SPECIAL EDUCATION

ARE WE READY?
Special Education: Are We Ready?

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Special Education: Are Congregations Ready? A Viewpoint from Public School Administrators

"1, 2, 3, 4... 18, 19, 20. Ready or not, here I come!" Sound familiar? Certainly. The call from a child who is "it" in the age-old game of "Hula 'N Seek."

This edition of ISSUES is devoted to the challenges of educating children with special needs. It focuses on the development of special, self-contained programs for handicapped students and the unique needs of parents and the public who are addressing issues of special education. Issues we discuss, such as the need for early intervention, the impact of special education on the general education system, and the importance of parental involvement, are questions that every congregation should consider.

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Reflections

VER THIRTY YEARS AGO, as a neophyte Lutheran elementary school principal, I arrived in a parish to begin my ministry only days before the school year was to begin. The Board of Christian Education had arranged for registration on the last Friday in August, with classes scheduled to begin on the following Tuesday after Labor Day. Registration went well. At the conclusion of the registration process, every family in the congregation which the Board of Christian Education expected to enroll was accounted for except one family. When I mentioned this to our pastor, he asked which family had not registered their children. When I mentioned the name, a broad grin appeared on the pastor's face. "Oh, don't worry," he said. "They are a family with special children. In fact, if their children are not enrolled, they are probably doing you a favor."

Surprised! The children arrived on Tuesday morning, with all of those who had registered on the previous Friday. A bigger surprise was that the children did well in our Christian day school. Never blessed with academic prowess, they did their work. One became very active in a leadership role in the congregation's worship life, and the children grew in the knowledge of Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. The biggest surprise came fifteen years later, when one of the children wrote me a lengthy "Thank you" letter, pointing out that she and her husband were so thankful, now that they were raising their children, for their own marvelous experience in a Lutheran Christian school.

This edition of Issues in Christian Education is special; it deals with special education. In God's sight all of us are special, specially designed children of the Heavenly Father, saved from eternity in hell, and destined, instead, for an eternity that is special place in heaven. Heaven is ours because God loved us, loved us so much He sent His Son Jesus Christ, to be our Savior. The Christian church must be inclusive, regardless of the manner in which each individual is special. As Roger DeMeyer says in his article, "The unifying factor, the common bond, is that each (of us) is a member of the body of Christ."
Helping Families with Special Needs Children

The number of children and families in our schools and church with special needs is increasing. Look at your own congregation, whether small, medium or large, and think of how many special needs families you can identify who have a child, and in some cases children, with a disability or special need. Having identified those families and children in your congregation with special needs, consider then the hosts of decisions their parents must come to with regard to medical treatment and/or early intervention programs. If you sympathize with these parents, do you perhaps sense their intense feelings of losing their dreams for their children? Do you sense uncertainty or a lack of self-confidence? Some of these families often find themselves out of phase with social organizations. Let us be proactive in responding to this challenge.

"Let Our Children Come": Parent Perspectives on Special Education in the Church

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curriculum, and who therefore require special accommodations. Typically these children possess a learning disability or behavior disorder which interferes significantly with their ability to learn, although they are intellectually capable of doing so. They may be labeled as learning disabled, behaviorally handicapped, emotionally handicapped, orGifted and talented. Each label signifies a different classification criterion, but the reasons for placement in special classes are the same.

The present study of categorical definitions has been in use since the mid-1970s and can retrospectively provide more accurate evidence of trends. The most prevalent handicap among the school age population are: learning disabilities, speech handicaps, mental handicaps, and emotional disabilities. The survey of Lutheran elementary and secondary school administrators conducted by this writer approximately one year ago indicated an increase in the number of handicapped children enrolled in Lutheran schools during the last five years.

TABLE 1
Prevalence of Exceptional Children in U.S. Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exceptionality</th>
<th>Percentage of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disabilities</td>
<td>2.0-4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech handicaps</td>
<td>2.0-4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentally handicapped</td>
<td>2.0-3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotionally disturbed</td>
<td>2.0-3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing impaired (includes deaf)</td>
<td>0.5-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedically impaired</td>
<td>0.4-0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visually impaired (includes blind)</td>
<td>0.08-0.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Gearheart, 1988)

This data indicates a significant increase in prevalence of learning disabilities, behavioral impairment, and attention deficit disordered children within Lutheran elementary and secondary schools. The data also identifies a tremendous challenge for teachers, principals, and parents as they attempt to be in ministry with and to this population. Such questions as "What do these children need?" and "How do we minister effectively?" are frequent topics of discussion at faculty and school board meetings.

To answer the question, "What do these children need?", it is necessary first to look at some general basic needs of children and then at specific educational needs.

Abraham Maslow, noted psychologist, theorized a hierarchy of human needs which is well known to psychologists and educators. In this list of needs Maslow indicates that all people experience survival needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, and self-esteem needs as they grow and develop. Where better to address these needs than within a Lutheran school/congregation? The fulfillment of survival and self-esteem needs is frequently attributed to the primary care giving unit, the family. If, however, this unit is incapable of meeting its obligation, it is incumbent upon the school/congregation to assist in whatever way possible. Our country today and many congregations find it necessary to organize a ministry specifically directed to the needs of school age children. This may be a direct result of the changes which are occurring in family structures and relationships.

The next level of need addressed by Maslow is that of love. Again the primary care giving unit provides initial response to this need. The family response to this need is strengthened and supported by active involvement in the child's life, as well as attendance at church, Christian Day School, and Sunday School. It is here that the children can be taught about Jesus' love for them and experience that love as it is expressed by caring teachers, principals, and parents.

The final level of our consideration is the need to be valued, by others. Other general needs of exceptional children, not unlike those of non-handicapped children, include the need for acceptance and the need for achievement or success.

It is this latter that exceptional children's educational needs cannot be met with the standard curriculum but require special accommodations. What might some of those accommodations be? Appropriate accommodations can be classified into four major areas: structure, skill development, learning strategies, and communication techniques.

Teachers who provide structure and organization are an immense help to mildly handicapped students. The teacher who is dedicated to scheduling and directing the student to success by providing adequate time to complete tasks is necessary as these students find it difficult to organize themselves to return to an assignment once they have had to move on to something else. A checklist to help organize assignments and homework can prove helpful. It allows the student to be responsible, yet provides a list of the items necessary to be successful. The checklist would include items such as required textbooks, paper, pencils, workbooks, and dictionary. Teachers who provide efficient and intense activities integrated with less difficult and taxing activities are thereby providing schedules which allow for a change of pace.

These students also benefit from systematically planned skill instruction. There are basically two approaches to teaching skill deficit students: direct instruction and precision teaching. Direct instruction has seven components (Haring and Schiefelebusch, 1976):

1. Assessment of learner characteristics that establishes the student's present level of skill.
2. Instructional goals are established and broken down into short-term objectives.
3. Instruction is systematically applied along with motivational sequences and reinforcement.
4. Goal-directed materials that maximize time-on-task are used.
5. Instruction is clearly and completely described with discrete and repeatable steps.
6. Direct instruction emphasizes the use of motivating consequences that are effective for the individual student.
7. Student success is continually monitored to assess the rate of skill acquisition.

It is clear that teaching techniques need to be planned, practiced, and analyzed so that the impact of instruction techniques or methods to improve student performance on specific skills. A major goal is to foster independence in students. Teaching learning strategies has proven successful for many students. Dr. D. Deshler and other researchers at the University of Kansas have developed instructional strategies which can be used by students to help acquire, organize, and express information. Mnemonic devices and other cues are used to facilitate student memory of the appropriate strategy.

The decision to use compensatory rather than remedial techniques is always a difficult one for teachers. It is important to use these techniques only when necessary and not simply as an easy solution to a short-term problem.

Compensatory techniques are used when a teacher determines that the remediation of weak areas is impossible or would require an excessive amount of time that the opportunity to work in other content areas is lost. Allowing a student who has difficulty in writing to take a test orally, or permitting the taping of lectures for students
who have great difficulty taking notes are examples of compensatory techniques. Some other compensatory techniques are:

1. Tape recorded textbooks are available from the Library for the Blind, or they can be recorded by volunteers. (This is a good way to get some retired persons involved with helping children in your school.)

2. Allowing students who do not write well to dictate and record assignments.

3. Schematic diagrams from textbooks reinforce written material for students who have difficulty reading and understanding their textbooks.

4. Notetaking generally proves a challenge to mildly handicapped students. Teacher-provided outlines of the lecture, with sections to be completed by the student, or a copy of notes taken by another student, also are effective support measures.

Compensatory techniques are reserved for use with the more severely handicapped students or with older handicapped students where a choice must be made regarding what they will and will not be able to learn in their remaining time in school. Teachers must exercise care so that they do not contribute unwittingly to a student's passive approach to learning.

The survey conducted by this writer in the spring of 1991 requested participants to react to a set of 15 beliefs statements regarding mainstreaming mildly handicapped students. The survey was designed to assess the prevalence of mildly handicapped students within Lutheran elementary and secondary schools and to determine how services for mainstreamed mildly handicapped students are provided.

The first survey item asked the respondent if they viewed the enrollment of mainstreamed handicapped students as a function of Lutheran schools. The response (3.6 on a 5.0 scale) indicates that the respondents definitely feel mainstreaming should occur within Lutheran schools. The all respondents indicated a substantial increase in the number of identified handicapped students within the last five years. The category of students labeled as behaviorally impaired has grown the most rapidly (see Table 2). In light of the increase referred to above, it is not surprising that the respondents indicated a high need for additional time to plan for mainstreamed handicapped students (4.1 on a 5.0 scale). A score of 2.1 on a 5.0 scale was calculated for the item, "Teachers in your building have adequate resources to work with mildly handicapped students.

These data indicate that more time, resources, and training are needed to increase teacher and administrator effectiveness with mainstreamed handicapped students. Fifty-three percent of the responding administra tors indicated that their school has its own program for mainstreamed handicapped students, while 47 percent indicated the mainstreamed handicapped students within their buildings were serviced by public school personnel at a site other than the Lutheran school.

Clearly the data supports the mission of Lutheran schools to be in ministry to all children while emphasizing that teachers and administrators feel a strong need for support in that ministry. The support should be in terms of both time and human resources, as well as material resources.

The current college training programs for pre-service teachers must be evaluated to assess the effectiveness of the system to prepare future teachers for the realities of the 21st century classroom. Once an awareness and an initial set of skills are acquired by the pre-service teacher trainee, it is essential that young teachers be committed to continuing education in the form of inservice education and/or more formal course work. Congregations must financially support beginning teachers in their efforts to acquire further education for effectively teaching children with special needs.

When congregations or schools accept the full responsibility of ministering with and to individuals with various types of handicapping conditions, they must learn how to work with the individual and his/her family. A recommendation of an excellent resource (One Body—One Mind—One Mission) encourages congregational leaders to work directly with the family to determine the full extent of the needs, to plan the parish response to those needs, and then to gather resources. The main point of the recommendation is to do this together, to assure that attention is given to making it possible for the handicapped individual to be involved in worship, teaching and learning God's Word, witness activities, service activities, as well as fellowship or support activities. Congregational or school leaders must grow in their awareness of the resources and helps that are available within the community, state and church-related organizations. There are more helps than most leaders may initially realize.

Bibliography


by Roger DeMeyere

THE HANDICAPPED

Opportunities for Ministry

A child is born with Down’s Syndrome. A three-year-old child ingests the contents of an aspirin bottle, and although the doctors save her life, she suffers neurological damage and is profoundly deaf. A nine-year-old boy is once again sent to the principal’s office for disrupting his classmates with constant noise and activity. A young father is in a horrible accident. He survives, but he will spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair.

What do these individuals have in common? Not age, gender, or circumstance. The unifying factor, the common bond, is that each is a member of the body of Christ. Each needs to be recognized first as a beloved child of God and welcomed into our church family. It is far too easy to see only the handicap and ignore the person. We are often unable to relate to the needs of those brothers and sisters who may differ from us. Yet, as Christians, professing to follow His example, we must turn from our personal blindness, see all of His children, and minister to those who do not meet our standards of physical,
Implementing Special Education in Congregations

A term currently in vogue for special education in public schools is the word “inclusion.” One of the goals of special education is to include, in a meaningful way, the handicapped with the non-handicapped. This concept is certainly appropriate in the congregational setting, for it is consistent with the pronouncements of Jesus Christ. A congregation’s ministry to individuals with physical, mental, emotional or educational handicaps requires sensitivity and concern on the part of the church leaders. This attitude is not merely a call to duty but is a call to a new way of living, a new way of ministering to those who are handicapped.

Options for ministry may be individualized to meet the needs of the handicapped person, or depending upon the number of people with similar handicaps, may include accommodations for a group of individuals. Opportunities for ministry may be as varied as the handicaps encountered. Interventions may be as extensive as making sure all buildings are accessible to those in wheelchairs, providing large print materials for visually impaired, or offering hearing enhancement devices for the hearing impaired. A mentally impaired or learning disabled individual may be taught by those in Sunday School class by using supplemental materials, or there may be a need within the congregations to develop a Sunday School class for all handicapped children. Parish day schools can hire special education teachers and consultants to accommodate children with special learning needs. Congregations and school leaders only need to ask, “How can physically, mentally, emotionally, or educationally ‘disadvantaged’ know that Christ is alive in the congregation?” Christ is alive when the congregational practice accepts the basic principle that Christ died for all. And, if we accept this principle, we will then find willing workers, appropriate materials, and resources to try to accommodate all members as the body of Christ.

Key Needs

Key needs in ministering to those with handicaps involve a basic knowledge of the handicapped, acceptance of the limitations of such individuals, and an understanding of handicapping conditions, knowledge of Christian resources in the community, and the availability of congregational resources. The beginning of this article dealt with some very fundamental knowledge needs that can be called acceptance. Just as parents and family members need to accept the handicapped person, so, too, does the congregation. And just as the family initially may be ignorant and fearful of the handicapped, so, too, is the congregation. Let it be our prayer that we will all open our hearts and minds to God’s leading. As a result, there is no doubt that our church doors will open wider, and those with handicaps will find the ultimate success that is theirs through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Resources

Bethesda Lutheran Home National Christian Resource Center on Mental Retardation
760 Hoffman Drive Watertown, Wisconsin 53094 (1-906-936-INFO)
Provides religious instructional materials for teaching the mentally impaired, various publications, and video cassette to develop awareness and provide support for those caring for the mentally impaired.

Concordia Publishing House 3558 S. Jefferson Avenue St. Louis, Missouri 63118-3975 (314-268-1000)
Publishes religious education series and resource materials used in teaching individuals with special education needs.

Teacher Interaction, published monthly by Concordia Publishing House (July/August (bimonthly), has a column entitled “Special Education Teachers” for Sunday School and Vacation Bible School personnel that provides information on how to work with children with special learning needs.

Concordia College Special Education Department 800 N. Columbia Avenue Seward, Nebraska 68434 (1-402-643-3651)
Offers special education teacher training, research in special education, and resources for inclusion.

Lutheran Braille Workers 19473 California Street P. O. Box 5000 Yucca Valley, California 92289-1450 (714-795-8977)
Sells Bible and devotional BRAILLE and LARGE PRINT materials. (See page 14 for order form).

Braille Institute National Office 1200 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, CA 90015 (213-245-0400)
Sells large print materials. (See page 14 for order form).

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Board for Mission Services Counselor for Deaf/Blind 1523 S. Kirkwood Road St. Louis, Missouri 63122 (1-314-965-9000)
Provides resources and consultation services regarding ministry to the deaf and/or blind.

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Board for Parish Services 1523 S. Kirkwood Road St. Louis, Missouri 63122-7295 (1-314-965-9000)
Publishes parish resources for accommodating the handicapped.

District Education Offices The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (See page 13 for list of 1992 Lutheran Annual for local district information.)
Provide information on Christian education, family life, and youth.

Lutheran Special Education Ministries 6861 East Nevada Detroit, Michigan 48234 (313-368-1220)
In addition to sponsoring instructional programs in Michigan, Illinois, and New York, Lutheran Special Education Ministries provides resources for special students in Christian day schools, Sunday schools, and confirmation classes through its Epiphany Center. Services include student evaluation, consultation, in-service presentations and curriculum materials. The Extended Special
SPECIAL EDUCATION

A School/Congregational Model

by Lorna Schmidt, Susan Rogalski, Janice Schrader, and Lee Schluckebier

ONE IMPORTANT ASPECT of the Lutheran heritage is the education of its youth. This heritage dates back to the arrival of the first immigrants on this soil. In reality, that heritage includes the ability to see a need and then fill that need through education.

In the very beginning, a perceived need was the continuation of the language of the mother country. Hindsight shows us that need was not as important with the second and third generation of the immigrants' children. Yet, both the immigrants and their succeeding generations saw the need for the continuation of the nurturing of its youth in a religious environment.
Today, this continuing need is felt by the church. It continues the education of its children in a nurturing religious environment. Such education is a vital commitment to the church as well as to the community.

Public Law 94-142 opened the doors of the public schools to children with special needs. The church had its doors open before Public Law 94-142 through such institutions as Bethesda, The Lutheran Special Education Ministries (LSEM) (Ohio School for the Deaf), St. Louis Lutheran Special Education District and various other institutions and schools throughout the country. Special education services moved from the institutions to the local level, Lutheran education has been there with various models for the delivery of services. Bethesda, with homes located nearer to the local area, and Lutheran Special Education Ministries changing from a deaf-oriented emphasis to an emphasis to services at the local level, are two examples of this change.

A Model
Within this framework of Lutheran education, there is another model. That model is based on the Christian day school and congregation providing special education services to the church and community. This effort is funded at the local level with funds paid for by the parents for services rendered to the students. Such a model is in place at Christ the King Lutheran School, Memphis, Tennessee. The goal of the program is to allow the school to be of service to a wider variety of students within the area and provide Christian outreach to as large a population as possible. The model at Christ the King Lutheran School is nearly self-financing due to the fees charged for the program. The program includes resources for nearly 60 students, high impact services through a self-contained classroom with an emphasis on mainstreaming for 14 students, and a resource gifted program for over 50 qualifying students. The programs are designed to meet the needs of the learning disabled and those students with exceptional academic abilities.

The term "learning disabilities" covers a wide variety of learning problems within the educational field. A local school has to determine the services it can make available to the public.

The services of a specific special education program have to depend on personnel delivering the services. Therefore, the school should secure the services it wants to deliver or determine what is needed in the church and community. Then the school should secure the expertise needed to deliver the services. Therefore, the school should determine the services it wants to deliver or determine what is needed in the church and community. Then the school should secure the expertise needed to deliver the services. The school’s delivery system becomes the heart of the program. The planning for the delivery of the special education teacher in a specific location or just working in the various classrooms. It includes all aspects from securing personnel to helping it work with strategies for the classroom or individual teachers.

Scheduling becomes a prime concern for the implementation and the smooth working of the program. There is usually a schedule with in which the classroom instruction and the special education teacher becomes the third schedule following the previous two. The scheduling of special education services depends on the flexibility of the classroom teacher. An effective program has to depend on the mutual respect of teachers and the close working relationship and support of the special education teacher. A sound special education system has to be based on the latest research and practice. Therefore, a major component in the delivery system for staff inservice, workshops, latest publications and personal study. In reality, special education is a new commitment by this nation’s mass educational community.

Special Education Research
Because of the mass availability of special education services, more monies are flowing into research. The research investigates a variety of areas; however, the research in the physiological area is generating valuable new information. This mass of information is helping the educator formulate educational practices which meet specific needs of handicapped individuals. Based on that specific information, the educator can develop delivery systems for the individual student.

A school or congregation entering this area of education special education is not a small task. The school must be prepared to deal with the task of providing services to the students. The school must also be prepared to deal with the task of providing services to the students. The school must also be prepared to deal with the task of providing services to the students. The school must also be prepared to deal with the task of providing services to the students. The school must also be prepared to deal with the task of providing services to the students.

A Local Effect
Christ the King Lutheran School can deliver services for the learning disabled, ADHD, and other general classifications afflicting students needing special educational services. Educational services a school should deliver include several areas.

The first area is the diagnostic ability of the school. It is one thing to say the school serves the Learning Disabled, ADHD, or other general classifications afflicting students needing special educational services. Educational services a school should deliver include several areas.

Second, the school should have the ability to develop a specific IEP (Individual Educational Plan) based on the diagnosis, other testing, and classroom observation for the student. The school should have the specific plan of operation for the education of the student as well as the standard for assessing the results to the plan. In effect, a well-trained and carry out an IEP is critical in the success of the school’s special education program.

Third, there should be services available to help the classroom teacher work with a specific learning disability in the classroom. Special education teachers should always be aware of techniques needed by the classroom teacher to make the student successful. The use of a special education program is how the student can function in the mainstream classroom. The lines of communication have to be made special education a useful tool. The classroom teacher, the teacher, the teacher and the parents. A strong special education program depends on all three working together and each has to see the same techniques and have the same expectations.

Fourth, the school must provide support services for parents. The parents of students are experiencing learning difficulties in school, parents need strategies to provide successful acquisition of basic skills. Through parent conferences, the parents have the full potential of providing parent training sessions, these techniques can be taught to parents so they can provide positive support for their child’s learning.

Suffer the Little Children
“Suffer the little children to come unto me.” These words of Jesus for mission and outreach to all of God’s children filled the hearts and minds of the pastor, principal, teachers, board of education, and members of Christ the King Lutheran Church and School when a special education program was begun in 1976. Many students who were enrolled already in the school at that time and一字 several more students of different kinds of teaching strategies to learn successfully. Many of these students were children of congregation members who desired a sound education in a Christian environment. These children needed their children to have a strong spiritual faith along with a supportive, academic curriculum.

The need for a program to challenge the gifted was also obvious to the Christian education staff, board members, and parents. Therefore, the goal was to establish not only a resource program for students with learning difficulties, but also a gifted resource program to challenge those students with a differentiated curriculum. Before such a program could begin, funding decisions had to be made. The special education program was to be self-financing wherever possible.

The school’s goal was to begin by bringing a special education resource teacher for students with learning disabilities in the areas of reading and math. Later that fall, a second teacher was hired to teach those students qualifying for the gifted program. With this mission in mind, a teacher was hired to develop a program specifically designed for the gifted. Mrs. Magizzetti was hired. Eva Westbrooks was hired on a part-time basis to begin teaching a resource class for students with learning disabilities. As the number of students increased, a second teacher was hired to work with younger resource students on a part-time basis. Using a variety of teaching strategies and behavior modification techniques, the students exhibited excellent progress.

The students attended the resource class for individualized instruction for one class period a day. During the rest of the day, they were mainstreamed in the regular classroom. The special education teacher regularly conferred with teachers and parents to make sure each student was successful for each student. Diagnostic evaluations were given to determine student strengths and weaknesses. Education had to be tailored for each student with evaluations and assessments measuring academic growth. The continuing goal of the special education program has always been to provide a positive, supportive, nurturing, learning environment where the student can have successful learning experiences to develop the character and provide a way to serve God in his world. This was the beginning of the present Discovery Resource Program.

While Christ the King Lutheran School was developing a program, the Tennessee State Special Education Guidelines were being expanded and developed. These guidelines were used for criteria for placement, curriculum development, number of students served, teacher certification and inservice. The instructional staff of Memphis State University also provided guidance in curriculum, resources and appropriate referrals for services.

Mid-South District Support
In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a task force was developed in the Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod to expand special education services. The task force was under the direction of Luther Schmidt, the Director of AAL. This task force raised the awareness of schools and churches in the District for the need to expand special education to people with special needs.

Through a Forward in Remembrance grant, this vision became a reality. Under the direction of the Mid-South District President, the Reverend Norman Grutelsch, a Special Education Committee was developed. The committee consisted of representatives from several Memphis Lutheran churches and schools as well as district officials. The Forward in Remembrance grant provided seed money to begin the construction of the first and onlyлюс classroom for all the students with learning disabilities.

The King. This classroom and program was, and continues to be, a model for other schools and congregations as a resource of guidance for their future development. The model program began in 1984 with Lorna Schmidt as Special Education Director while also serving as the full-time director of the Forward in Remembrance Grant.

One program is successful is dependent on many factors.
At Christ The King Lutheran School, several important factors were included. First was the support of staff, board of education members, and parents in accepting the goals and strategies necessary to teach special students. The second factor was a commitment to the concept that God gives each of us an accepting attitude realizing that each child is a unique child of God who needs the message of salvation. A third need is a commitment to strong educational planning and curriculum development exhibiting a variety of ways for children to learn major concepts and basic skills. The fourth factor is creating an atmosphere of acceptance, nurturing and understanding for these children in the overall school setting.

The classroom teacher and the special education teacher have to accept the simple premise, "All children can learn if they are given the time and are taught using the correct teaching/learning strategies." Creativity, flexibility and patience are extremely necessary in successful teaching with special education students.

Finally, a successful program needs sound funding. In our metropolitan area, there is a great need for these services. Christ The King's program has been funded almost entirely by additional tuition assessed parents for the services. Some gift and grant money has provided support to get the program started, but now it is a self-funding program.

Pupils Learning in Unique Styles (PLUS)

Christ The King Lutheran School offers a self-contained class for students in grades 1 through 6. The class was established to meet the needs of students with emotional learning problems or cognitive processing problems that necessitate a one-to-one directed instruction. The emphasis is on individuality leading to mainstreaming. The class is limited to 14 students who have been tested and recommended for placement in such a program. Each student has an Individual Educational Plan developed stating educational, social and emotional goals to be attained. Indicators have included such topics as visual perception problems, learning styles and homework help, understanding the child with learning problems, and self-esteem.

The school is always looking for outside resources. Information related to the various organizations that offer assistance is made known to the Learning Disabilities Association is available.

Family Involvement

Christ The King's approach to special education has always been a team approach. It is understood, by necessity, involves parents as a vital link in the total education of the special child. A formal parent conference is held when the student is in individualized instruction and the program. Teachers desire to keep communication lines open at all times. The initial conference includes the expectations the school holds for the parent and student.

At least one formal conference is scheduled during the second semester. A master schedule as well as the general plan for the school year. A second formal conference is held at the beginning of the second semester to review the progress as it applies to the IEP. Finally, a formal year end conference is held to review the IEP and begin to develop the new IEP for the coming year.

During the year, there are numerous telephone conversations, meetings to exchange necessary ideas, information, concerns, and counseling. Christ The King's program places a high value on open lines of communication. Weekly newsletters are used to keep parents informed of events and general happenings in the classroom as well as daily homework sheets and notes about assignments. A handbook of ideas to help with homework strategies and other suggestions on topics such as discipline and reward system is also available.

Parents are invited to join the class for a variety of occasions including family chapel services, special lunches, play performances, field trips, pet days and special art projects. We also use the video camera to tape performances of projects done by the class. These are then sent home for parents to view.

Special parent meetings are held periodically with special speakers and programs on pertinent topics. These sessions have included such topics as visual perception problems, learning styles and homework help, understanding the child with learning problems, and self-esteem.

The school is always looking for outside resources. Information related to the various organizations that offer assistance is made known to the Learning Disabilities Association is available.

Each summer a summer school session targets specific skills. Summer packets are put together for each student. They contain review activities in the areas of reading and math skills. A picnic is held at the end of the summer for all those who complete the packets. This provides us an opportunity to get together on an informal basis and strengthen the communications link.

Horizons (A Program for Gifted/Academically Talented Students)

Horizons, Christ The King's program for gifted and academically talented students, meets weekly for a two-hour session. The students are grouped by grade level for instruction.

The teacher provides a differentiated and extended curriculum which is organized around themes and relationships. Relevant interdisciplinary units promote higher level thinking skills, emphasize problem solving, foster creativity, develop leadership skills, strengthen students' resourcefulness, and incorporate opportunities for spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social development. Students have input into the selection of unit topics and are given opportunities to pursue interests of their own choosing, create products which express their learning and evaluate themselves and their projects.

The Horizons classroom is viewed as a safe place to express and explore divergent and evaluative ideas. Students' unique and creative cognitive abilities are nurtured when they are allowed to probe interesting subject at an earlier time and at a deeper level. Background knowledge is a constant participation in a special program that in which they learn to understand and value themselves as gifted/talented/blessed children of the Heavenly Father. They develop positive coping skills to help themselves deal with the frustration arising from challenging activities and working with others with different viewpoints. Good feelings come from having opportunities to share feelings, to better understand others and to express themselves more concisely. Students are enabled to maintain a positive attitude about learning and view themselves as being influential in their own education. After working with Horizons units, they are prepared to initiate self-motivated courses of study and create products that demonstrate their findings. They become more confident decision makers and problem solvers.

Aim High Counseling Program

In 1989, a counseling program was established to provide coping techniques and support for students with learning needs. In class, counseling strategies were taught to students to build inter-relationship skills and develop self-esteem and peer support. A trained state certified counselor provided group instruction to each classroom using high-interest materials and group techniques. Children with special needs were provided with strategies to deal with their learning disabilities and develop self-esteem. Individual counseling was done by the counselor as needed, and conferences were conducted with parents and teachers.

Results

Participation in the special education program at Christ The King has produced success. Students have gone on to colleges after high school. They have achieved acceptable scores on ACT tests and SAT tests to allow entrance into college which has led to college graduation. One student who had struggled with handwriting and math computation skills as a resource student at Christ The King recently graduated from college obtaining a degree in business. Another high school student mentioned how he had previously reported he had scored a 50 on his ACT test and thanked the special education teacher for teaching him math. Benefits to the students' self-esteem and attitude about learning are obvious when these strategies are used to help them learn successfully.

Parents benefit from the program through gaining a better understanding of their children's learning needs. Through parent-teacher conferencing and resources explaining special learning needs, parents are more supportive of their children. Christ The King has conducted workshops on self-esteem by The Learning Disabilities Association and presentations by child psychologists on such topics as giving children the deficit hyperactivity disorder and developing parenting skills. Parent involvement in writing a child's IEP which states educational goals and needed modifications provides input and understanding of what and how their child learns.

Competent leadership provided by a staff that is knowledgeable about special education is imperative. Their knowledge can be shared with staff, a congregation and must be applied to develop and maintain the program. When teachers need support with a problem, strategies must be shared to help them teach a child. When a child has behavior problems, ideas must be given to continued on page 20
book reviews


Dr. Gevig, Professor of Religion at Pacific Lutheran University and a Lutheran pastor, can speak from personal experience. A coal miner, he had polio that left him with an artificial arm.

In a study published in 1986 for the International Center for the Disabled, a person was defined as disabled if he or she:

- had a disability or health problem that prevented him or her from participating fully in work, school, or other activities;
- said that he or she had a physical disable;
- had a learning disability or impaired achievement in an emotional or mental situation; or
- considered himself or herself disabled, or said that other people would consider him or her disabled.

Fifteen percent of Americans aged sixteen or over, or some 27 million people, fit the criteria at that time.

While the law mandated that public buildings must be free of barriers for persons with disabilities, there remain tremendous architectural barriers, even within the church, that are much more daunting to “the largest minority group in the country.” Social workers have long been aware of the need for barriers to be removed, and the replacement of these physical barriers.

The title of Gevig’s book comes from Ernest Hemingway’s A Farewell to Arms, in which Hemingway states, “The world breaks all of us; then, after we rise from the ruins, we can begin to build.”

In Part One, Gevig introduces the reader to barriers that block people with disabilities from being accepted. After identifying the issues of unfairness and discrimination, he concludes that the church has the opportunity to minister to persons with disabilities. Gevig, however, presents that the congregation go beyond actions to these persons, and also seek out their gifts to the church, and also be in ministry from the pulpit, the vestry and in other multiple capacities as the body of Christ.

In Part Two, Gevig describes the “white lie” of social work.

Jesus spent much of his time ministering to persons who were broken in mind or body. The church has the opportunity also to minister to persons with disabilities. Gevig, however, presents that the congregation go beyond actions to those persons, and also seek out their gifts to the church, and also be in ministry from the pulpit, the vestry and in other multiple capacities as the body of Christ.

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In Part Two, Gevig describes his own experience as a social worker.

“Unfortunately Hemingway’s message is often obliterated in opulent social and theological jargon. He advocates a “community spirit” rather than “group collectivism,” leaving the church to the bigger picture, which can be subtle.

He warns us to encourage “tenderness toward others” in order to avoid “liberating pedagogy” and “reduced concern oriented toward the unloved.”

In Part Three, Gevig comes to the audience he will have to confront this reality: “There are those who must hear our call to radical change.”


Entitling Hessel’s book Social Ministry is like saying “This is a study of church life.” The title only gives the message of the power. This book is a literary work of art, but it can be welcomed into any pastor’s study and sit benignly on the shelf. It is a very enjoyable read, the reader will be radicalized “Ehrener!”

“My intention in this book,” says Hessel, “is not to dwell on the social problem or to discuss a particular social issue; I would like to encourage the reader to think about the meaning of the social ministry.”

“Social Ministry is essentially an attitude toward an organized group of people and the social situation.”

Hessel’s message to us is remarkably similar to that of George Agger’s book A Bible for the Proud Prophet.

Seven hundred-fifty years before Christ, Amos was sent to the kingdom of Israel to call the people to faith, to repent of their sins and to speak the truth. Hessel’s book is a testament that God’s will is still necessary today.

The author, a Swedish Lutheran, uses the parables of Jesus to show how God wants us to live. He is a master at biblical interpretation, and his work is a must for those interested in the church and its relation to society.

“The message of the parables is that God is concerned about the way people live and that we are not free to ignore his call.”

The message is clear: God wants us to be concerned about the way people live and that we are not free to ignore his call. The author, a Swedish Lutheran, uses the parables of Jesus to show how God wants us to live. He is a master at biblical interpretation, and his work is a must for those interested in the church and its relation to society.

The basis of acts of caring and an understanding of the church is explained in a clear and concise manner. A variety of motives for engaging in compassion are identified, ranging from a desire to do good to others to a selfless, sacrificial giving to others. As expected, the presence of both faith and biblical text enables us to see the compassion in the context of the other responsibilities of the church.

The book is a powerful and inspiring reminder of the importance of compassion and how it can be used to make a difference in the lives of others. A wonderful resource for anyone interested in the church and its relation to society.”

Robert Hovland, Associate Professor of Sociology

Cincinnati College-Seward


In compassion alive in the United States? Are we a society basically a compassionate or selfish people? What is our country becoming or less compassionate during the last twenty years? Are members of the church more compassionate than the people who are not members of the church? Are there a relationship between faith and the showing of compassion in one’s life? What are the motives for engaging in acts of compassion? What are the consequences of decisions to show compassion today showing compassion beyond their membership to the larger community? To what extent is compassion linked to hope for improvement in conditions relating to crime, homelessness, and inner-city problems? What are the roles of volunteers, smaller charities, larger charities, the church, corporations, and government bureaus in addressing the problem of compassion? How can compassion exist in society’s craving for self-satisfaction?

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A Tribute to Richard Wiegmann

Twenty-four years and seventy-four editions following his appointment as professor of history at Franklin & Marshall College, Education, Richard Wiegmann has chosen to retire as the illustrator of the issues. His outstanding contributions to the magazine have been recognized by his colleagues, readers and professionals in the field of art. A colleague characterized his work as being “worthy of a place in the hall of prominence in the field of illustration.”

Wiegmann’s work has been seen in countless publications, including books, magazine covers, calendars, and group exhibitions in galleries and churches throughout the country. He serves currently as a board member of the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

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help the parent cope with this phase of development. Conducting inservice educational programs for teachers to enhance their teaching abilities is imperative. This type of education is needed by administrators and staff to gain knowledge about successful teaching strategies and new trends. The special education staff has attended workshops by LDA, TEA, Memphis State and clinical psychologists to improve teaching skills and knowledge.

The Lord has blessed the school, congregation, students, and parents in the development of this program. Many families and children have learned of Jesus as their Savior and have come to faith because of the “open educational door” for students with special learning needs.

★★★★

A LIST OF RESOURCES that may be helpful in establishing a similar program in a congregation includes:

• Your state’s special education manual.
• The Pre-Referral and Intervention Manual, Stephen B. McCarney. Published by Hawthorne Educational Service, 800 Gray Oak Drive, Columbia, Missouri 65201.


THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES will be helpful in establishing a program for gifted and talented students:

• The Gifted Child Today, Periodical, P. O. Box 637, Holmes, Pennsylvania 1943-9937.
• The Good Apple Newspaper and Challenge Magazine: Good Apple, 1204 Buchanan Street, P. O. Box 299, Carthage, Illinois 62321-0299.

Concordia College
800 North Columbia Avenue
Seward, Nebraska 68434

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