a means whereby we can reach out to those who have no Savior. Here we have an opportunity to see to it that we make the best of our God blessed opportunities for sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The pastor is the one who sets the tone and level of investment in the congregation to show the members not only the importance of evangelistic outreach but also the methodology of this whole concern for the souls of those who do not know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The pastor normally has his eyes and ears keyed to what is going on the congregation's work. It is he who has an appreciation of the needs that exist. Thus, through his input, the various arms of the congregation find their direction and purpose more fully.

THE GOSPEL IS SHARED WITH CHILDREN

The Lutheran pastor who has a spiritual concern for children in the congregation's care-center knows that children are truly a part of God's salvation plan. When one searches the New Testament, we see that there is much written about the love of God for children. John 3:16 is very clear on the truth that God's love is for the

world. This includes little children no less than adults. We are also told that God's love for the world is so great that He did not spare the life of His only Son, Jesus Christ. We see that the Father's love was so great for a world of sin-infected people that He sent Jesus Christ to take away the infection which people had passed on to each other through Original Sin, which is the infection of humanity. Because of Original Sin, all people are in need of the cleansing of their very being from this destructive reality.

The Father did this, when Jesus Christ went the way of the Cross as a human being. Jesus Christ, who was with the Father in all glory and majesty, did not think that it was wrong of Him to leave the glory of the Father to become one of us, to live in our world, to be one like us, but without sin: "In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning . . . The Word was made flesh and He lived among us" (John 1: vv. 1 & 14 [TJB]). This Jesus Christ suffered for children's sins. He was rejected by humanity through Judas, and by the religious leaders of Israel who jeered, demanding that Christ be placed on a cross to be killed. Through this act, the Father let this become the method whereby humanity's sins against Him were paid for by Christ. Because of Adam and Eve's sin, death was brought upon all people, no less children. This spiritual death brought complete and total separation from God upon all people both for time and for eternity. However, through Christ's resurrection, the Father's anger against people, including children, was appeased. The Father of life and mercy gave forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life to all who are in Christ Jesus.

This great love of the Father was not simply limited to that time and place, but for all time and for all people who are found in Christ Jesus the Lord. Scriptures tell us that the Father wanted all to be saved, “and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” This message is not something that miraculously falls out of the sky; it is not something that the Holy Spirit simply lays on someone out of nowhere. This message comes from the Bible. It is to be taught, to be heard, to be learned, and accepted.

The Father’s love was to be shared with the world, and the disciples were to be the messengers of that Gospel truth. Through the spoken Word and the other part of the Means of Grace—Baptism—even children would be freed from all their guilty stains, brought purified before the presence of God. For Jesus says that little children are important. This is the way we are given by the Lord to see to it that children are brought into the Kingdom of heaven: “Let the little ones come to Me; do not stop them; for it is such as these that the kingdom of God belongs” (Mark 10:14 [TJB]).

We have to have an opportunity to fulfill the will of our God. There must be ways in which this act of sharing salvation can be accomplished in the lives of little children, who may not yet know the Lord Jesus Christ, or who already have faith in Him through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Not only was this message to be used to make disciples, but it was also to be taught to people in an ongoing way. People were to share this message with children. In the Old Testament we know that God told fathers to teach the Word to their children when they were walking, when they were sitting down, etc. We read in Ephesians 6:4, “Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”

[KJV]. To our Lord, these little ones are as important to the Kingdom of Heaven as are adults, in that Jesus tells the disciples of His day, as well as us today, it is to “such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs” (Mark 10:14 [TJB]). In Acts 2:38 ff. “Peter answered, ‘And every one of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise that was made is for you and your children’” [TJB]. We dare not omit our concern for children from our outreach planning. They do truly fit into God’s scheme of things.

Through the divine imperative, God does indeed provide the decisive reason for us to carry on the privilege of reaching out to others who do not have the Gospel message in their hearts so that “the love of God shed abroad in the hearts of believers is the supremely dynamic motive for Mission work.”⁷⁹ Lavik states that “the authentic will of God is given us by divine revelation, and that revelation tells us not only that God wants us to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles but also that He wants us to do this because without the Gospel they are lost.”⁸⁰

I believe the unbelieving parents, whose children attend a Christian Child Care Center, fit into this category. They have no knowledge of Jesus. We have the opportunity of making the Gospel known to them in a very personal and real way. The child-care staff members have this kind of relationship with the parents of the children who are unbelievers, and God’s love is there for them to receive the message

⁷⁹Lavik, *The Christian Church in a Secularized World*, 36.

⁸⁰Ibid.

of salvation into their hearts. The basic motive of the Church's existence is simply "to save souls from sin and perdition."⁸¹ We read from Acts 1:8, prior to His Ascension into heaven, Jesus tells the disciples to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. The child-care workers are fulfilling this directive of our Lord. Here are Christian people who personally profess the Christian faith, which has been given to them by their Lord Jesus through the action of the holy Spirit. Here is their opportunity of sharing this same wonderful news of salvation with people who have not been given the opportunity of hearing the Good News in such a personal and caring way. These are not the "called workers" of the congregation. These are people who know the Christian faith as that which is personal in their lives. Although not paid to do so, they of their own volition share Jesus with these parents and children. There is also the fact that these staff people are there everyday. They are able to build up very personal and meaningful relationships with these parents, thereby giving them much more of an opportunity to speak with the children's parents concerning the child's physical, emotional and spiritual life needs.

Quite often, these parents live quite literally in a secularized society which has no need for God, or what He represents to a world that is sitting in darkness and moving steadily to destruction. These parents do not see any need for change in their own lives or in those of their children. As the trust and care are built up between the care worker or teacher, parents often are open to what these people are able to share with them. This is a way not to turn them off, as a pastor might possibly do, since he

⁸¹Ibid., 37.

is not attuned to the parents the same way that a staff worker is attuned to them. Staff people are often capable of reaching out to parents in such a way as to open the door, not to salvation, but to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit then works through these workers so that parents' hearts are changed. It is something very special for parents to see and feel love demonstrated by the teachers in word and deed, as they care for more than the physical and emotional needs of their children. This means that the atmosphere at the center is one where love and Christlike examples are real. Scriptures state it rather simply: "By their works you shall know them." Unless the above is demonstrated in spiritual truths of living, the external care is nothing beyond simply that.

CHAPTER 5

SETTING THE STAGE

FINDING A WAY TO REACH THE UNCHURCHED PARENTS

As was stated, the pastor has a high degree of responsibility in helping to instill a positive understanding of Evangelism throughout the congregation's areas of ministry. The pastor is to go to the congregation's key boards asking them to become involved in reaching out to those who are not in Jesus Christ. If Evangelism is to be effective, it must of necessity be achieved through the congregation, the local church. This arm of God has a very strategic position; and, thus, the person who has a key influence on the direction of the congregation is the pastor. He is the person who normally has his eyes and ears keyed to what is going on in the congregation as well as in the world around him. He has an appreciation of the needs of the parish. Thus, through his input, the various arms of the congregation find their direction and purpose more fully.

When the congregation's ECDC begins to have a considerable number of non-churched parents who have only nominal membership in a church, the pastor sets the wheels in motion to see what can be done to meet this challenge. It is the pastor who is able to see the potential for outreach through the ECDC program. It is true that he could possibly meet with the parents individually and could ascertain their intentions;

however, the staff members of the ECDC have a better relationship with the parents of the children, and, I believe, a more effective way of reaching out to those who do not know Jesus or who are not involved with worship in any congregation at the present time.

One of the struggles that take place in a congregation as well as in the Synod is that “we have never done it that way before.” True, the strength of our Synod is our organizational heritage. We all do the same thing. It is safe and secure doing what we have always done, along with everyone doing it together. There is also the difficulty that, in many child-care centers and early childhood development centers, a goodly number of the staff may not be Lutheran. Therefore, many believe we cannot have the non-Lutherans witnessing to the parents. In Mark 9:38-41, when the disciples came to tell Jesus that He should stop a certain group from witnessing for Jesus and His ministry because they were not direct followers of Him, Jesus then tells His disciples that they should let these non-followers be, for if they were for Him, they could not be against Him.

I believe that our Church should not be afraid to be innovative. Instead of being afraid to take the initiative, we should not be afraid to take an idea and make it work for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If the staff members are willing to work with the pastor and congregation, it is important that we go with our ideas until someone makes us stop. We have the Gospel to bring to people who do not know Him or who are weak in their faith. We may make mistakes, but it would make more sense to do too much than to do too little. This is a different way of doing things. It's

change, it's something that might or might not work; but we should not be afraid of this change in approach. Instead, it is vital that we be faithful in our calling to share the Gospel as was Dr. C. F. Walther. He always kept the Gospel as the foremost object in his work, but he was not afraid to go wherever necessary to share that wonderful gift of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

THE ECDC BECOMES A WAY TO REACH UNCHURCHED PARENTS

The method of reaching out to those in the ECDC who are either unchurched or who are non-attending people would be that of using the center staff as witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ. For lay people to be about the business of being involved in a biblical approach to growing Christ's Church, the clergy must be trusting and willing to train the laity in the work that they are to do for the Kingdom.⁸² The laity are the key for making the Church visible to those who are outside the pale of Jesus Christ. The child care workers in the ECDC are the people who are the front line for outreach. The Gospel is not just for those inside the Church, but for those who still need Christ. This can be done by these laity:

The use of gifts and involvement of the laity is far more than the maintenance of the existing body. Using gifts in ministry and outreach is an essential ingredient to a healthy growing church.⁸³

For only when the clergy go to the effort of training the laity, to propel the laity into their ministry with the tools and skills that are required, will Christ's body grow, as

⁸²Oscar E. Feucht, *Everyone a Minister*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1974), 102.

⁸³Oscar E. Feucht, ed., *Helping Families Through the Church*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1957), 59.

guided and directed by the Holy Spirit. The Church is like a body, the Body of Christ. Its members make up that Body of which Christ is its Head. So that the Body might be effective in building and sustaining Christ's Church, by the Power of the Holy Spirit, this training and education are essential to the Lord's work.

We know we are to do God's work under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit in the most effective way possible. Luke 14:28-31 tells us that one must count the cost, check out the advantages or disadvantages of what we are preparing to do. Not only do we need the right goals, but the right people. The ECDC staff are truly God's gift to grow His Church in the ECDC.

Having a biblical philosophy also means that we do not merely make goals; these goals are made so that they are assigned to someone's accountability. This would be through the Education and Evangelism boards. The boards, through the pastor, see to it that people are brought the Good News of the Gospel. Through these trained laity, we believe that the Holy Spirit works through these people as he "calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Church on earth and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith."⁸⁴ As these laity are trained to bring the Gospel to parents in the center, the goal of the Holy Spirit bringing people to Christ through these people is fulfilled. Paul writes in Romans 10:13-17 that, unless people are involved, there is no Gospel to be heard and no one will believe and be saved. We know that, when the Roman Government came and destroyed Jerusalem, the laity were scattered throughout the then-known world, witnessing Christ wherever they

⁸⁴Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord*, 345.

went. In Acts 16:4–10 we see this concept taking place.

These persons would be given training and would, thereby, be prepared to be used by the Holy Spirit to witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ as they come into contact with the parents on a day-to-day basis. This could take place in relationship to the child, or according to the personal needs of the parents of the center.

A STRATEGY IS BEGUN

As we know, the Gospel is the message of importance. It is also the motivation for all that is done in the congregation is reaching out to the unsaved. It is the work of the congregation, using the boards of Evangelism and Education, to devise strategies for the furtherance of the Gospel in its midst. We realize that the strategies themselves do not build the Church. It is the inworking of the Holy Spirit that achieves His wonderful work of increasing the Kingdom of our Lord.⁸⁵ However, we realize that the Holy Spirit works through the ongoing activities of the local congregation so that more people in the congregation will be involved in outreach. In this way more people are reached with the Gospel. Paul writes: “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors as though God were making his appeal through us” (2 Corinthians 5:20 [NIV]). Thus, when the congregation is made aware of the Holy Spirit’s involvement as the great Strategist, it will follow the Guidance of the Holy Spirit as found in the Bible. We read:

The Holy Spirit is the great Strategist in Acts. He is indisputably the Superintendent in the great missionary endeavor. He empowers and

⁸⁵Laetsch, ed., *Abiding Word*, Vol 1., 454.

initiates (Acts 1:8; 13:1–4), guides and directs (Acts 8:29; 16:6–10). Although the strategy is not explicitly spelled out in Acts or anywhere in the New Testament for that matter, yet it is implicit and traceable.⁸⁶

The pastor must surely be aware of this truth as he works together with the Boards of Evangelism and Education, seeking a way to reach people who do not have Christ as their Savior. These two boards, working with the pastor, seek to plan and carry out a program in the ECDC which is positive and workable; that is, to bring people into contact with Jesus Christ. When the pastor is aware of personal involvement of the Holy Spirit, he does not shrink back with fear that it will not go through; but he is confident that, through prayer and planning under the Holy Spirit, the will of God that salvation be brought to people will be effective.

The spiritual leader, the pastor, is the logical person to go to the Boards of Evangelism and Education, seeking their help in using the ECDC as an outreach tool to bring and to sustain persons in Jesus Christ. However, he should not expect the boards simply to step forward and to do this work of combined effort for outreach in the ECDC. He should advocate a planning procedure. The Scriptures themselves teach the necessity of wise planning. The Book of Proverbs describes a wise man as one who looks ahead (14:8). When he makes a decision, he does so on the basis of the facts (18:13). When faced with a problem, he seeks the counsel of others (15:22). He depends on God to help him (16:9). He acknowledges that, while human beings make plans, it is God who determines the final outcome (16:1). Only the fool refuses to give up plans when they do not work (13:19). Finally, the intelligent man is open

⁸⁶Peters, *A Theology of Church Growth*, 223.

to new ideas (18:15).

The pastor is there to set the pace. However, the lay as well as the professional leaders in a courageous church are people of vision. Understanding both broad objectives and specific goals, they present clear direction. The Christian leaders work for change, and the congregations accept the change. The leaders understand possible barriers to change and growth, and the churches are flexible in meeting the challenge barriers present. Risk is acceptable, and people have permission to fail. In faith in God's promises, the professional and lay leaders try things that seem humanly impossible. The congregations attempt action never taken before.

The pastor and key leaders possess perseverance . . .
The professional leaders strongly attempt to remain on the cutting edge of ministry through continuing education. They constantly look for new ideas, attend seminars, read books, listen to tapes, and often engage in postgraduate work. They also motivate key congregational leaders to do likewise.⁸⁷

HOW TO SET UP PROGRAM

When the pastor sees that there is potential for addressing a special need in the congregation, he will seek to find a way to meet that need. Here is where the pastor and the two main boards are involved in seeking to have the Early Childhood Development Center become a more effective outreach tool for the congregation's Evangelism program.

Jesus asked the question in Luke 14:31: "What king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able to

⁸⁷Paul T. Heinecke, Kent R. Hunter, and David S. Luecke, *Courageous Churches*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), 106.

with thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?" [KJV]. He is calling for planning. The pastor and boards are to plan so that what is hoped for will take place. These people are looking at the resources that are available and how to make the best use of these available resources. Too often, the church is afraid to move forward into areas that have never been travelled before. But, when we know that God is with us, there is the assurance that nothing can realistically cause us to fail. In 2 Kings 6:15–17 [KJV], we see that Elijah was not afraid to pray to the Lord and trust that God would be with him in his endeavors; it was so. Likewise, when we know that what we are doing is given and directed by the Lord, we are confident in our forward actions:

Wise planning according to Church Growth practitioners, is not only biblical, but it is also essential if the church is to carry out the Great Commission as God intended. Good planning requires that one know the facts. This implies analyzing the existing situations in a congregation, setting up goals and objectives, developing a strategy which will outline what a congregation should do to meet its goal, and finally, evaluating the results to determine whether the church is "moving ahead."⁸⁸

Both boards and pastor approach the matter of the necessity of outreach from their own set of responsibilities. The board for Evangelism looks at what is going to be required—tracts, the sending of newsletter bulletins, possibly helping and directing with a community newsletter advertising the ECDC and the Christian care that is being offered. This board is also to work with the director and staff in conjunction with the Education board to help the ECDC reach out to the unsaved and to share

⁸⁸Peters, *A Theology of Church Growth*, 34.

Jesus Christ with the parents of the children in the center. Together they set up the overall training program for those who will be involved. The pastor will set up the training program for those teachers who are to be the witnesses for Christ as well as the materials that are to be used for this staff training in conjunction with the Board of Evangelism. The Scriptural material is entrusted by “Call” to the Pastor. Pastors are to be involved in “regulations or ordinances” for the sake of order, according to Augsburg Confession Article XXVII.⁸⁹ However, as Klug points out in his book *The Church and Ministry*, the congregation has the overall responsibility of ministry of the parish.⁹⁰

The Board of Education sees to it that the Christian education aspect of its ECDC is being carried out. Their task is to see to it that the children in their care are being given the best care possible while at the center. They are also responsible for the Christian education that is to take place while the children are at the center. Much of what this board does is truly an example of bringing Jesus Christ to the children. The teachers and the material they use are to be Christ-centered and also geared to the level of the children that they are teaching. However, they also are representatives of the congregation; and, thus, they are persons who by their lives show the love of Jesus Christ. The pastor views the total picture, seeing how this can all be accomplished by using the resources available through the two respective boards.

The director and staff are aware of the fact that they will be working with the

⁸⁹Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord*, 90.

⁹⁰Eugene F. A. Klug, *The Church and Ministry*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), 136.

pastor and the Board for Evangelism as well as with the Board of Education; they are always made aware that the congregation will be regularly informed about the work being carried out by the ECDC on behalf of the congregation's full ministry of bringing the Good News of salvation to others.

Now that the two boards have agreed on what they will be doing together, they bring their desired will to the Church Council. After it has received approval of the Council, with all questions being duly answered and all difficulties being covered, it goes to the Voters Assembly. It is important that the two boards involved, as well as the pastor, all work together, hand in hand, with the same objectives and with each understanding what part each involved party is to be playing. It is vitally important to point out that what is being attempted is definitely a part of the Congregation's Mission Statement. A congregation that seeks to use as many avenues as possible for outreach will see the importance of this effort. If this work of outreach is presented with a proper understanding of its importance, it may well be that the members of the congregation will come to realize that the ECDC does truly reach out to people, not merely to take care of the so-called physical needs of the families involved. The congregation will realize and appreciate this involvement and participate in bringing people to the Lord Jesus Christ and in sharing the Gospel message by which salvation is made possible through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

When the congregation has given its tacit approval, then the plan can be carried out to use the ECDC as an effective tool for outreach. After this planning has been completed, all concerned bring the whole project to the council and Voters Assembly,

where the discussion is directed to a proper understanding of the ministry being proposed by the two boards. When approval is given, the plan is put to action.

As was stated above, the pastor must, of necessity, be actively involved in any kind of positive evangelistic activity. He should realize that he is the one whom the Church has called to provide the leadership required to help the congregation be effective in seeking to save those who are lost. In the planning for this combined effort, there should indeed be a printed procedural guide for all that is going to be done in this work for the extension of the kingdom, including what is expected of everyone involved.

THE PLAN IS SET IN MOTION

The plan is now set in motion to reach out to the parents of the ECDC through the workers in the center. The ECDC Director must be in full agreement with what is going to take place. If the director is a LCMS person, there should be some understanding already of the importance of Evangelism in the work of the congregation. The director reports to the Board of Education and also shares the results of the dialogues of parents and teachers with the pastor. If the director is not Lutheran, it is crucial that the person be helped to understand the significance of this project. It is also just as important that the director be fully informed as to what the overall program is going to be—how she is going to be involved and what her role is going to be in seeing to it that the employees be encouraged to participate in this form of outreach through the ECDC.

It is hoped that the ECDC Director will be enthusiastic about the intentions of

the Gospel working in the hearts and lives of the families whom the staff will serve through this project of outreach. The director's level of enthusiasm will rub off on the employees, who will also come to see their work in this outreach as essential. They will see that they are truly evangelists for the Lord Jesus Christ. They will be the "front line soldiers" of the Cross of Christ in this effort. This means that the staff, including the director, needs to be Lutheran, or at least persons who are willing to witness for Christ on behalf of the congregation.

The majority of the staff in many early childhood development centers are non-members of the congregation for whom they work. In many instances, these people are not even Lutheran in their denominational affiliation. It is hoped, however, that they are all people who profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Thus, it is imperative that, before any programming be put into place, approval and agreement be sought from these staff persons. The following procedure is recommended:

- a. A member of the pastoral staff, an Education board member, and a member of the Board of Evangelism will meet with the director of the center. They seek to involve the director and staff members in the more involved process of reaching out to the unchurched and non-involved church members whose children are attending the center. Approval needs to be sought so that the staff members can be asked if they would be willing to participate in such an outreach endeavor. Those staff members willing to be involved in the training of this outreach program are given the opportunity for service, while the other staff members continue in their usual staff tasks as is.
- b. The director of the care center would be instructed to make those workers

who have accepted their involvement in the outreach program aware of the identity of families who are either unchurched or non-involved in any particular church.

We know from the Scriptures that Jesus came to change mankind's relationship to God. The statements of Luke 19:10, Matthew 20:28, and Matthew 9:13, make this quite clear. A reconciliation between a holy God and a sin-filled humanity was the purpose of the coming of Jesus. Through this Jesus, the bridge between God and people was rebuilt. The Cross provided the way back to God again; and, through this Jesus Christ's work of reaching out to humanity through the Cross, there became genuine peace between God and humanity. Since Jesus has made this peace a reality, the Church is to make this a truth for all with whom it comes into contact. True, it is for the world; and the local congregation is part of that world:

How will the whole world come to know and feel the impact of Christ's redemptive and creative acts? . . . The answer is clear from this passage. It will occur through the multiplication process . . . This process initiated by Jesus Himself, will guarantee that the Gospel is preached to every generation, unto the second coming. Spreading the Gospel cannot happen any other way.⁹¹

This multiplication takes place as children come into contact with the Gospel through the ECDC; then the parents are impacted by the Holy Spirit's presence through the staff of the ECDC. Through this daily contact with children and parents and a caring for the eternal welfare of both concerned, the Kingdom of Heaven is extended; and people are added to eternal life with Jesus Christ. Therefore, all who are involved with this effort are truly building the Kingdom of God.

⁹¹Ron Jensen and Jim Stevens, *Dynamics of Church Growth*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Book House, 1981), 45.

From what I have been able to ascertain, many day-cares or ECDC's in our Synod are staffed primarily by non-Lutherans. They have no sense of obligation beyond their work time in educating and caring for the children. The idea of being trained to be witnesses of the Gospel on behalf of a Lutheran church is not necessarily one of concern by these teachers or helpers. Nevertheless, some workers who may possibly belong to another church, might be willing to be of service in this area of work. It is then the responsibility of the pastor, in conjunction with the aid of the director, to speak with these people concerning their being willing to be trained in this area of outreach. It is imperative that the director in no way attempts or even hints at this being obligatory. It must be strictly on a voluntary basis. In some cases, there are staff people who are of the Lutheran Church; and they may be willing to participate in the training procedure and be witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ in the congregation's ECDC.

The program of outreach through the ECDC staff does not mean that all of the persons of the center would be required to be involved. It would consist only of those persons who indicate a desire to do so. It should be pointed out that this kind of care and concern for the souls of those who are not saved is very important. So very often, the staff of the center does have a better opportunity of witnessing to parents than does the pastor or other professional. These are the people who have daily contact with the child and parents. These are the persons who are able to build up a positive relationship with the parents in a more effective manner than would the average pastor. Remember, the majority of these parents are not sending their children to the

center to have some pastor witness Christ to them. They are bringing their child or children to be cared for physically and possibly emotionally. It is that staff person with daily contact who is possibly the best witness around. The director has the names of all of the families who enter the center. She has the information on the religious affiliation or non-affiliation of the children and parents. The director is able to share the names of those families who are either non-Christian or non-affiliated with those care-givers involved in the outreach program.

Pastors are the ones who must initiate and maintain a positive plan for the saints to work at bringing the unsaved the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Scriptures tell us, through Paul in Ephesians 4:11-15, that pastors are given as God's gifts to equip the saints for growing Christ's Church. Obviously pastors model the witnessing life for their members; but they must also provide a plan for equipping His people, who are in their care, for the task of sharing the Gospel with those who do not know Jesus.

Quite frankly, it is impossible for the clergy of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to escape this Scriptural mandate. However, if one reads the Synod's statistical data, one sees that very few of our congregations are gaining people for Christ. This is the responsibility of the pastors in those congregations. We hear this doleful chant, "We are to keep the Church's doctrine pure and holy." Does this mean that, if we become involved in reaching out to the unsaved, they might "dirty up" the purity of the Church's doctrine? The idea of a congregation working through its pastoral leadership to bring the message of the Gospel to parents and children who use the center is definitely not going to compromise the Gospel. It may even strengthen the

Good News that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the unsaved.

When the pastor sets up a training program for the ECDC to reach out to the unsaved and the weak, it is to be an effective plan. Not only is the congregation as a whole to be taught the witnessing responsibility that they have; but specific groups, such as the ECDC, can also be effectively used in sharing the Gospel with those in need of its blessing of forgiveness and salvation.

When the pastor sets up a plan for the ECDC staff to witness to parents of the center, it is not to be merely some off-the-cuff activity. Instead,

they need to learn it clearly, cogently, with repetition and evaluation, because many of them have great difficulty saying plainly what God in Christ does for sinners, especially to a non-Christian who does not know our jargon.⁹²

THE TRAINING OF THE STAFF

When the pastor trains the staff of the ECDC properly, the staff will be able to do this as skilled persons, because they have been trained by role-playing real life situations in their training program. First, they observe a videotaped training film which shows the various approaches to witnessing to parents who use the ECDC. They will then go through some very thorough training in role-playing themselves. Here they will feel the joy of knowing that they are able to testify to the joy that is within them. The individuals involved have an opportunity to gain something akin to hands-on training. They see that this is something they are able to do.

⁹²Roger S. Greenway, ed., *The Pastor-Evangelist*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1987), 134.

These people will be assured by the pastor that what they are doing is not of human origin, but of the Holy Spirit. He is to inculcate in them that wonderful statement of Luther, “the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, sanctified and enlightened me with His gifts.”⁹³ It is also important that the pastor, in his training, helps the staff to be able to witness to these parents in such a manner that the Gospel message will be suited to their level and need. This is the way Paul did things in his witnessing to the unsaved. His message, although the same Gospel truth each time, was couched in language and usage that they were able to understand. This can be seen from his address to the people at the Areopagus in Athens, Acts 17:22–34. Here he speaks of their gods and presents the true God. He uses their poetry to prove his point about salvation in Christ.

When these trained staff members witness the Gospel, follow-up by the congregation becomes imperative; for it is meaningless to lead someone to the Cross and then to forget to incorporate him/her into the worshipping community. In Chapter Seven, a follow-up procedure is shown.

It is also important that there be evaluation and support given to these people who witness the Gospel. They need to know that they are bringing results in their efforts. True, as Paul says, we are not to be concerned about the reaping of the seed that is planted; still it is helpful to know that there have been some results in this effort on behalf of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Those teachers who accept the challenge of being witnesses for the Lord Jesus

⁹³Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord*, 345.

Christ, in the ECDC, would be given training in how to witness to the parents who are receptive to the sharing of the Gospel of Christ. There would be a structured training program which would last for eight hours. This would be either *The Master's Plan* from the Church Growth Institute or *Caring Evangelism* from the Stephen Program. These approaches would differ from confrontational Evangelism in that the teachers would learn to share the Gospel through a relationship situation, as opposed to a direct questioning of the conviction or involvement with Christ or the Church.

The staff members would be shown a video prepared for witnessing to parents about Jesus Christ. These staff members would also be trained in the use of the Arch Books Series. The video is produced to show a variety of role-play situations which might occur in the daily life experiences at the center. This video is then used as part of the preparation for the staff members in training them to be involved in friendship evangelism. After the video has been shown, the staff members would also go through a series of role-playing situations which would help them to feel more secure in what they are doing. This training is shown in Appendices Five through Seven. Through this kind of action, the staff would become more effective in relating the Gospel to parents who are unchurched, as the opportunities for witnessing spontaneously arose.

After the staff members have been given the training listed above, they would begin to practice their skills. This would mean that the staff persons would get to know the parent(s) over time. It would mean to simply be there as a friend, a listener to child and parents. As time goes on, there would be the building of positive

relationships with the parents, which would eventually open the door to witnessing to those who are either unchurched or non-church-attending people.

CHAPTER 6

VIDEO TRAINING FILM

HOW THE TRAINING VIDEO WAS PREPARED

The following material is an explanation of the procedure used in the preparation of the Training Video for the MAP: *A More Effective Use of the Early Childhood Development Center for Evangelistic Outreach*.

I contacted the persons involved in the training video four weeks prior to the production of the video. I contacted the director of the center so that those workers who were willing to participate in the program were given permission to be involved in the video work. I asked seven staff members and eight church members to participate, all of whom agreed to be involved in the training video.

A member, Judi Reimer, and I wrote scripts that would portray a variety of encounters between the staff members and parents. One of the members of the congregation who had attended a Bible Class dealing with *The Master's Plan* assisted with the writing and the putting-together of *The Master's Plan* segment of the dialogues. Judi Reimer is a free-lance writer, who was a tremendous help in this project. We geared the material from the *Stephen Series Evangelism* for short-term dialogues, although they also built long-term associations between would-be staff and parents.

After we wrote the scripts and assigned parts about four weeks prior to filming,

another member of the congregation put together cue cards for those members involved in the dialogues. We used large tablet-sized sheets so that both participants would be able to see each other's lines. These were used so that the people involved in the filming would be able to appear more realistic in their actions and words.

When all of this work had been accomplished, Barbara Flowers, a member of the congregation, filmed the video in three evenings. She also edited the production.

We produced the video so that those members in the Early Childhood Development Center would be able to see live interactions between staff and parents. This video training film would also be available for all future training activities involving staff members who would be outreach people for the Center. The video film cost \$15.00; the tablets used in preparing the cue cards cost \$25.00; there was no charge for the time that it took to prepare the cue cards or the shooting of the dialogues involved.

Through these video scripts, we deal with those staff members whose theology differs from that of the Lutheran Church. We did not use staff members who had differences with our stance on Baptism, and so on, to avoid compromising the beliefs of both our staff members and ourselves. However, the majority of the staff members who participated in the preparation of the training video were open to involvement without reservations as to the theological content in the script materials.

I believe that the video training film will be a great help to us in assisting the participating staff members to role-play, thus preparing them to become involved in witnessing to parents whose children are in the center.

Many states require workers to participate in a minimum number of hours of

creditable training to keep working for an ECDC. Giving these workers training for the outreach program could be offered as part of their required hours. As long as the training is in conjunction with helping of the workers to become more competent in their work, this would be an acceptable training program. These hours of training are acceptable to the state's required hours of training.

Whenever new staff persons are added, it is important that these people also be offered the possibility of being trained to be witnesses for the Kingdom of Christ. It would be of value to have each of the involved staff persons keep a diary of what has transpired between the staff person and the parents in the course of that year. This would obviously make it easier for the new staff person to either make contact for the first time or to seek to build upon the relationships that have been established by the previous staff person or persons.

As has been stated, many parents who send their children to King of Kings ECDC do not have, as their primary concern, the salvation of their children or themselves, but they want their children to receive proper care while they themselves are at work. Make no mistake about it—salvation of their children is not always a positive aspect in the eyes of the parents. Some may be skeptical, fearing that their children will be “brainwashed” or coerced into particular beliefs, while others will be indifferent. It would be easy to avoid any witnessing to the parents of the children in the center. Nevertheless, as witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's primary task is to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who are not in the Kingdom of God, in Christ. In the past eighteen years, our directors have shared the information from our policy book, giving the parents a sense of

what our practices are in regard to the Christian faith. The director also attempts to answer belief questions to the best of her ability. The more involved questions are referred to the pastor.

This awesome privilege and responsibility is a natural response for bringing people into the family of God. The Christian daycare worker is in a unique position to witness to families in a day-by-day, ongoing relationship, and in a spontaneous, non-threatening way. "God uses people, in most cases to bring other people to Himself."⁹⁴ Although there can be no set formula for witnessing, there are steps that can be taken to enhance the opportunities that come up in the Christian day-care setting.

USING CARING EVANGELISM IN OUTREACH

In *Caring Evangelism*,⁹⁵ it is important that trust is built up between the staff person and the parents. The staff person puts herself in the situation of realizing that she is a forgiven sinner. She looks at her own peculiar circumstance in life. She has come to know Jesus through others sharing the Gospel with her, as well. She was not pressed by them, nor did she press them. It took time for this relationship of trust to build. The teacher, in turn, looks at her own position as witness for Christ in much the same way. There is no forcing the issue, nor is there avoidance of the issue; instead, caring atmosphere is established in which the Gospel seed can be planted in the most positive manner. In each case, the teacher, after building up a positive bond, seeks an open door through which the

⁹⁴Win Arn, *The Masters' Plan*, (Pasadena, CA: Church Growth Press), 111.

⁹⁵*Caring Evangelism: How to Live and Share Christ's Love*, (St. Louis, MO: Stephen Ministries)

Holy Spirit is able to bring about the sharing of the Gospel message, either in a one-time conversation, or over a number of conversations. Therefore, after a teacher or staff member has built up a positive relationship with a parent or parents, it is appropriate to respond to “openings” that would encourage a witnessing possibility. Below are a variety of possible circumstances through which the Gospel might be brought to parents.

After a period of time, when trust has been established between the staff worker and a parent with a child birth to eighteen months, the following scenario might take place: the mother of a six-month-old child might well come to the staff worker and say, “We have been bringing our Nadine here for the last four months. I feel very good about the way you are caring for her. We see that you give her the kind of love that is important to her positive growth. We are so busy with both of us working that I know that Nadine does not get the attention she should. Thank you for being such loving people.” To which the worker might respond, “Thank you for your trust. We enjoy having Nadine here at the center. This kind of love is so important. We like to sing little songs about the love of Jesus and His love for them. We believe that God’s love is so important to little ones, just as much as it is for adults.”

The parent responds, “We have not been involved in any kind of Bible study or church attendance since we were married. As a child, I remember going to church and Sunday school, but that’s been a long time ago. Now that we have Nadine, I know we should be involved somewhere, but we just don’t seem to find time to do it.” The staff member might respond, “God’s love for you and Nadine is so great. You might remember the Bible passage: ‘For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that

whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' That's the kind of love God has for you and Nadine. King of Kings would like to share this love with you and your family. We believe that little ones are so important to God that He has given Baptism as a means whereby they can become His children." "My parents had me baptized many years ago, but since we don't belong to any church, it just didn't come up in our conversation at home," says the mother. To which the staff worker may respond, "Would you mind if I asked the pastor to visit with you concerning Baptism for Nadine?" "That would be wonderful. Now that we have been talking about God and Jesus, I feel that it would be important that my husband and I have her baptized." This would then lead to the staff worker's sharing the name with the pastor and the child's baptism.

Another possible scenario would be that of a father and mother who have an eighteen month old child in the center for the last ten months. The father usually brings in the child in the morning, visiting with the worker each morning. Over this period of time, the worker has come to know the father rather well. He knows that the parents are not Christian and that the child has not been baptized. One day, the father mentions that the child sings a song that sounds like "Jesus loves the little children." The parent brings up the following point of discussion, "My daughter begins to sing this song, about Jesus loves the little children, in the car, and that He died for the little children. We have never spoken about Jesus to our child. Not that I am against this or anything, but that is not something that is important to us." To which the staff person might respond, "We do like to teach the children the love of Jesus. We think that it is important for them to know Jesus Christ as their Savior. These little songs are a fine way of doing this." The parent answers, "This

Jesus is really someone foreign to me. I hear about Him and read about Christianity.

However, I have never really become involved in anything that is Christian. This is the first time I have really come close to anything like this. My daughter sings all those little songs about Jesus. I don't understand all the words but I do hear the words 'Jesus.'"

The staff person can reply, "The story of Jesus is found in the Bible. The pastor could let you have one of the Sunday School Bibles to read. I am certain that he would be able to point out the important stories and passages in the Bible that might be helpful to you. If it's alright with you, I will talk to Pastor about this, and tomorrow, when you bring Dawn to school, he can share some of what we have talked about here. Is it acceptable if we do that?" "That would be alright. At least I will have the opportunity to see what this Jesus business is all about that Dawn sings to me." The teacher would then speak with the pastor that morning about the discussion between herself and the parent. The pastor would then make it a point to be there the next morning so that the matter might be pursued a little further.

On another occasion, there might be an opportunity to share Jesus with the parents of a three-year-old whose parents are members of a particular denomination, but who do not attend, which the staff has learned through the positive interaction of the parents and the staff worker for the last three months. One afternoon, when the parents are picking up their three-year-old daughter and their five-year-old daughter, the one parent mentions that both children have been sharing some of the Bible stories that are taught in morning chapel. "I am so pleased that you have those chapel services during the week. My children get so much out of those little stories that you present each time you have chapel. I

remember some of them myself.”

The other parent says, “Yes, I remember them too. You know, we belong to so and so denomination, but we have not been going anywhere since we moved here two years ago. When we hear the children share those stories and things, we know that we should be involved in some worship setting, but we just don’t get around to it.” The staff person may respond. “You say that you remember those Bible stories, maybe one of those Bible passages that speak about how we are to bring up our children might be helpful.

Remember the passage that says, ‘Fathers bring up your children in the Lord Jesus Christ?’ This might be a great time for you to start doing this. King of Kings has a wonderful Sunday school program for both you and your children.” “Well, I am not certain that the wife and I want to go to Sunday school, but I think, maybe we should start sending our children to the Sunday school here at King of Kings. It would be a beginning anyway. Yes, I think the wife and I will do that.” It is a beginning with the possibility of further involvement by the family in the future.

In another setting, there is a divorcing parent who has been bringing her child to the center for the past six months. The divorce situation is worsening, and the mother is quite distraught. The child has been very unhappy and acting out a lot. One day the mother and care-worker are discussing the child’s behavior, and the mother says, “I am so sick of all of this. I don’t know where to turn. Charles and I are not getting anywhere with our divorce stipulations. I am so upset and that is making Allen very upset. I know that you see it in class every day. But, I have some real problems with all of this. I am seeing a therapist, and Allen is there with me. But we are missing something.” At which point the

worker may well break in with the words, "I am glad that you are seeing someone so that you can talk out the frustrations that are happening in your life right now. I would like to share something that may well help you in your personal life. The Bible tells us, 'Come to Me all you that are troubled and heavy laden and I will give you rest.' I do not know if you have turned this over to the Lord or not." "Oh, I do not know if God really cares about me and my problem. I have not really been involved with worship or prayer for so long. Do you really think that God cares about me?" "Oh, I think so. The Bible tells us that Jesus says, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.' He also says that when we are in trouble, we are to call upon Him for He cares for us." "I do hope that what you are saying is true. I do need someone to turn to. People certainly are not helping me any. I want to thank you for listening to me and sharing God's care for me and that I can talk to Him about my problems."

At this point, there has not been any talk about becoming a member of the congregation or sending the child to Sunday school; however, the groundwork has been set so that in the future this kind of discussion may well arise such as, "I want to thank you for sharing Jesus' love for me. I got out my Bible and began to read the various passages that were listed in the front of the Bible about problems and difficulties in life. They were so very helpful to me." To which the worker replies, "It's good to hear that the Bible has been so helpful to you. Now that you are studying the Bible and reading about God's care and love for you, have you thought about a place for your child to learn about Jesus? King of Kings has a wonderful Sunday school program. There is also an Adult Information class that is taught at the same time that Sunday school is taking place." "What is this Adult

Information class?” “It is a sixteen week course in which you can learn about God, sin, forgiveness, Jesus Christ and His wonderful love for you and all of us.” “You said it is at the same time that my child would have Sunday school.” “Yes, they are at the same time. It would be wonderful for your little one to see you going with her.” “Yes, and I might get to know some other people who are struggling in life the way I am.” “That is true, you may well be able to find a number of people in the class who have some common problems and find that God has a solution for you.” “I am so thankful that God directed me to you people. Thanks for your love for me, too.”

Another possible situation which might arise is that there is a family that has one parent churched and the other with no church affiliation. They have not attended worship for a long time. One day the opportunity to witness to this family arises. The unchurched parent begins to talk about the various sayings on the walls of the classroom. They are Christian sayings. “I see that you have all kinds of little Bible sayings on the wall. I guess that they are important to you folks, but I never have had much room for the Christian religion. It just is so much junk, in my mind. My wife would like to go to church and take our three children to Sunday school, but I have discouraged her from becoming involved in this kind of stuff.” The worker might respond with, “I am glad that you trust us with your children. I am surprised that you do send them here, if you are so strongly opposed to the Christian religion.” He says, “I do not think that this will hurt them any. It is important that children be brought up with good moral values, and I believe you folks are doing that.” To which the worker may reply, “Jesus says: ‘Allow the little children to come to Me and forbid them not.’ Jesus certainly has a real concern for your children. We

are so glad that we can share this love of Jesus with your children. Even though you do believe that it is not for you, I am glad that you continue to give us the opportunity to share Jesus with them.” “That’s alright. Like I said, it probably won’t hurt them any.” The worker says, “We appreciate your openness with us, and I hope that we can talk some more again.”

A few months later, the unbelieving parent comes in again and begins the conversation with, “Those Bible stories and songs you have been teaching our children are causing me to think about what we talked about a few months ago. Those kids want me to teach them some of the stories, but I don’t know any.” The worker says, “We have some Bible story books in the library. Why don’t we go there and I will show you some of the books? They are taken from the Bible and are easy to read.” “Yes, let’s go see what we can find.” The worker and parent go to the library where there are some Bible story books geared to little children. The teacher points out the books, and the parent takes one. Thanking the worker, he leaves.

A few months later, the father comes in; and the worker asks, “How are the stories coming?” The parent replies, “Well, I have a bit of a problem. The children want to go to Sunday school, but we have no place in particular where to go.” The worker asks, “Have you thought about sending them to the Sunday school here at King of Kings? I am certain that they would be welcome.” “That’s a thought. They know the building, and it would not be strange to them. Maybe that would be a good idea.” Then the father leaves.

A few months later, the father again comes to pick up the children. This time he is a bit on the uneasy side. The worker inquires as to why he seems so uncomfortable. “Mr.

Lane, you seem to be a bit on the nervous side.” “Well, yes,” he replies. “You have been so very helpful in getting my children both fine physical and emotional care; plus you have shown me that there is someone who cares for children. I’m now sort of caught up in it all. My wife wants us to go to church, but I am so uncomfortable with it all. I don’t know much about Christianity really.” The worker answers, “This church has a fine education program. Maybe you could talk with the pastor who could work with you and help you to learn more about Jesus and what all the worship of God is about.” “That would be different, wouldn’t it? I am the one who has not had any room for Jesus, and now, because of my children coming to this child-care center; you know we could have picked any other center, but we picked this one. And now I am being changed through my children’s learning about Jesus and the Bible. That’s really something.” The worker asks the father to join her in a brief prayer, thanking God for His love for Mr. Allen and his family and the joy that God brings to them. Mr. Allen thanks the teacher and, with a smile on his face, leaves the building.

Another situation which might occur is a Lutheran parent who has not had his child baptized. The opportunity arises in which the worker and parent are talking about the one picture on the wall which shows Jesus as the Good Shepherd, and there are little children sitting around Him. The worker, knowing the child has not been baptized and looking for an opportunity to broach the subject without causing the parent to become upset, capitalizes on the moment. “Isn’t it wonderful that Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He is also a caring Shepherd. He is like the shepherd that had lost a sheep. Instead of just letting it go, he went after it, looking for it until he found it.” The lapsed Lutheran father looks at

the picture and then at the worker, replying, “You know, my wife and I have not had our little one baptized. Do you think the pastor here would do that for us? We do not have a home congregation right now. I know that they have probably dropped both of us from the rolls in our home congregation.” “I believe this is possible. His study is right down the hall there. Why not just ask the secretary if you might have a word or two with him.”

“Thanks for the way you shared your concern for our baby the way you did. I do appreciate it very much. God bless you for that.”

These are all possible ways in which a child care worker who has been trained in *Caring Evangelism*⁹⁶ might approach these different kinds of parents. These exchanges are based on long term contact in regard to their spiritual needs for Jesus or in regard to the renewal of their Christian faith.

THE USE OF *THE MASTER’S PLAN* IN OUTREACH

This portion of the training video moves into another approach; that of *The Master’s Plan*. Here dialogue form is again used.

Mrs. Morgan is a young, single mother with a three-year-old daughter, Julie, who is in the preschool morning class and then stays through the day in the regular program two days a week. The teacher, Miss Ann, has the child only in the morning class. Julie is a shy, quiet child who cries desperately each morning as her mother leaves:

“I’m sorry you have to have to put up with this, Miss Ann, but I just can’t get her not to cry when I leave her. I had a baby sitter at home for a while and Julie did the same thing, so I thought she needed to be around

⁹⁶Ibid.

other children. I didn't want her just moping around and watching television all day like she used to do."

"She's coming around, Mrs. Morgan. I have a special stuffed animal that I give to her after you leave, and she's crying less and less each day. She really loves that bunny. We'll show Fluffy to Mommy when she comes to pick you up tonight, okay, Julie?"

Several weeks later:

"Good Morning, Miss Ann, please apologize to the afternoon teacher again for me and tell her that I'll be sure not to be late picking Julie up this evening. My boss just can't make me work late again."

"I'll tell her, Mrs. Morgan. Working lots of long hours, aren't you?"

"I'll say. I just can't get everything done anymore. We had to let one girl in the office go already and I'm trying to do the work of two people. But I've got to keep going, because if business doesn't pick up I'll probably be the next to be laid off."

"Sounds like you're really worried about possibly losing your job in spite of all your hard work?"

"I'm scared to death. And it must be rubbing off on Julie, because she clings to me even more than ever after I get home, crying at everything and wanting me to hold her. Does she cry all day long here?"

"She's still shy, but she's beginning to interact with some of the other children. I know you worry about her a lot, but she's pretty happy here. She has one special friend, Sarah, whose mother is a member of the church here. Let me introduce you, and maybe Julie and Sarah could get together to play on weekends. Sarah's mother is a single mother, too."

"I'd like to try that. I don't mean to be boring you with all my problems, Miss Ann. It's just that it's so hard being a single parent. All the worries, and nobody to talk to . . . Julie's all I have. That's probably why we're so close. Actually, I need a friend as much as Julie does."

"We all need each other, that's for sure. The other teachers and I look forward to playground time as much as the children do because we get a few moments to talk to each other. As much as I love my job, when I pray for strength and patience in chapel on chapel days, believe me, I mean it."

"Well, I'd better not be late for work. Thanks for letting me cry on your shoulder."

Up to this point, there has been no speaking of God or salvation. It is a time of building up rapport with the parent.

Advent season:

“Oh, Miss Ann. You should hear Julie singing all the songs from the Christmas service. I’m amazed that a three-year-old can learn so much. I haven’t heard some of those songs since I was a little girl.”

“She really does love singing, doesn’t she? She’s one of the best in the class. What church did you grow up in?”

“I went to my parents’ church all my life. My father was an elder in our little country church, I sang in the choir and everything, but after I got married and had Julie and then got divorced, well, my parents and I didn’t get along so well, so I stopped going to church.”

“Don’t you miss having a church family? I couldn’t do without mine for support. But mostly I couldn’t do without my Sunday morning worship. I didn’t grow up in a church home like you did, and perhaps that’s the reason I treasure it so much. . . . Communion, prayer . . . I sing in the choir here, you know.”

“That’s wonderful, Miss Ann. I do miss it sometimes, you know Julie’s never been baptized, but it’s kind of hard to start new when you’ve been away so long, and I’m just so busy on weekends with laundry and grocery shopping and everything. Sarah’s mother has asked me to come with her a couple of times. We’re coming to the Christmas children’s service together.”

“The first time is the hardest, I’ll bet. Did you know there’s a Sunday school class for three-year-olds here? If you think Julie has learned a lot of Christmas songs, just wait until you hear the Bible stories she could learn. They’re the same ones you learned, you know. See you at the Christmas service, and maybe by this time next year you’ll be singing in the choir with me.”

Mrs. Walker has two children in the day care center program, an eighteen-month-old son Jonathan and a four-year-old son Jason. Jason is in the four-year-old afternoon pre-kindergarten class as well as in morning day care, and Jonathan is in day care all day.

Miss Susan is Jason’s pre-k teacher.

“Jason says he won’t be coming to the children’s Christmas service, Mrs. Walker. Are you going out of town to visit relatives for the holidays?”

“No, Jason is disappointed, but we’re just busy that night. We won’t be traveling. My parents live here in town.”

“Well, I’d like to invite you to the other Christmas worship services here at church. You could bring your parents, too. I know Jason would

especially enjoy the Sunday school children's service on Christmas Eve. They will be singing a lot of the songs he knows from chapel. Have you ever thought about bringing him to Sunday school here?"

"Thanks anyway, Miss Susan, but we're not religious. We've never been a church-going family. My husband has pretty strong opinions about that."

"Well, our doors are always open. Have a wonderful Christmas."

Several weeks into the New Year:

"I'm a little concerned about Jason, Mrs. Walker. I've noticed he just doesn't seem like himself. He's a bright, young man, but he seems distracted lately."

"Hmm, ah, his grandmother, my mother, has been having a lot of tests done, and she's in the hospital. I'm very worried about her, and it's so hectic going back and forth to the hospital and trying to keep things normal for the boys. I've tried to keep things from Jason, but I suppose he's worried too. He is really close to his grandmother."

"He's a very sensitive child even though he acts so outgoing. I'll make sure he gets some extra TLC. I'm so sorry about your mother. I'll keep her in my prayers, and you, too."

"Thanks, Miss Susan, you really know Jason well. No wonder he loves you so much."

"He knows I love him, too. He's a special little boy."

A few weeks later:

"How is your mother, Mrs. Walker?"

"I'm afraid the news is not very good, Miss Susan. She has cancer. They say it can be treated with chemotherapy, but it's just so scary."

"It's just so hard to see a loved one suffer something like this, isn't it?"

"I can hardly stand it. My mother and I have not always gotten along especially well, but somehow all the old problems don't seem to matter anymore. At least that's something good that has happened."

"God has ways of sometimes supplying blessings where we least expect them. We have a prayer chain here at the church, a group of people who join in praying for others, whether it's problems, illnesses, or thanksgiving for blessings. May I ask for prayers for your mother and your family?"

"I think I'd appreciate that, Miss Susan."

Several weeks later:

“My mother is responding so well to her cancer treatments, Miss Susan. Would you please thank your prayer chain? I’ve been wondering about some things . . . does God always answer prayers, I mean, what about people who aren’t Christians, does He care for them?”

“God always cares for people, you can be sure of that. But He does things in ways we don’t always understand. Sounds like you have some questions about what God is really like. You should come to Sunday school with me. Believe me, it really helps me understand so much more about God in my life.”

“Oh, I’d be too embarrassed, to tell you the truth, Miss Susan. I’d feel like a fool not knowing anything about God. But when I thought my mother was going to die I started thinking about God a lot, you know, wondering about heaven and hell and all that.”

“Knowing death is the beginning of eternal life with God takes a lot of the fear away for me, Mrs. Walker. I couldn’t have made it when my mother died if I weren’t a Christian, to be honest with you.”

“I’ve always been afraid to talk to Christians about these things, Miss Susan. Afraid they’d try to push me into their church. I don’t even have a Bible.”

“Here, take mine home with you. And believe me, being in a Sunday school class doesn’t mean you know everything—that’s why we go. There are lots of different classes, one that’s about exactly what our church teaches and believes and why. Many people in the classes started out just like you. Everybody has questions, and that’s the best place to get the answers, using the Bible as the reference. You might read the Gospel of Luke as a start and Romans, as well. Then maybe we could have lunch and talk about some of the things you have read. I certainly don’t know the Bible forwards and backwards. Probably no Christian does, but thank God, that’s not what counts with God. It’s faith in Jesus Christ.”

“Simple as that? Not all that other stuff? I think I have a lot to learn about God and His love for me.”

A short time later:

“I need to talk to you about something personal, Miss Susan. I think you need to know because of the effects it will probably have on Jason. His father and I are going to separate, and it looks like there’s no way to avoid divorce.”

“That’s a serious situation that always affects children in a family, Mrs. Walker. Thank you for sharing that with me. What can I do to help?”

“There’s nothing anyone can do, I guess. We just disagree about so many things . . .”

“Have you spoken with a marriage counselor? Our pastor was an

enormous help when my daughter went through some very difficult times in her marriage. Pastor worked with them for a long time. But Satan won her husband away from her. Another woman took him away. It was a tremendous blessing to have the pastor help her work through her grief and sense of failure.”

“I thought Christians didn’t believe in divorce.”

“God never wants married couples to divorce, but being a Christian doesn’t mean everything will be perfect in this life, Mrs. Walker. But the Lord is there when pain is taking place in the heart of His beloved.”

“I am thankful that that’s not one of our problems, but we have plenty of others. I think I’ll mention to my husband about seeing your pastor. He enjoyed talking with him, when you had your last open house at the day care. He welcomed us as new members of the day care family. Like I said before, he’s very cautious about anything to do with church. I think, however, it’s worth a try. Maybe we can try that Adult Information class together.”

To summarize *The Master’s Plan* approach:

Get to know the children well—their personalities, their interests, their needs. Each child is precious to God and is unique to his or her parents. Nothing fosters an affection and trust for another person like someone who takes a special interest in that child.

Get to know the parents—take the couple of minutes’ conversation each day as they drop off and pick up their children to listen carefully to their comments. Active, attentive listening will provide clues to the problems and concerns in their lives. Attentive listening has no hidden agenda. Listening is not geared toward turning the conversation to spiritual matter at the first opportunity . . . [instead, it] seeks to understand [the other person’s] dreams and ambitions . . . needs and problems . . . develop a level of understanding which builds a mutual respect and person empathy.”⁹⁷
 “Our caring and friendship . . . must be unconditional . . . not the bait of a religious trap.”⁹⁸

Don’t try to rush it; time is the most effective “ally” in a Christian day-care worker’s witnessing “toolkit.” This may mean taking notes for future reference. The Holy Spirit

⁹⁷Arn, *The Master’s Plan*, 88.

⁹⁸Ibid., 101.

uses people to do His work as He used Paul so many times.

“Focus your efforts . . . you may want to identify several people with whom you have a natural, warm relationship . . . these people [might] be the ones . . . to be potentially receptive to the Gospel.”⁹⁹ But also prepare for the unexpected. Some people put up defensive standoffish barriers that have nothing to do with the way they really feel. By the power of the Holy Spirit’s direction, the barriers can be broken down by continuous, loving concern and interest. Prayer is to be a regular act in the process of your being led to people for witnessing for the Lord Jesus Christ.

WE EXPECT GOOD THINGS WHEN WITNESSING CHRIST

In the day–care setting, rubbing shoulders with these parents on a daily basis, you are able to discover where each person is, both spiritually and emotionally, and to meet him/her there. “Jesus’ ministry of healing focused on the people’s needs . . . then their healing . . . then their following Christ.”¹⁰⁰ Direct questions, as long as one is not confrontational, are acceptable to people, when such are asked in a caring, supportive manner.

As we said at the beginning of these dialogues, create windows of opportunity. The sharing of day–to–day experiences of the children can well be used by the Holy Spirit to lead to occasions in which invitations are extended for families to be brought to Christ, as these people come to worship, to attend Sunday school, to attend fellowship activities in

⁹⁹Ibid., 85.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 105.

the congregation, etc. Comments, in the dialogues presented, provide examples for entrances for witnessing Jesus Christ to unbelievers, to the unchurched, and to weak Christians.

These are also other approaches which might open the way to Jesus for parents when these opportunities present themselves spontaneously. We truly have so many opportunities in our early childhood development centers that make for the possibility of Christ being shared. This sharing can be accomplished by the workers themselves if they are trained in outreach techniques that do not literally grab the parents by the throat and possibly drive them away. These long term outreach possibilities do make for effective Gospel sharing by the ECDC of our congregations, as they engage in the work of the Kingdom of God.

CHAPTER 7

LONG TERM PLANNING AND CONCLUSION

LONG TERM PLANNING

When pastors, Boards of Education and Evangelism, and congregations see that the ECDC can give more than physical and emotional care to children entrusted to them by parents, the potential for Kingdom growth through this avenue is tremendous. However, it is not going to take place over night. The persons involved must understand what kind of goals to set in order to enhance the growth of God's Kingdom through their ECDC. Some questions which they should raise are:

1. How does this approach to outreach fit into the general purpose of this church?
2. What are the measurable objectives for the outreach program of this type?
3. What needs to be done? (This was spelled out earlier in this work)
4. By when do we want to begin this work?

With positive planning and goal setting, and especially with the blessing of the Holy Spirit, who not only brings people to salvation but also keeps them there through proper use of Word and Sacraments, a congregation may well use their Early Childhood Center much more effectively for Kingdom work.

Whenever this witnessing brings forth any positive response, the staff members

are to contact the pastor involved with the ECDC to let him know what all has taken place and the positive way in which the parents have responded. It is then that the pastor makes another contact with the parents who have been motivated by the Holy Spirit through the work of the ECDC staff person. All of the various opportunities for worship and education are shared with the interested parents. He also shares with these people the fact that there is an Adult Information Class available to them for learning about the Christian faith.

It is at this point that the pastoral staff becomes actively involved in the process. There would be a visit to the home of the child/ren, and perhaps a welcome to Sunday school. Questions that might arise are answered, and suggested worship experiences are offered.

The Sunday School Superintendent is notified when a new child is to be enrolled. The teacher of that class or classes is notified. It would be imperative that the parents are also welcomed to the Adult Inquirer's class at this time. The pastoral staff member explains what is involved and what steps are to be taken to become a member of the congregation.

This family is provided with information that will help the family to become actively involved in the congregation both before the Adult class and following completion of the class. This family would also be linked up with other families so that they could have a sense of belonging. When a family is able to relate to at least five or six other people, they are more apt to remain a part of that congregation. Obviously, the Word of God is of utmost importance; but many people have a strong

desire to be able to relate to other people within the Christian community who have the same likes. Thus, they sense and establish a commonality with others in the worshipping community.

This same procedure or something similar is what is intended to take place within the center as new people enroll their child/ren in the Early Childhood Development Center. By doing this, the Early Childhood Development Center becomes a more effective tool for outreach on the part of the congregation.

It would be best if the assigned pastoral staff person can sit down with the director of the center and compare notes regularly. This is where the things are either happening or not happening. When the staff members have direct input, they share positive ownership in bringing the families to Christ. They will also actively try to improve the procedures.

Periodically, responsible staff members should give a report to the Boards of Evangelism and Education on the number of non-affiliated children attending ECDC. This report should give the number of contacts between staff and parents and the results of those contacts. Those involved boards would then note where things have been going well and continue to practice those positive intentions. Thus, they seek to make this practice of outreach through the ECDC staff truly a positive experience for all concerned.

CONCLUSION

About six months to a year after the ECDC has used the program outlined, the pastor, ECDC director and the two congregational boards should evaluate the

programs. They should note those things which worked best. They can then change or delete weaker aspects and add means to make the outreach of the ECDC more effective for the congregation.

The evaluation committee should compare the number of persons added to the congregation since beginning the effective outreach program of the ECDC with the number of families brought into the congregation during the same length of time immediately preceding the ECDC program. They should also compare the number of children in the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Mid-week School, etc. prior to this program and see how many children have been added because of the outreach program begun by the Boards of Evangelism and Education. Hopefully, those involved in the evaluation will find that there has been an increase in people entering the congregation through the ECDC because of the outreach program who judge in comparison to those entering prior to its inception and execution.

Some people will be upset because the evaluators seem to use only numbers of families as indicators of success. This is not to be the only criterion for success. Nevertheless, one is able to see how effective the outreach program in the ECDC is by the number of people who join King of Kings. True, there well may be people who do not become members of King of Kings. They may become involved or become Christians in a different denomination through the efforts of the staff of the ECDC. This is a wonderful positive result. However, the overall desire on the part of the congregation would be that members be added to King of Kings. The congregation would also be thankful that some have been added to the Christian Church through the

efforts of these staff workers. Therefore, the goal of bringing people into contact with the Word of God through the Church through these ECDC workers has been met.

APPENDIX 1

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER QUESTIONNAIRE

The methodology for securing the necessary information on how congregations used their Early Childhood Centers is as follows:

I developed a questionnaire consisting of twenty-one statements which was assembled and mailed to fifty congregations across the Synod which had day-care centers as a part of their Christian education programs. Thirty-one were returned.

The twenty-one statements were intended to determine how strongly pastors of the Early Childhood Development Centers felt concerning the use of these centers for a variety of purposes in respect to the congregation's ministry. The primary purpose of the questionnaire was to see if congregations with Early Childhood Centers did use these centers for the purpose of Evangelism, but more importantly with the stronger intention of active Evangelistic outreach by these centers. Of the thirty-one returns, twenty-five felt that the centers were not a burden to the congregation; twenty-seven believed that the centers were not a financial drain on the congregation, while thirty of the respondents believed that it was a positive part of their congregation's ministry. Twenty-three of the respondents believed that their center did meet an important need within their community.

Most of the pastors believed that the center did bring people into the congregation by virtue of the center being a part of the congregation's overall program of ministry.

There were a good number who believed that the outreach factor was helpful in bringing children into the church through baptism. There were fourteen who believed that a training program in Evangelism for their staff would be acceptable and beneficial for the purpose of outreach through the center. One of the gauges that I thought would help in seeing what effect the ECDC's existence had on Evangelistic outreach was the question: "Do you believe that there are more baptisms in your congregation due to your having an ECDC program in your parish?" To this twelve pastors replied NO, with fifteen saying YES, and four men not having any thought on this.

In the area of outreach as a result of their center, most of the respondents believed that Evangelism was a very important aspect of its ministry to the unchurched. There were three statements that spoke to this, and they were answered in the seven to ten range of choices. On the issue of more active involvement by the teachers of the center as a part of active Evangelism outreach, the vast majority were not certain as to what should be done, with the majority of responses between three and five on the scale of one to ten, one being low and ten high. Seventeen respondents were either neutral or negative. However, thirty responded positively to the question "Do you believe that you would support such an attempt at helping your ECDC be more effective in outreach?"

From the responses given by the pastors to the questionnaire, it would appear that most of the pastors who have Early Childhood Development Centers are firm believers in their ECDC's as tools for outreach; they are open to additional ways in which they will be able to serve the Lord's Kingdom in Evangelistic outreach to those who are not in the Kingdom of God in Christ, known as the Visible Church. Thus, it seems to be important

that the Synod seek to make congregations more effective in fulfilling the needs of those ECDC's that want to be actively involved with bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ as the only Lord and Savior of the world, especially a program that will help the teachers in our ECDC's to be caring persons not only for the body but of the soul of both child and family.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Do you have an Early Childhood Development Center (Day Care Center)?

Yes No

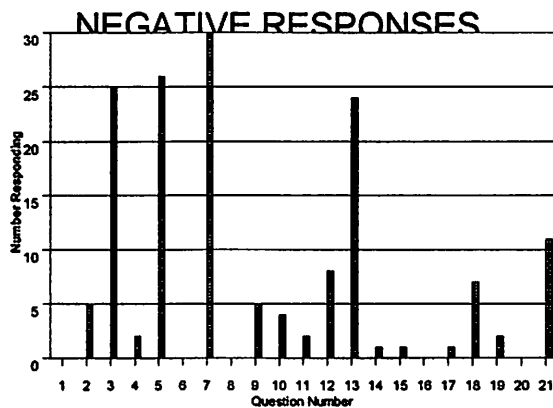
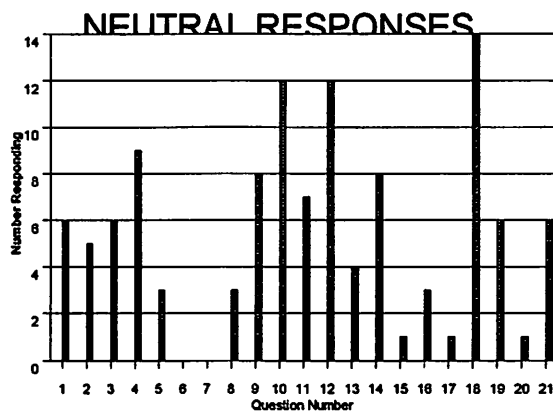
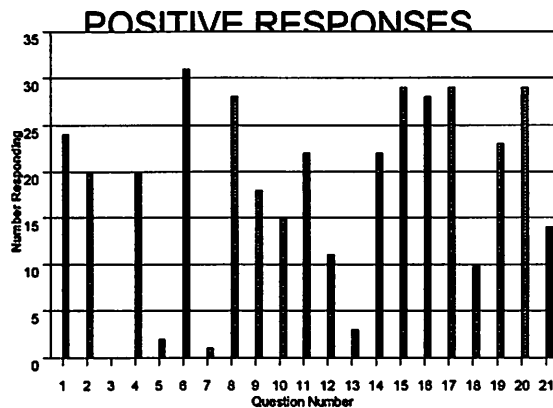
The following questions are to be answered on a scale from 0 to 10, 0 being lowest negative response and 10 being the highest positive response.

1. Do you believe your ECDC to be a valuable asset to the congregation?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2. Do you believe that you advertise your ECDC effectively in your community?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3. Do you believe that your ECDC is a burden to your parish?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4. Do you believe that your ECDC contributes to the value of your congregation's ministry within the congregation itself?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5. Do you believe that your congregation's ECDC is a drain on your congregation's budget?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6. Do you believe that your congregation's ECDC is a contribution to the needs of the community in which you serve?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
7. Would you prefer to see your ECDC closed?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
8. Do you believe that your congregation's housing the ECDC is a worthwhile project?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
9. Do you believe that you use your congregation's ECDC as a tool for Evangelism or outreach?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
10. Do you believe that your members care either way about the existence of the ECDC?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11. Do you believe that your members are positively aware of the ECDC in your congregation?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
12. Do you believe that you use the ECDC of the congregation as effectively as possible?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
13. Do you believe that it is the goal of your congregation to use the ECDC as a way of raising funds?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
14. Do you believe that you can support Evangelism as an overall goal through your ECDC?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
15. Do you believe that your ECDC has some purpose beyond your housing the center in your congregation?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
16. Do you believe that your ECDC can be used more effectively as an outreach tool for your congregation's Evangelism work?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
17. Do you believe that your members would appreciate the ECDC's active involvement in bringing people to Christ and possibly to your congregation?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
18. Do you believe that if your teachers were to be given an opportunity to be friendship Evangelists they would actively seek to be helpers in reaching out to those who are unchurched in your ECDC program?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
19. Do you see the ECDC as your congregation's positive outreach arm, especially for those families who are unchurched?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
20. Do you believe that you would support such an attempt at helping your ECDC be a more effective outreach tool for the Lord's Kingdom?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
21. Do you believe that there are more baptisms in your congregation due to your having an ECDC program?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER SURVEY RESULTS											
	SCALE VALUES										
	Negative				Neutral			Positive			
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
QUESTION 1					2	3	1	3	5	6	10
QUESTION 2	1	1	1	2	2		3	3	12	2	3
QUESTION 3	12	2	8	3	2	4					
QUESTION 4	1		1		3	1	5	7	6	5	2
QUESTION 5	16	6	4		1	1	1		1		1
QUESTION 6								2	7	11	11
QUESTION 7	23	5	2					1			
QUESTION 8					1		2	1	5	5	17
QUESTION 9		1	2	2	1	3	4	8	4	3	3
QUESTION 10		2		2	2	6	4	7	3	2	3
QUESTION 11				2	2	2	3	4	11	4	3
QUESTION 12	1		3	4	6	1	5	6	4	1	
QUESTION 13	15	6	2	1	3		1	1	2		
QUESTION 14				1	1	2	5	7	6	2	7
QUESTION 15				1			1	3	7	4	15
QUESTION 16							3	4	9	8	7
QUESTION 17				1			1	4	7	7	11
QUESTION 18			2	5	3	7	4	4	3	1	2
QUESTION 19			2			1	5	9	2	5	7
QUESTION 20							1	3	4	10	12
QUESTION 21	6	2	1	2	1	4	1	4	4	2	4

ECDC SURVEY RESULTS



APPENDIX 2

PROPOSAL TO THE BOARD OF EVANGELISM

To involve the Staff members of the Early Childhood Development Center in Evangelistic Outreach, I propose:

1. That the Boards of Evangelism and Education meet to see if it is acceptable and feasible to involve staff members of the Early Childhood Development Center as helpers in Evangelism to parents that use the center.
2. That the Board of Evangelism, after approval by the Board of Education, provide the training material; that the Pastor prepare the staff members for witnessing in outreach.
3. That the Pastor be given permission for the preparation of materials to be used in training staff members; that he train the staff members for outreach in the center.
4. That the Evangelism Board is to use *The Master's Plan* to prepare the staff members for outreach; that the Pastor be given authorization to prepare a training video to be used in role-playing demonstrations during the training of the staff members.
5. That this program is not to be the only tool used by the congregation in its efforts to reach out to the community with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That the regular programs remain in place such as visiting the new residents in the community on a regular basis; visit the people who worship with King of Kings for the first time; a welcome letter and card be sent to each visitor, that a personal phone call be made to these visitors each Sunday evening of their visit, and that follow-up letters be sent to visitors after the second and third visits to the congregation; continue to have newspaper ads each week; prepare four newsletters to the community each year telling of King of Kings and its program; telephone messages concerning worship times; and sign boards in motels and hotels in a five-mile radius of the congregation.
6. That the Board of Evangelism give the Pastor authority to be a part of the monitoring of the outreach activity.
7. That the Board of Evangelism is to begin this program as soon as both boards agree on an acceptable time table.

APPENDIX 3

PROPOSAL TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

To involve the Staff members of the Early Childhood Development Center in Evangelistic Outreach, I propose:

1. That the Evangelism and Education Boards meet together with the Pastor to see if it is acceptable and feasible to involve staff members of the Early Childhood Center as helpers in Evangelism to parents that use the center.
2. That the Board of Education give permission to the Board of Evangelism to pursue this program if acceptable to the Board of Education, after it has been explained and understood by the Board of Education members.
3. That the Board of Education give permission to the Evangelism Board, through the Pastor, to prepare the staff members of the ECDC, with the permission of the staff members, under the Director's agreement, to do so.
4. To begin the program as soon as authorization has been given by the Board of Education and acceptance by the director and staff members to be involved.
5. That new staff members be asked to participate on a voluntary basis, when they join the center's staff.
6. That authorization be given that this program be used by the Pastor as a part of his Doctor of Ministry Project.

APPENDIX 4

**AUTHORIZATION FORM FOR STAFF MEMBERS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT CENTER TO BE INVOLVED IN OUTREACH TO PARENTS OF THE CENTER**

I _____ hereby agree to participate in the King of Kings Early Childhood Development Center's out-reach program.

I agree to attend the training program provided by the pastor for this program.

After being given the proper training, I will involve myself in the work of witnessing to the unchurched and possibly unsaved parents that use this center.

I may opt out of the program at any time I so desire.

Signature

APPENDIX 5

PROPOSED TRAINING PROGRAM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD STAFF MEMBERS WHO WILL PARTICIPATE IN OUTREACH PROGRAM

1. Permission from staff members will first be taken for those members of the ECDC staff that are to participate in the program.
2. The staff members will participate in the 8-10 hour *The Master's Plan Evangelism Program*. This program shows how care for the unsaved and unchurched is a long term process. This is especially beneficial in the Early Childhood Center. This training device is lecture, video and group discussion. The course will be taught from the perspective of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod's theological stance.
3. The staff members will be taught to make referrals to the Child Care pastoral advisor, when they believe that a person is interested in learning more about King of Kings Lutheran Church. Only those staff members who are practicing Christians would be accepted into the training program.
4. After the training in *The Master's Plan*, the members will then be involved in role playing situations which might be openings for witnessing. As a part of this role playing teaching time, a training video prepared especially for this setting will be shared. This is a one-session activity.
5. Question and answer time is to take place to give each staff member the opportunity to clear up any questions that might arise during the training.
6. After the staff members have been trained and functioning in the witnessing activity for a period of three to four months, there is to be an evaluation of how things are going as well as what should be changed.
7. When new staff members are added, the above training program will be given to at least two to three persons. (This means that there may be a time lapse before new staff would be able to participate in the witnessing program.)
8. It is to be understood that this outreach activity is but an assist program with possibly five to six new families added to the Adult class per year.

APPENDIX 6

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS — ECDC STAFF TRAINING

The one day training in *The Master's Plan* would be a modification of the Eight Session plan.

The course would begin at 8:00 A.M. with Chapter #1, explaining *The Master's Plan — Making Disciples*

8:00 A.M. Opening Devotion

8:05 A.M. The Master's Plan—Making Disciples

9:00 A.M. How New Disciples Are Made

10:00 A.M. Break

10:05 A.M. Key Principles of Disciple-Making

11:00 A.M. Seven Steps For Making Disciples

12:00 Noon Lunch Break

12:30 P.M. How to Teach "Your Extended Family"

1:30 P.M. Your Church-Partners in Disciple-Making (With modifications as affects staff personnel)

2:30 P.M. Explanation of Forms for participation. Questions and answers

3:00 P.M. Closing Prayer

Two weeks later, a second class with Role Playing will be taught to the staff members

8:00 A.M. Opening Prayer

8:05 A.M. Explanation of role playing in preparation for video presentation

8:30 A.M. Video on role playing

9:15 A.M. Dividing staff into groups of two for role playing and observers. Observers and players reverse roles.

9:30 A.M. Role Playing

10:30 A.M. Break

10:40 A.M. Continuation of Role Playing

11:30 A.M. Explanation of how assignments will be made to staff for long term witnessing.

12:00 Noon Questions and answers

12:30 P.M. Closing Prayers

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