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An evaluation of adult confirmation materials

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AN EVALUATION OF ADULT CONFIRMATION
MATERIALS

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1962
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

By
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVE OF ADULT CONFIRMATION	3
III. A HISTORY OF ADULT CONFIRMATION INSTRUCTION --STRESSING THE MATERIALS, METHOD, CONTENT AND SUCCESS	12
IV. A COMPARISON OF MATERIALS CHOSEN (WITH REGARD TO ITS CONTENT, ITS ORDER, ITS PROOF- PASSAGES, TIME ELEMENT, STYLE, AND FORMAT)	34
V. CONCLUSION	49
APPENDIX	53
BIBLIOGRAPHY	56

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Working with adults has proved to me an enjoyable and rewarding experience. This thesis is written with a desire to help give adults that which has proved to be a blessing to me and to fulfill in their lives this same joy which they may have never known.

The author does not pretend to be an authority on this subject matter, but is writing on adult confirmation materials merely because of his love in this field. Neither does he intend to exhaust all the material related to this paper, but merely to present an overview in order to evaluate some of the materials of our generation.

The importance of this subject can be emphasized in relation to the aims and objectives of adult instruction for church membership. Therefore we will want to learn what is desired in a new adult member. This is the first purpose.

Adult confirmation is important because it serves as a means of integrating the confirmed into the total program of the church. Such instruction serves to deepen the spiritual life, especially if prospective members come with some knowledge of the Christian faith. Christianity is based on a faith grounded on knowledge.

Christ commanded that we should deepen the spiritual and knowledge of believers in the "Great Commission": "Go and

make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

Confirmation should be held in high regard not because of any intrinsic benefits which confirmation itself gives, but because of the important period of instruction in the Word of God by which the Holy Ghost is given opportunity to work His wonders. Such study of the Word of God is important and will be brought out in Chapter II of this thesis.

The instructor will also want to make the most of this opportunity because it is the last chance for formal instruction with a group as such.

The second purpose of this thesis is to review quickly the history of adult confirmation in the various periods of history.

When the material overlaps into the instruction of children, it is usually because there is a lack of information from the sources that were used or of a lack of activity in this area at that time.

In my conclusions I am trying to keep in mind the special needs of an adult confirmand. Various types of adults consent to become acquainted with the teachings of the Bible and the Lutheran Church. Sometimes they appear with limited and sparse knowledge; sometimes they are informed; at other times they may be ill informed and prejudiced. We will definitely want to consider the confirmand in this light as we give suggestions or recommendations.

CHAPTER II

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVE OF ADULT CONFIRMATION

To formulate aims for confirmation is no easy task. Too often they will be general and difficult to make specific.

If there is anything specific about confirmation instruction that differentiates it from Christian religious instruction generally, we must know what it is before we can prepare an adequate statement of aims. I have given some thought to the matter and must admit that I constantly drift back to the general aims of Christian education and wonder whether anything is specific.¹

Confirmation instruction is a part of the total Christian instruction and, therefore, the aim will not differ essentially from those to be achieved by the total program.²

However, confirmation instruction does differ from other Christian instruction in that it is an intensification and focalization of all previous instruction and prepares the confirmand for participation in the Lord's Supper and all the privileges and responsibilities of communicant membership.

The local Christian congregation is responsible for this task. Immediately upon stating this fact there are a

¹A. C. Mueller, "The Aims of Confirmation Instruction" (from the files of A. G. Merckens, August 12, 1954), p. 5.

²The Lutheran Inter-synodical Committee on Parish Education, "The Aims of Confirmation Instruction," Seminar on Confirmation and Confirmation Instruction, Racine, Wisconsin, DeKoven Foundation, August 24-27, 1954, p. 1.

number of questions which arise concerning the fitness of the individual for receiving the Lord's Supper. It presupposes knowledge of other fundamentals. The congregation, therefore, lays upon the pastor this responsibility. In order to prepare individuals for this sacred privilege, one must lay a solid doctrinal foundation. It is necessary for individuals who wish to integrate themselves into a Christian congregation to recognize their duties and privileges as individual Christians and as members of the congregation and of the community and nation.³

The confirmation of adults is a praiseworthy activity of the church. In spite of the prominence given to Bible study, many church members know very little about the Bible.⁴ If this is true of those within the church and who have opportunities to learn the knowledge of the Bible, what is to be expected of confirmands who have lapsed and have a twisted and sparse knowledge? In any case it is certain that specific aims will be needed to carry out a satisfactory program and to meet their needs.

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

³Mueller, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

⁴Oletta Wald, The Joy of Discovery (Minneapolis: Bible Benner Press, c. 1956), p. 1.

life and work of the mature congregation, with the help and by the grace of God.⁵

Another says that the general aim of confirmation is, by the help of God's Spirit who exercises His power in the Word, to bring men to the Christian faith or to indoctrinate them so as to make them intelligent church members, able to examine themselves and to be of service to their Savior, their church, and their fellowmen. The aim is not

NOT--chiefly to be confirmed, not merely a human rite;

NOT--just to prepare converts to the church but members of the LUTHERAN Church. This doctrine is scriptural in its totality. It is

NOT--directed to a class, or members, but individuals, personal faith.⁶

Aims or objectives are purposes which the teacher and students wish to accomplish together. Some aims may be so general that they afford little guidance. The above may be classified as general aims.

They may also become one-sided with the emphasis placed exclusively on knowledge. Too often the main purpose is to prepare the confirmand for worthy reception of Holy Communion and that alone. This narrow aim is re-emphasized by Scherzer when he says the goal of confirmation instruction

⁵The Lutheran Intersynodical Committee on Parish Education, op. cit., p. 1.

⁶Herm. A. Steege, "The Preparation of Confirmands, or the Instruction of Catechumens," Concordia Theological Monthly, III (May 1932), 361-363.

is to ground the learner in the truths of the Word.⁷ This was said of children in the confirmation class, but it is also very applicable to the adult confirmand. Much in the aims of the confirmation of children can be applied also to adults. For mere facts alone will leave both child and adult cold, especially the adult, since he is more alert to the situation.

Therefore, in order to avoid this pitfall which can lead to an intellectual faith, a faith which believes what the Church teaches, it is necessary to become more specific.

Below are objectives of confirmation instruction by Rev. Paul Koenig. They are more specific but in outline form, which may lose much of the intended meaning. It was specifically intended for children, but can be applied very easily to the adult at each point. It is assumed that the child has had previous religious training and has acquired a basic knowledge of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus from the study of Bible History and Catechism.

I. Through indoctrination in the Fundamentals of the Christian Religion.

1. To give the child a better understanding of the doctrine of sin.
2. To impart a deeper knowledge of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

II. Preparing for the Rite of Confirmation.

⁷A. C. Mueller, "The Objectives of Confirmation Instruction" (from the files of A. G. Merckens, August 16, 1951), p. 1.

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

III. Training for Intelligent Church Membership.

1. To enable the child to make an adequate examination of his life according to the Ten Commandments.
2. To teach the child the meaning and appreciation of the Lord's Supper.
3. To enable the child to judge Christian doctrine on the basis of the Word of God.
4. To cause the child to realize what church membership implies.
 - a. Diligent church attendance
 - b. A life of prayer
 - c. Constant use of the Word of God
 - d. Regular attendance at Holy Communion
 - e. Willingness to give time, effort, and means for the support and the extension of the Church.

IV. Training for a Christian Life.

1. To enable the child to have a clear ethical judgment on all matters pertaining to every day life.
2. To prepare the child for the duties of Christian parenthood.
3. In general, to lead the child to reduce to practise the teachings of God's Word.⁸

A more comprehensive and deeper spiritualization of the confirmend is found in the following aims. It is here that the question should be asked: What kind of a person should

⁸Ibid., pp. 2-3.

the confirmand be at the time of his confirmation? The aims show what the ideal catechumen would be.

I. Personal Commitment to Christ

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

II. Understanding of the Chief Doctrines of the Christian Faith

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

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

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

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

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

- A. Knowledge of the history of the church, church body, and congregation as a prerequisite for the enjoyment of the church's privileges and the fulfillment of one's duties as a church member
- B. Such interest in the spiritual welfare of others as will lead to personal soul-winning, to prayer for the expansion of the church, and to generous giving
- C. Faithful church attendance and diligent use of the Means of Grace
- D. A growing interest in the work of the local congregation and readiness to participate according to opportunity and ability in this work as a teacher, officer, member of congregational organization, or in any other capacity
- E. Acquaintance with the liturgy, hymns, and prayers of the church, and ability to use them with intelligence and profit

- F. Awareness of the church as a spiritual fellowship consisting of the saints on earth and in heaven, and a growing anticipation of eternal blessedness as the ultimate destiny of all who remain faithful to their Savior unto death.
- V. A Greater Measure of Fulfillment of the Law of Love in Daily Life in the Relation to the Fellowman in the Home, the Community, the State, and the World
- A. Realization that love is the fulfillment of the law
 - B. Devotion to the building of true community
 - C. Understanding and practice of the universal priesthood of all believers
 - D. Understanding and practice of the Christian calling
 - E. Understanding and practice of Christian stewardship
 - F. Proper attitude and conduct in regard to sex and family living⁹

These specific aims will help greatly in directing the whole outcome and success of the class. No set of aims can steer clear of the fact that they will be ultimately idealistic, especially so if they are specific. The minimum requirement in the achievement of the aims would be knowledge, knowledge of the true God and the only way of salvation, that this knowledge be not only abstract but a sincere trust. The skills in handling the Bible, of stewardship, and worship are aims which can be achieved only with respect to the maturity of the individual. Some may find it profitable to

⁹The Lutheran Intersynodical Committee on Parish Education, op. cit., pp. 1f.

make the class aware of the aims by distributing them to the class, preferably at the midway point or later. This is recommended only after you have gotten to know the class and that they would readily receive such aims.

CONTENT, AND SUCCESS

The Early Christian Church

The early Christian Church worked primarily with adults. It goes without saying that missionary activity was at a very high level. In view of the fact that the Old Church was a missionary organization to a degree never attained since, the candidates for reception were primarily adults. In conformity with the commission according to Matthew 28:19 and apostolic usage, reception into the Church took place through the act of baptism.¹ In the early days such instruction was to prepare them for baptism; for baptism is the Sacrament of initiation, and it was natural that mission work of those days was concentrated on adults. It seems to have exhibited various degrees of thoroughness. It was of prime importance during the Apostolic Age (without a doubt).²

In many cases as in the case of Jewish converts it must

¹J. H. Rex, Catechetica (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1918), p. 9.

²Herrn. A. Steege, "The Preparation of Confirmands, or the Instruction of Catechumens," Concordia Theological Monthly, III (May 1932), 351.

CHAPTER III

A HISTORY OF ADULT CONFIRMATION INSTRUCTION-- STRESSING THE MATERIALS, METHOD, CONTENT, AND SUCCESS

The Early Christian Church

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¹J. M. Reu, Catechetics (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1918), p. 9.

²Herm. A. Steege, "The Preparation of Confirmands, or the Instruction of Catechumens," Concordia Theological Monthly, III (May 1932), 351.

be remembered that they had a religious consciousness and store of religious knowledge and understanding. However, they lacked proper coordination of the Old Testament with the New Testament. Therefore, we find a thoroughness of indoctrination.³

The source of materials for instruction was mainly from the Old Testament and the Epistles of Paul. Only attempts were made to systematize the doctrines.⁴

Thoroughness was exhibited in two patterns of missionary activity. The first was in regard to Jewish converts. The instruction was simple. It included the atonement of Christ and the place of the law in the New Testament. In other words the fulfillment of the Messianic promises was found in Christ and the connection between the Old and New Testaments was maintained.

The other pattern of education was for the Gentiles. It stressed two phases of Christianity, its morals and faith. The following passages bear this out.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve" (1 Cor. 15:3-5).

³Ibid., p. 351.

⁴"Catechetics," Lutheran Cyclopedia, edited by Erwin L. Lueker (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1954), p. 174.

The moral precepts included warnings against adultery and the passions of covetousness and avarice, 1 Thess. 4:3-8; vice, Gal. 5:19, 1 Cor. 6:9, Eph. 5:3-5, Col. 3:5, Rom. 1:29, 1 Cor. 5:10, 1 Tim. 1:9, Rev. 21:8, 22:15; virtues, Gal. 5:22ff., Eph. 5:9; family precepts, Eph. 5:22-6:9, Col. 3:18, 1 Pet. 3:1-7. The "two ways" of the Didache (chapters 1-6).⁵ The apostles reminded them of their instruction in morals.

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Rom. 6:17).

"But ye have not so learned Christ" (Eph. 4:20).⁶ Thus the method of instruction may be fairly characterized as being "informal." Nevertheless, baptismal instruction existed in doctrine and morals. "We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more" (1 Thess. 4:1).

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us (2 Thess. 3:6).

For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring unto you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church (1 Cor. 4:17).

⁵Reu, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

⁶Lutheran Cyclopedia, op. cit., p. 174.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17).⁷

The doctrine of faith included knowledge of God, 1 Tim. 3:10, etc., 1 Tim. 6:13, 1 Cor. 15:3-4; and of Christ. The stress on the latter was that God fulfills His promises. The opportunity was given to stress the Christological feature in this manner.⁸ Other references to instruction on faith would be: "But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (1 Tim. 6:11). 2 Tim. 3:10-4:3 says of Timothy "That from a child hast known the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation" (cf. Rom. 6:4, Col. 2:11-13, 1 Pet. 3:18-22).

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms . . ." (Heb. 6:1-2; cf. Didache 16).⁹

The difference between the baptismal instruction as imparted to Gentiles and as imparted to Jews was a foregone conclusion.¹⁰

From 1 Cor. 15:3 it is plain to see that a Biblical

⁷Reu, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

⁸Ibid., pp. 16-17.

⁹Ibid., pp. 14-15.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 12.

history was taught. It contained a history of Jesus and the catechumen's significance for the plan of salvation.¹¹

Missionaries of the Jews went forth proselytizing (Mt. 23:15). The proselyte catechumenate taught "the yoke of the kingdom of God." This consisted in the instruction concerning God that created the world and miraculously led the children of Israel forth. It also taught "the yoke of the commandments" (Lev. 18 and 19). Probably there was added to this instruction of faith and morals an eschatological element which treated of judgment and the final glory of Israel. Such instruction was followed by the tripartite act of reception: (1) circumcision, (2) the thebilah, or baptism by immersion, (3) a sacrifice.¹²

Glimpses from the Book of Acts show the importance and necessity of a well-indoctrinated membership for the churches. In Acts 8 the work of Philip in Samaria is typical, also the visitation of Peter and John in the same chapter, as well as Philip's indoctrination of the Ethiopian eunuch, Peter's work in the house of Cornelius, Aquila and Priscilla in behalf of Apollos, and similar incidents.¹³ It can be seen that the success of a church body depends upon a well informed laity.

¹¹Ibid., p. 17.

¹²Ibid., p. 14.

¹³Steege, op. cit., p. 351.

From the Third to the Mid-Fifth Century

During this period the catechumens had first to be presented by a sponsor to the bishop for examination and instruction. Then they could go to the Sunday services. After three years they were listed as catechumens at the beginning of Lent. After a period of fasting, prayers, vigils, and public examination, renunciation followed and then they were given the words of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. On the Saturday before Easter they were anointed with oil, dressed in a white "chiton," and baptized. After the bishop had laid on his hands they were admitted to their first communion. The white garments were worn for a week, during which time they received catechetical instruction. The instruction was chiefly homiletical and liturgical. In many of the liturgies of the Lutheran Church, the same prayers may be found which were used at the various acts of examination of the catechumens as they passed from stage to stage closer to the sacred mystery of Baptism and the Eucharist.¹⁴

M. Reu names three sets of influences that were brought to bear upon the candidate. First, it was the ascetic

¹⁴Gustav K. Wiencke, "Confirmation Instruction in Historical Perspective," paper read at the Intersynodical Seminar on Confirmation and Confirmation Instruction, Racine, Wisconsin: DeKoven, Foundation, August 24-27, 1954, p. 2.

influence, which included confession of sin and fasting. They had to show sincerity (abstain from theatre or banquets, live continently). Secondly, there were educational influences. They explained the apostolic symbol, and lectured on Baptism. It should be noted that the ethical element was not absent. They emphasized moral training and the Lord's Prayer. The final influence was on the liturgical. The catechumen expressed faith and intention to obey the commands of the Church. The "signatio crucis" was made upon their forehead, along with the imposition of hands and the exorcised and consecrated salt.¹⁵

In the Didache, we discover that the order of instruction of catechumens concluded with Holy Communion, the preceding parts being: instruction (ch. 1-6), Baptism (ch. 7), the Lord's Prayer (ch. 8), and the Lord's Supper. Justin (Apol. I, 65) says that baptism was followed by Holy Communion.¹⁶

What was the reason for such strictness? With the persecutions (ca. A.D. 200) the Church became more cautious in the reception of new members. There was a long period of probation and preparation, which practise led to a distinct classification called the catechumenate.¹⁷ Septimius

¹⁵Reu, op. cit., pp. 36-43.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 19-20.

¹⁷Lutheran Cyclopedia, op. cit., p. 174.

Severus, A.D. 202, persecuted those who were determined to enter the Church. "More stringent rules of admission into membership were adopted, and a graded catechumenate was developed."¹⁸ Even Augustine mentions that they were always careful of the intention before they were allowed to come. In his work De catechizandis rudibus the mode of reception into the catechumenate is best described. The course was adapted to a special need, namely, to supplant false motives.¹⁹

Origen of Alexandria shows that distinct grades of catechumens are to be found (cf. Contra Celsum iii, 51). He does not give particulars concerning the material or the method of instruction, but stress is once more laid upon moral discipline. In several other passages he mentions "Moses and his law" as the means of moral instruction, however, without having in mind specifically the Ten Commandments. The importance of Bible reading is stressed. Origen recommends they begin with the Old Testament Apocrypha because of moral maxims. In Contra Celsum vi, 10; Hom. in Judices v; De Principis praefatio, instructions can be found concerning baptismal confession and sacraments toward the end of the stage.²⁰

¹⁸Reu, op. cit., p. 27.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 34.

²⁰Ibid., p. 29.

Origen of Alexandria gives us one of the clearest statements concerning the catechumenate. He tells us that there are three distinct stages in the catechumenate period already in his time (d. 254). Stage one included preliminary inquiry concerning individuals' character and occupation, plus a brief private instruction. At stage two the catechumens were admitted as "audientes." This meant they could attend the first half of the service, the "missa catechumenorum." They were sometimes instructed privately. Probation often was as long as three years. After this they became "competentes." The third stage consisted in further inquiry as to their moral fitness. If they were found fit, instruction for Baptism followed, after which they were admitted to the "missa fidelium," where the Lord's Supper was celebrated.²¹

Irenaeus after A.D. 190 relates the painstaking methods that were taken at Lyons in Gaul. The course was based on a tripartite confession of faith. This entailed the history of divine revelation and of the economy of grace from creation to the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan adding brief references to Solomon and the prophets and closed with a detailed presentation of Christ's incarnation and redemptive work as a fulfillment of prophecy. There was much stress on morality. Tertullian received adults in

²¹Lutheran Cyclopedia, op. cit., pp. 174-175.

accordance to definite rules. He taught by means of sermons or lectures, and they received a thorough moral training. Cyprian added nothing new. He did make sincere efforts at introducing catechumens to Scripture.²²

At the beginning of the fourth century, the graded catechumenate was a universally accepted institution.²³ It declined after the persecutions because of the large numbers.²⁴ As the church gradually grew farther away from the pristine purity and conscientious zeal, especially after the fourth century, the preparation of catechumens also became a matter of spiritless formality. There were times of reawakening but as darkness of popery settled on the Church this important phase of church activity experienced the same decadence.²⁵

Fifth Century and Later

With the decay of the catechumenate there were still large masses of people crowding to the churches to receive baptism.²⁶

This brought about two changes. First, with the reception of large numbers into the church, infant baptism became

²²Reu, op. cit., p. 28.

²³Ibid., p. 30.

²⁴Lutheran Cyclopedia, op. cit., p. 175.

²⁵Steege, op. cit., p. 351.

²⁶Reu, op. cit., p. 44.

more general. The old concept of the church as the congregation of the saved was altered to the idea of the church as an institution to mediate salvation.²⁷

With this change, the old rigorous disciplines of instruction and adult baptism disappeared. This is the second change. Despite the large numbers a considerable measure of Christian knowledge was imparted and a reasonably thorough moral training was accomplished. There was discarded, however, preparatory catechetical discourse, probably as early as A.D. 500. It was dangerously shortened. In A.D. 506 the Synod of Agde said Jewish converts must remain in the catechumenate for eight months. At the Council of Bracara in A.D. 610 the time for instruction of competentes was actually shortened to twenty days. In most cases religious instruction was overshadowed. This was due to pagan ceremonies and rituals.²⁸ By the beginning of the eighth century Baptism was reduced to the reading of a short liturgy by the priest for the benefit of the sponsors. The old pre-Baptism examination became a magic ritual.²⁹

In the Middle Ages

The liturgical shell of the rite of Baptism was further

²⁷Wiencke, op. cit., p. 2.

²⁸Reu, op. cit., pp. 44-45.

²⁹Wiencke, op. cit., p. 2.

elaborated in the Middle Ages, and the old discipline of the catechumenate was forgotten.³⁰ M. Reu speaks on this same problem, the gradual dissolution of the catechumenate for adults in which Christian saving truth had been all but replaced by liturgical ceremonies.³¹

The Church was extended into the Teutonic world, at times by the forcible baptism of masses of people.³² Missionary preachers thought they had fulfilled their duty if they proclaimed the Gospel and baptized those who were convinced that Christianity was better than paganism. Pre-baptismal instruction did not exist. Baptismal instruction was, of course, altogether out of the question when Christianity was forcibly imposed upon whole nations. Post-baptismal care was also sadly lacking. The magical effect of the sacrament showed a destructive power.³³

Confirmation itself became a separate rite and finally a sacrament in 1274.³⁴ As such confirmation confers grace; and because it does so ex opere operato, a child of seven is ready for it. Romanists give confirmation a higher rating than Baptism, not only because it is performed by a bishop,

³⁰ Ibid., p. 2.

³¹ Reu, op. cit., p. 61.

³² Wiencke, op. cit., p. 2.

³³ Reu, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

³⁴ Wiencke, op. cit., p. 2.

but chiefly because it confers more grace than does Baptism. Without it one cannot be a complete Christian nor receive a full measure of the Holy Spirit.³⁵ The Greek Church retained confirmation as a sacrament immediately following Baptism and said that it could be administered by any priest.³⁶

Otfried, a monk in the cloister of Weissenberg in Alsatia, wrote a kind of catechism about A.D. 840, even though it was not called such. It explained mortal sins, the Apostles' and Athanasian Creeds, the Lord's Prayer, and the Gloria in Excelsis. The first "catechism" was written by Bruno, Bishop of Wuerzburg (d. 1045), in the form of questions and answers.³⁷

There were three important attempts to correct this lack of catechetics. Pirmin (d. 753), Alcuin (d. 804), together with Charlemagne, and Rhabanus Maurus (d. 856) drew up instructions for the training of the members of the Church. Their influence was only limited.³⁸

Pirmin first instructed adults in his work among the "Christianized" Alemanni (724-753), before he baptized them.

³⁵A. C. Mueller, "The Aims of Confirmation Instruction" (from the files of A. G. Merckens, August 12, 1954), p. 1.

³⁶Wiencke, op. cit., p. 2.

³⁷Lutheran Cyclopedia, op. cit., p. 175.

³⁸Ibid., p. 175.

He uses the "catalogue of mortal sins" (cupiditas, gula, fornicatio, ira, tristitia, acedia, vana gloria, superbia, [cf. Gal. 5:19ff. and 1 Cor. 6:9f.]), and the Apostolic Creed.³⁹

Alcuin insisted on a thorough pre-Baptismal instruction. He reverted to the practise of the Early Church, recommending Augustine's book De catechizandis rudibus as the important manual. He said the course should offer information concerning (1) immortality, (2) judgment, (3) life eternal and damnation, (4) a brief exploration of the symbol, and (5) the Lord's Prayer. After Baptism they were given an introduction into the commandments of God. The time of instruction was too short. It lasted no longer than forty days and not less than seven days.⁴⁰

Rhabanus Maurus was a missionary among the Slavs. His course of baptismal instruction was close to Augustine's. He stressed the narratio, which was the essentials of sacred and church history, and also exhortatio, which was based on the hope of the resurrection, and of an explanation of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.⁴¹

The examples of these men were not heeded. The church was primarily concerned with retention of its members at

³⁹Reu, op. cit., p. 63.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 63.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 63-64.

this period. Their object was mainly to instruct children born within the church and to retain parents. Their method was poor.

By linking instruction with the confessional institution, the Church completely shifted her educational aim. Confession being compulsory throughout life, the goal no longer was maturity and independence of the individual catechumen, but absolute submission to the clergy, lifelong subjection to these mediators between God and man.⁴²

The domestic catechumenate was woefully deficient.

The medieval catechism, as religious instruction of the common people, was made up of Creed, Lord's Prayer, Decalog, Double Command of Love, Seven Works of Mercy, Seven Cardinal Virtues, Seven Mortal Sins, and the Seven Sacraments. The method of dictation and recitation was used.⁴³

The religious sects of the Middle Ages with their more intense spiritual life stressed instruction of children.⁴⁴ Catechisms had been prepared by the Waldensians, the Moravians, the Hussites, and the Wycliffites in the form of questions and answers. There were three parts: (1) the Ten Commandments, (2) the Creed, and (3) the Lord's Prayer. The Roman Catholic catechism had just the latter two.⁴⁵ By Luther's time there were four parts to catechetical instruc-

⁴²Ibid., p. 78.

⁴³Wiencke, op. cit., p. 2.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 3.

⁴⁵Lutheran Cyclopedia, op. cit., p. 175.

tion: the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria, the Apostles' Creed, the Decalog.⁴⁶

In the Reformation

Confirmation was regarded in a bad light. First of all, because Luther opposed it in his treatise "Of the Babylonian Captivity of the Church" (1520) on account of the sacramental significance attached to it by the Roman Church.⁴⁷ The Augsburg Confession rejects confirmation by implication, and the Apology (ch. 7:6) and the Smalcald Articles (app. pt. II, 73) reject it expressly.⁴⁸ Confirmation was regarded in a bad light secondly because it was so bound up with anti-scriptural teachings that it would be almost impossible to disassociate it from these errors.⁴⁹ Thus confirmation was not a general institution.

But instruction in the catechism was generally practised. A revival of instruction appeared such as the Church had not experienced since Apostolic times. Despite the diversity in the method of instruction, in desired aims, in the pensum, length of time, etc.; nevertheless, much effort

⁴⁶Wiencke, op. cit., p. 3.

⁴⁷W. Nordsieck, "Confirmation Instruction," Lutheran School Journal, LXXV (1940), 8.

⁴⁸Wiencke, op. cit., p. 3.

⁴⁹Nordsieck, op. cit., p. 8.

exuded to show the importance of this duty and a deeper appreciation toward it.⁵⁰

There were catechisms by Bugenhagen, Melancthon, and Brenz in existence before Luther's Small Catechism in 1529. Yet his outstripped all the rest. Its basis was a series of sermons beginning in 1516. His Large Catechism appeared a few months earlier.⁵¹ Between 1522 and 1529 about thirty catechisms were issued.⁵²

The content of the Small Catechism stressed the evangelical note, emphasizing the functional living Christianity.⁵³ M. Reu says it is noted for its evangelical interpretation of individual parts and also its pedagogic excellences.⁵⁴ The content was aimed at the young and immature. However, it had in view the common people also.⁵⁵

In 1529 Luther issued a work which may well be called the first Biblical History for the Christian Home. We have in mind Luther's Passionale. The importance of history, especially sacred history, for the education of the young

⁵⁰Steege, op. cit., pp. 351-352.

⁵¹Lutheran Cyclopedia, op. cit., p. 175.

⁵²Reu, op. cit., p. 89.

⁵³Lutheran Cyclopedia, op. cit., p. 175.

⁵⁴Reu, op. cit., p. 109.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 87. Cf. Triglotta 853.

had been stressed repeatedly by Luther and Melancthon.⁵⁶

The Council of Trent, convened under Pope Pius IV in 1556, ordered the Roman Catechism to be published. It was a manual for catechists and preachers.⁵⁷

Since the seventh century the instruction has been slanted greatly toward the children.

The Reformers examined and sifted the mass of material transmitted by the medieval Church; they fixed a much more correct aim of instruction; they also improved the method of instruction; and above all they understood evangelically and interpreted biblically the traditional material of instruction.⁵⁸

In the Period of Orthodoxy

There were many theological controversies during this period and it influenced catechetical instruction.

A product of these times was Conrad Dietrich's Institutiones catecheticae (1613). It was in the form of questions and answers and influenced an American catechism printed in 1872 and used by English speaking churches of the Missouri Synod. Osiander contributed to this period.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 97.

⁵⁷Lutheran Cyclopedia, op. cit., p. 175.

⁵⁸Reu., op. cit., p. 83.

But likewise his main intent was to reach the young children.⁵⁹

The form and method of these catechisms had an influence beyond the Lutheran Church, in particular the Roman Church. In Lutheran circles of America the same form and method has continued down into the twentieth century.⁶⁰

In the Period of Pietism

During this period confirmation was viewed as a highly emotional experience. The aim of the pastor was to bring about the child's conversion. They were responsible for the widespread notion that confirmation is the renewal of the baptismal covenant in the sense that something is still missing.⁶¹

Thus it is seen that the power of Baptism was negated and confirmation was synonymous with it.

Wie Kliefoth richtig urtheilt, kam bei der Schule Speners die Sache bald so zu stehen, dass die objektive Heilswirkung der Taufe in den Schatten trat, jedem Getauften eine spätere "Erweckung," ein "Zumdurchbruchkommen" abverlangt und solches ziemlich selbstredend mit der Confirmation in Verbindung gebracht wurde.⁶²

⁵⁹Wiencke, op. cit., p. 4.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 5.

⁶¹Mueller, op. cit., p. 1.

⁶²Leo Brenner, "Geschichte und Bedeutung der Confirmation," Lehre und Wehre, II (1905), 126.

Ph. J. Spener, 1635-1705, was partly responsible for the revival of confirmation, along with like-minded pietists. He said confirmation served the following points: (1) as a reminder of his Baptism, (2) as a public confession of the doctrine and the faith into which he has been baptized, (3) as a means of examination of his knowledge of the chief parts of Christian doctrine, (4) as a way of knowing all heterodox people and all errorists, (5) as a time for admonition, (6) as a special time for the congregation to offer prayers, and (7) that this prayer is indicated by the laying on of hands.⁶³

The stress in the confirmation class was memorization of Bible verses and church hymns. Also more use was made of "Bible history" until it became an independent subject of instruction.⁶⁴

In method, Spener relied heavily on a word analysis of the catechism.

Many of his questions were awkward, unclear, and abstract. He counseled the catechist to put the same question in different forms until the right answer came back from the child. If the answer does not come, then let the teacher say the answer and have the child repeat it.⁶⁵

Pietistic confirmation instruction easily became homiletical, sentimental, and hortative. Its method of first

⁶³Mueller, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

⁶⁴Wiencke, op. cit., p. 6.

⁶⁵Ibid.

memorizing doctrine and then discussing its application divorced the inner relationship of religious insight and the action of the will. The overstimulation of the emotions was an excess to which pietism was prone.⁶⁶

This particular influence that pietism had is seen in the catechism used by Muhlenberg which contained "orders of salvation."⁶⁷

In the Period of Rationalism

It was not before the close of the eighteenth century that confirmation had come to be an established rite in all Lutheran churches of Germany.⁶⁸ And then it was mainly emphasized on the elementary level and not on the adult.

Rationalism sought to lead the individual to grow and develop and so discover new religious truths for himself. A real unity between understanding and knowledge was sought. To this end Mosheim and Dinter developed their well-known "socratic" catechisms. Dinter was a master in putting such plain, specific questions to a child as would make him want to think and find an answer. Material was organized in a clear, appealing manner.⁶⁹ There was less memorizing to be

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Nordsieck, op. cit., p. 9.

⁶⁹Wiencke, op. cit., p. 7.

done now by the students.

It was a brilliant method of instruction, but it lessened the interest in the Confessions and in preserving pure doctrine. Rationalism focused on three main ideas, God, virtue, and immortality.⁷⁰

In the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

The nineteenth century saw the development of theories of catechetics as a part of practical theology. Caspari and Kaftan wished to do just this. Caspari, in his Geistliches und Weltliches zu einer Volkstuemlichen Auslegung des Kleinen Katechismus Lutheri in Kirche, Schule, und Haus (1953), sought to make the catechism understood by the common man. Kaftan's catechetical method was made known in America by J. W. Horine in his The Catechist's Handbook, 1909.⁷¹

M. Reu's historical study of Luther's catechisms and the catechisms of the Reformation era is an authoritative work. He removed dogmatic additions and the five parts were not to be treated as a system. Only Luther's "paraphrase" should be the object of explanation. Children should be encouraged to think independently and teaching should be graded to their level. Three hundred and forty-six memory

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 9.

verses were cited, and a supplement offered material on the Bible, the church year, and church history.⁷²

In the twentieth century, catechetical instruction aimed at making Luther's catechism relevant to the life today. Along with this objective went attempts to apply modern pedagogical theory and method. This reveals an unresolved tension--how can the authoritative form of the catechism fit into modern educational method?⁷³ Leo Brenner typically states: "Die Ansichten darüber sind sehr verschieden, so dasz das Urtheil eines neueren Theologen zutrifft, welcher, sagt: 'Ueber die Confirmation hat jeder Geistliche seine eigene Auffassung.'"⁷⁴

The most outstanding concern today is to integrate confirmation instruction into the overall plan of religious education. Educational devices, such as filmstrips, tests, and workbooks, graded lessons for pre-confirmation years, as well as a facing of the problem of continued religious instruction beyond confirmation, have been developed.⁷⁵

⁷²Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁷³Ibid., pp. 10-11.

⁷⁴Brenner, op. cit., p. 131.

⁷⁵Wiencke, op. cit., p. 12.

CHAPTER IV

A COMPARISON OF MATERIALS CHOSEN (WITH REGARD TO ITS CONTENT, ITS ORDER, ITS PROOF-PASSAGES, TIME ELEMENT, STYLE AND FORMAT)

A. Know the Truth¹

The content covers all the basic doctrines of the Christian religion in a good brief outline. Despite its brevity it includes a discussion of the lodge, a history of the Lutheran Church and churches, especially The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. The authors stressed personal evangelism in the life of the Christian. No Bible history was included.

The order of Bible doctrine in this volume is as follows:

1. The Bible, The Word of God, The Holy Scriptures.
 - a. general facts
 - b. how the Bible was written
 - c. the contents of the Bible
 - d. the purpose of the Bible
 - e. eight reasons why we believe the Bible is the Word of God.

2. The Law, the Ten Commandments.
 - a. the Law of God
 - b. the First Commandment
 - c. the Second Commandment

¹A. Doerffler and W. H. Eifert, Know the Truth
(St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1944), p. 3.

- d. the Third Commandment
3. The Law (continued), the Second Table.
 - a. duties to man
 - b. the Fourth Commandment
 - c. the Fifth Commandment
 - d. the Sixth Commandment
 - e. the Seventh Commandment
 - f. the Eighth Commandment
 - g. the Ninth and Tenth Commandments
4. God the Father.
5. God the Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord.
6. God the Holy Spirit.
7. The Holy Christian Church.
8. Holy Baptism.
9. The Lord's Supper.
10. The Power of the Keys.
11. Prayer.
12. The Evangelical Lutheran Church.
13. True and False test.

The order varies slightly from that which is found in the Synodical Catechism. The doctrine of the Church is mentioned separately. The Third Article is followed by the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The doctrinal part ends with Prayer.

There is an abundant use of proof passages for each doctrine except it might possibly be weak on the natural and revealed knowledge of God.

The course is divided into twelve lessons. However, in the preface the authors state

While this course is divided into twelve lessons, the Committee does not intend to prescribe exactly twelve lesson periods as the ideal for a group preparing for church membership. Circumstances will determine the number of lesson periods required. It will be found that these outlines have been arranged that the instructor can readily expand them into two or more lessons.

The style and format is appealing in that it has good paper, an attractive cover and neatly outlined. The user of this volume has plenty of opportunity to use his own style. The print is small and the material is presented in brief outline form. The Bible passages are purposely not written out. Again they state, "The instructor is to supply the complete text of the lesson in his own words." The six inch by nine inch pages are stapled. It is thirty-one pages in length.

B. God and I²

The content of God and I covers the main teachings of the Bible. Its strong features are proof passages for each statement and work sheets for discussion. Christian giving is mentioned apart from the outline. Some significant omissions are the lodge, the three-fold office of Christ, actual sin, explanation of a sacrament, confession and absolution, confirmation and an explanation of how we received the Bible and what books and how many.

²Martin L. Koehneke, God and I (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1944), p. 3.

The order of presenting its doctrine is

1. God and I
2. God's Book and I
3. God's World and I (First Article)
4. God's Will and I (Commandments 1-3)
5. God's Will and I (Commandments 4-6)
6. God's Will and I (Commandments 7-10)
7. God's Son and I (Second Article)
8. God's Spirit and I (Third Article)
9. God's Means of Grace and I (Baptism)
10. God's Means of Grace and I (Holy Communion)
11. God's Church and I
12. God's Ears and I

It will be noticed that the commandments are placed between the First and Second Article. The doctrine of the Church is again treated separately and placed after the two sacraments. The book concludes with prayer.

Excellent use is made of proof passages. Two and three passages are given where many only give one. The Bible passages are not written out. One of the author's aims is

to help the learner develop Bible skills, to enable him to search the Scriptures, to find Christ and much blessing in them, and to test all teachings by the Word of God.

He fulfills this aim well with the reservation, "It is not recommended that every text be 'looked up' in the class

session."³ One passage which surprisingly was not used as proof for infant baptism was Matthew 28:19.

The length of the course seems to be divided into twelve lessons, however, nothing is mentioned in the preface.

The style is very striking and appealing in its outlined form. Possibly to keep strictly to the "God and I" pattern some content was sacrificed. It is printed very attractively on good paper with large print. Several things to be taught are often written in one paragraph. Everything is run together. The page is broken up by having the doctrine written in bold type and the Bible passage reference in light type. You are reminded that "this is a book and not the teacher. It is only an aid to the teacher. . . ."⁴ The six inch by nine inch pages are stapled. There are fifty-five pages.

C. Fundamental Facts of Faith⁵

The content in doctrine is essentially similar to the Synodical Catechism except it omits the atonement and justification. It mentions redemption and shows the way of salvation plainly but does not deal with these terms. The

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵H. Paul Boehne, Fundamental Facts of Faith (Murphysboro, Ill., 1957), p. 4.

doctrine of angels is omitted. Besides carrying illustrations in pictures and graphs, many written illustrations, notes and remarks, there is also treated the history of the Lutheran Church, the lodge and Christian giving.

The order is as follows:

1. What is truth in religion?
2. Your questions and God's answers (God, inspiration, Law and Gospel)
3. The Ten Commandments
4. The Creed
 - A. The First Article
 - part 1--the person and work of the Holy Ghost
 - part 2--the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints
 - part 3--the forgiveness of sins
 - part 4--the life everlasting
5. The Sacrament of Holy Baptism
6. The Sacrament of the Altar
7. The Power of the Keys (Confession)
8. Prayer (The Lord's Prayer)
9. The Testimony of Science
10. Thoughts on Christian Giving
11. Brief Notes on the Evangelical Lutheran Church
12. The Reception of Children into Communicant Church Membership
13. The Reception of Adults into Communicant Church Membership

The only difference is that the Office of the Keys is placed after both the sacraments. The doctrinal section is concluded with prayer and followed by interesting features.

Fine proof passages are found in this course and all of them are written out.

"Because of the time element in adult instruction and the necessity in child instruction the Scripture passages have been printed in full." It mentions no set time nor does the outline suggest it.

The style can best be explained from its preface,

This manual proposes to present the ABC of the Christian religion in a language that can easily be understood by all who use it. We have endeavored, through the medium of simple, direct language.

. . .⁶

It is written in question and answer form. There is no waste space. Everything is compact and pressed together. It has large type. The Bible passages are in bold type and for emphasis it has caps in bold type. This relatively small book, 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches by seven inches presents its ninety-five stapled pages as not only to be used for children and adult confirmation but as a "worker's kit" and discussion in Walther League, Ladies' Aid, and Men's Club meetings.

⁶Ibid.

D. What Does the Bible Say?⁷

This booklet contains an excellent coverage of all the essential doctrines of the Christian faith. In the discussion of each doctrine there is an application of it to our life and faith. The work sheets after each lesson prove to be very thought-provoking and stimulating. Other features are memorizing of only the very most important passages, as well as readings from the Bible and comparison with the Synodical Catechism. The idea is to show that the teachings the class is learning are the teachings of the Bible and the Lutheran Church. The theme is carried out very well. There is a teacher's manual to supplement this text. It is mimeographed and comprehensive.

The order is as follows

1. What Does the Bible Say About the Natural Knowledge of God?
2. What Does the Bible Say About Itself?
3. What Does the Bible Say About God?
4. What Does the Bible Say About the Origin and Preservation of the World and Man?
5. What Does the Bible Say About Angels, the Fall of Man, and Sin?
6. What does the Bible Say About Mankind From Adam to Moses? What Does it Teach Concerning Law and Gospel?

⁷Oswald Riess, What Does the Bible Say? (mimeographed, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960).

7. What Does the Bible Say About Our Duty Toward God? (Commandments 1-3)
8. What Does the Bible Say About Our Duty Toward Our Fellow Men? (Commandments 4-6)
9. What Does the Bible Say About Our Duty Toward Our Fellow Men? (Commandments 7-10). What Does It Teach Concerning the Purpose and the Fulfillment of the Law?
10. What Does the Bible Say About God's People from Moses to Christ?
11. What Does the Bible Say About Jesus Christ, the God-Man?
12. What Does the Bible Say About Our Savior in His Humiliation?
13. What Does the Bible Say About Our Savior in His Exaltation?
14. What Does the Bible Say About the Holy Ghost and His Work?
15. What Does the Bible Say About the Church and Churches?
16. What Does the Bible Say About Forgiveness of Sins or Justification?
17. What Does the Bible Say About the Nature of Holy Baptism?
18. What Does the Bible Say About the Benefit of Holy Baptism?
19. What Does the Bible Say About Prayer?
20. What Does the Bible Say About the Office of the Keys and Confession?
21. What Does the Bible Say About the Nature of the Lord's Supper?
22. What Does the Bible Say About the Benefit and the Proper Use of the Lord's Supper?
23. What Does the Bible Say About the Last Things?

24. A Brief History of the Christian Church from the Death of the Apostles to the Present Time.

The order follows very naturally. The commandments are placed between the First and Second Article. The doctrinal part ends with the last things. The sacraments are separated by Prayer and the Office of the Keys in that order.

There is a free use of Bible passages in substantiating Bible doctrine, especially the main teachings.

There are twenty-four lessons, which seem to be geared for a one hour lesson.

"What Does the Bible Say?" is the basic question throughout. It is carried through in each lesson by the following statements: "The Bible says . . ." and then the Bible passages are headed "From this we learn." Possibly it should be noted that generally speaking the language is good but the instructor should elaborate on the theological terminology, which is not always understood, but often taken for granted. It has ninety-two pages. Each page is 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches by 10 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches and is large enough for its purpose. Space is used well.

E. "Confirmation Class"⁸

The entire gamut of Christian doctrine is covered in this course, some more adequately than others. One major doctrine that could be spelled out more specifically (by treating it in a lesson by itself or as a portion of a lesson) is the atonement and the purpose of redemption. This is true also of all the other materials except the first two treated. The doctrine of Baptism could have been more thorough also. Original and actual sin are omitted. With each lesson there is an assignment and review questions that cover the material presented. There is frequent referral to the Synodical Catechism. It contains several educational features (a) History of Martin Luther, (b) The Lutheran Liturgy explained, (c) Abundant use of symbols, (d) Occasional reviews. It stresses memory work. One whole lesson was devoted to this alone. Bible stories are referred to off and on, but there is no Bible history. A prayer is written at the top of each lesson. The Gospel is stressed nearly in every lesson.

It follows the Synodical Catechism in the order of the presentation of the various doctrines. The lessons begin with a history of Luther and ends with an explanation of

⁸"Confirmation Class," Sunday School By Mail, The Manitoba-Saskatchewan District, The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (mimeographed), n.d. (Lowell, Indiana), n.d.

the Lutheran Liturgy.

There are no proof passages to support the doctrines explained. The course refers the pupil to the Synodical Catechism. The student is directed to make frequent use of his Bible by reading sections in the Bible.

There are forty-seven lessons. The Sunday School by Mail expects one lesson to be covered each week.

The style and format is written and graded very well to the child who is in his teens. It is very direct. This course is not primarily intended for use with adults. The language is simple and direct. Illustrations are frequent. There are eighty-three unnumbered mimeographed pages on different color paper for each chief part, on one side only. The symbols do not coincide with the lessons. The typing, stenciling and mimeographing is neatly done on 8½ by 11 inch paper. The knowledge of the doctrine seems to be the chief purpose of the course. The practical living Christianity is incidental. The course does want to familiarize the confirmand with the Lutheran Church and its customs. Elite type accompanying a crowded page does not make for a quick overview of what the lesson is covering.

F. "Basic Bible Truths"⁹

"The course is a guide to Bible Study at home and in

⁹Wm. Adgm, "Basic Bible Truths" (Lowell, Indiana), n.d. "mimeographed," supplementary materials, p. 1.

class. Its purpose is not to tell about the Bible, but to lead to personal Bible Study on the part of the student." This purpose must be fulfilled in order to overcome its brevity. The following supplementary materials are used: (a) Questions on Basic Bible Truths (each page has twenty questions), (b) My Conscience, (c) Some Reasons Why a Christian Should not Belong to an Unchristian Religious Organization, (d) Some Soul-Strengthening Bible Passages, (e) God's Gifts, and (f) The Order of Morning Service and Holy Communion. There is no detail on the Lord's Prayer, and no Bible History. Four practical Christian Problems are stressed, Human Relationships, Christian Stewardship, Christian Giving, and Personal Evangelism. The course can be used for members and non-members. The Synodical Catechism is introduced after the course is about half finished or at the end if an adult is prejudiced against it to begin with. Then the Bible should be studied alone.

The order of it is

1. Natural Knowledge of God
2. Revealed Knowledge of God
3. Attributes of God
4. Creation
5. Sin
6. Sin against God (1-3)
7. Sin against Man (4-10)
8. Salvation by Jesus Christ

9. Saving Faith by the Holy Spirit
10. Holy Baptism
11. The Lord's Supper
12. The Christian Church
13. God's Providence
14. Daily Renewal
15. Christian Prayer
16. Human Relationships
17. Christian Stewardship
18. Christian Giving
19. Personal Evangelism
20. The Last Things

The traditional order of the six chief parts is not followed. A natural progressiveness is followed.

There is an abundant and accurate use of proof passages. This is ideal for those who are prejudiced against the use of a catechism. The author designed the course for this purpose. That is why it refers to the Bible only.

"The guide may be divided into twenty-four, twelve, eight, six or so lessons."¹⁰

The style is fine for the purpose intended, namely the prejudiced adult confirmand concerning the catechism. The teachings of the Lutheran Church are presented in a brief skeleton outline. It is mimeographed on ordinary 5½ by 8½

¹⁰ Ibid.

inch paper. There are twelve pages. Most of the space is used.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Keeping in mind the special needs of the adults in relationship to the aims and objectives of confirmation materials and the history of adult accessions into the Church, I would conclude on the basis of this study that first and foremost the materials used in our church should be evangelical in content.

This definitely meets the basic need of all mankind. For man is incapable of saving himself. "No man can say that Christ is Lord but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12:3). "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8,9).

But the Gospel is the "power of God unto salvation," and apart from the preaching of Christ there is no salvation (Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 3:11).

Our task is an endless task of bringing the timeless Gospel to temporal people who are destined for unending eternity.

Secondly, I would conclude that the materials should be doctrinal. It is a mistaken idea or opinion that doctrinal teaching is impractical. Doctrinal content clearly presented gives the adult a picture of the convictions of the pastor, the congregation, and the church body which they represent.

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Also, carefully examining the doctrines, the adult himself will form his own convictions. Such convictions naturally would serve as guides for his life. Doctrinal material, therefore, cannot be overemphasized.

I do not mean to say that you cannot neglect other important goals, such as the one above (evangelical) or the practical itself, but merely that doctrinal instruction is very valuable. This was proved in the history of the early Christian Church. Together with a high level of missionary activity and evangelical preaching and a well indoctrinated convert the church grew fast and was strong.

In the third to the fifth century doctrinal requirements proved to be the success of the Christian Church against persecution. Although the church did not grow as fast, it nevertheless remains as an outstanding period in the Christian Church because of its firm convictions.

Sound doctrine based on the Word of God was the successful weapon of the Reformation under Dr. Martin Luther. Again evangelical teaching along with sound doctrine is closely related.

Thirdly, the materials should be practical. Doctrine without proper practical implications becomes dull, dead, and dormant.

This is the sad commentary of the Middle Ages. Preoccupation with liturgy and a neglect of Christian saving truths became the gradual dissolution of the many years of

cultivation and instruction in the Church. To a lesser degree this happened in the periods of Pietism and Rationalism.

Thus adult instruction should be practical in content, especially when it is important for them to know how Christianity is different from the former life. It will not be expedient for the Christian to do certain things.

If materials are evangelical, doctrinal, and practical in content, they will best meet the crises which come to all men and will help to overcome them successfully and effectively.

This will be true of our own little crises. They may not seem important to anybody else but to you it may mean everything. Being able to interpret this crisis in terms of Christ, with confidence and then working through a practical solution in a quiet manner is necessary during an age that invented the coffee-break, but yet is noted for its nervous breakdowns.

This is especially true of major and national crises. The loneliness of the disciples at Pentecost could be the first example of this. When the Holy Spirit came upon them as Christ promised, 3,000 were added to the church. During the loneliness of persecutions the Church was again effective and ready to help.

The muddy waters of the Middle Ages brought on the rumble of the Reformation. No one can deny that the Refor-

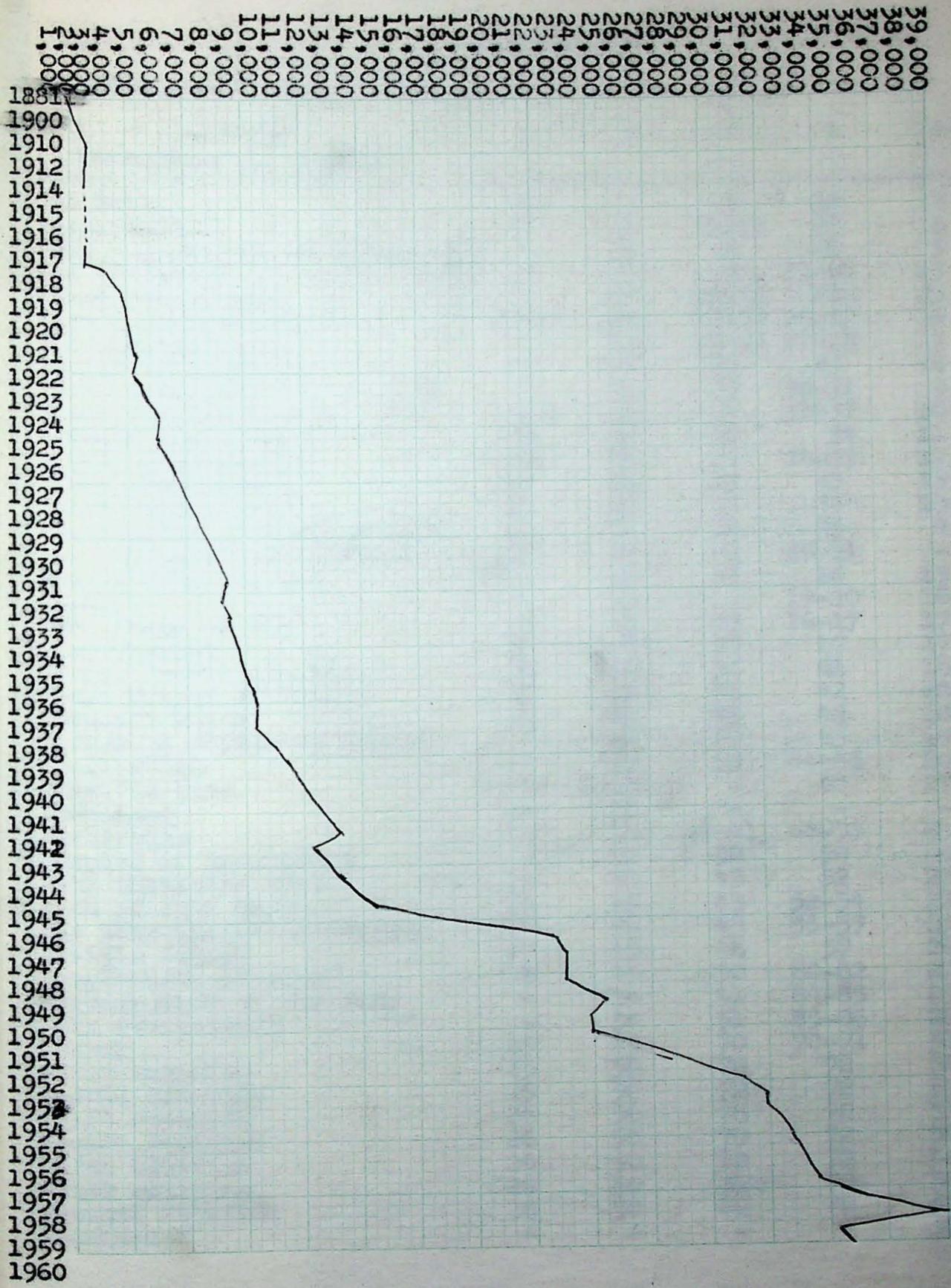
nation did not effectively help people in their spiritual crises.

The graph of adult accessions at Appendix I shows two sharp rises, one from 1945-1946 and the second from 1953-1954. Both happened after a national crisis. Why there is no similar rise after the First World War may be due to the fact that all three of the above conclusions were not present, namely, evangelical, doctrinal, and practical materials. You will notice, however, that an upward trend is evident after the year 1917 when there had been many years of stagnation prior to this time.

On the basis of these conclusions the materials examined are all good. Some will be found better than others. This may be because the quality is better, but mostly because it fits the personality of the instructor more than another.

You can see that the manner in which a book may be composed is not the main thing to consider here, but rather how these materials are used. It is very important that every pastor and prospective pastor and instructor of adults keep in mind these three basic considerations in preparing a novice for Christianity--that the instruction be evangelical, doctrinal, and practical.

APPENDIX I



APPENDIX II

Synodical Conference Gatechism

CONTENT (according to pages)	1	2	3	4	5	6
The Bible	5		9	10	2	1
Inspiration	5	10	11-12	10	2	1
Nat. & Revealed Knowledge of God (Trinity) God)	7	7	9	7-8	5	1
First Commandment	7	7	9	13-14	15	1
Second Commandment	7	17	15-16	26	5	2
Third Commandment	7-8	17	17-18	26-27	6	2
Fourth Commandment	8	18	19-21	27-28	7	2
Fifth Commandment	9	21	22	30	8	3
Sixth Commandment	9	21	23	30-31	9	3
Seventh Commandment	9-10	22	24	31-32	10	3
Eighth Commandment	10	25	25	34	11	3
Ninth Commandment	10	25	26	34-35	12	3
Tenth Commandment	10	26	27	35	13	3
The Keeping of Commandments	10	26	27	35	13	3
Sin (Original and Actual)	11	16	28	35	4	3
God as Maker of all	11	13	29	20-21	-	2
Angels	11	13	33	16	15	2
Man (image of God)	11	13	-	19-20	16	2
Preservation	11	13	33	16-17	17	2
Divine Nature of Chr.	11	13-14	33	17	17	8
Human Nature of Christ	13	29	36	41	18	4
Personal Union	13	29	36	42	18	4
Threefold Office of Christ	13	29	35	42	18	4
Humiliation	13	-	42	43	19	4
Justification	13	29	39	44-46	20	4
Atonement	12-14	13&34	-	60	27	-
Exaltation	14	30	-	-	-	4
Purpose of Redemption	14	30	40-41	48-50	21	4
Holy Ghost (as God)	-	31	38	50	-	-
Work of Holy Ghost	15	33	43	52	23	5
The Holy Christian Church	15	33	43	52-54	23	5
Visible Church	17	44	45	56-57	25	7
Forgiveness of sins	17	45	46	57	26	7
Resurrection of the body	23	44	50	60-62	27	8
Life Everlasting	-	34	41	84-85	27	12
Prayer	-	34	51	85-86	28	12
First Petition	25	49	70	70-71	31	9
Second Petition	25	50	76	72	32	-
Third Petition	25	50	72	72	33	-
Fourth Petition	26	50	78	72	33	-
Fifth Petition	26	50	79	72	34	-
Sixth Petition	26	50	80	72	36	-
Seventh Petition	26	50	81	72	36	-
Conclusion	26	50	82	72	36	-
	-	-	-	-	37	6

Synodical Conference Catechism
 (continued)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sacraments	19	-	52	64	38	-
Nature of Baptism	19	36	52	64	39	5
Infant Baptism	19	36	55	65	39	5
Blessings of Baptism	20	36	54	67	39	5
Power of Baptism	-	37	54	68	-	-
Office of the Ministry	23	45	66	75	41	7
Church Discipline & Excommunication	23	45	66	75-76	42	7
Confession & Absolution	23-24	-	68	76	42	8
Real Presence	21	40	60	78	45	6
Benefits of the Lord's Supper	21	40-41	63	81	46	6
Power of the Lord's Supper	-	-	-	-	-	6
Salutary Use of the L. S.	21-22	41	62-63	82	46	6
Confirmation	24	-	-	-	-	-
The Catechism	-	-	-	-	3	-
Other						
History from Adam to Moses				22-23		
History from Moses to Christ				44-46		
History from Apostles to Present	27		90	88-92		
Human Relationships						10
Christian Stewardship						11
Christian Giving		46	88			11
Personal Evangelism						12
History of Martin Luther				89	1	
The Lutheran Liturgy					47	
The Lodge	17		49			

KEY:

1. Know the Truth, A. Doerffler and W. H. Eifert
2. God and I, Martin L. Koehneke
3. Fundamental Facts of Faith, H. Paul Boehne
4. What Does the Bible Say? Oswald Riess
5. "Confirmation Class," Sunday School by Mail, Manitoba-Saskatchewan District
6. Basic Bible Truths, Wm. Adam

57

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