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A STUDY OF THE CHURCH-SPONSORED WEEKDAY NURSERY SCHOOL IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Religious Education

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by

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May 1953

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of World War I, there have developed, first in England, and later in the United States, various programs for caring for the preschool child outside his own home. Some of the projects have involved mere physical care, while others have sought to educate the young child as well. The most recent development in the field has been the church's interest in combining preschool education with Christian nurture.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The church has always been interested in the Christian education of young children, and has long had institutions such as the "Cradle Roll" to indicate its interest and concern for their spiritual welfare. However, it has not been until recently that the church has sought to extend its program of Christian education through a weekday school for very young children. In such a venture, the church attempts to maintain the educational standards of the secular nursery school in addition to its Christian emphasis.

Purpose of the study. The purpose of this study was (1) to discover the values of the nursery school to the

the family, the church, and the community; and (2) to seek to evaluate the work being done by church-sponsored nursery schools by comparing them with standards suggested for nursery schools by secular agencies and religious education organizations.

Method of study. Both secular sources and sources particularly interested in the religious education of the preschool child were studied in order to arrive at standards for judging the church-sponsored nursery schools. Questionnaires were sent to one hundred church-sponsored nursery schools in various Protestant denominations in a number of different states. Forty-four replies were received, which number can only serve to indicate trends in practice rather than conclusive findings. These replies came from persons in sixteen states, and thirteen religious denominations. Three replies did not state the denomination of the school. Evaluation of work done, and conclusions drawn were based on the forty-four answers to the questionnaire which were received, which fact limits the value of the findings, but at least to a certain extent indicates practical trends.

Importance of the preschool years. It is well-known by those interested in the welfare of very young children that the preschool years are the most formative years of life. More can be accomplished -- or lost -- at this time

than at any other time of training. Horace Bushnell wrote, "Let every Christian father and mother understand, when their child is three years old, that they have done more than half of all they will ever do for his character."[1]

Gesell has this to say regarding physical and mental development:

> Never again will the child's mind, character and spirit advance so rapidly as in the formative pre-school period. Never again will he have equal chance to lay the foundation of mental health. From the point of view of mental hygiene the pre-school period therefore appears to have no less significance than it has for physical vigour and survival.[2]

Furthermore, these early years are the time of the religious awakening of a child. Nimkoff states that sometimes as early as the third year the child asks questions about the nature of the world and the origin of life.[3] This, therefore, is the time to relate all of life to God as Creator of the universe, Ruler of the world, and loving Father of all mankind.

If this is to be the pattern of the child's religious training, it naturally follows that his environment, both

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[1] Horace Bushnell, Christian Nurture, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), pp. 248-49.

[2] Arnold Gesell, Mental Growth and the Pre-School Child, cited by Lillian DeLissa, Life in the Nursery School and in Early Babyhood, (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1949), p. 13.

[3] Meyer F. Nimkoff, The Child, (Chicago: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1924), pp. 267-68.

inside and outside of the home must be one which will foster and encourage this interest in spiritual things, and which will help him to develop a well-rounded personality.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Nursery school. The term nursery school is used throughout the report to mean a school whose program and environment are primarily suited to the educational needs of preschool children. It enrolls children aged two to four for not less than two hours per day, and meets at least two days per week. It uses a supervised program which is conducted by teachers who promote educational objectives through the use of well-planned equipment and materials.

Church-sponsored nursery school. This expression is used to describe a week-day nursery school which is operated and administered by a local church or church organization.

Preschool age. This term is used in referring to children below the age of six years.

III. PREVIOUS WORK DONE IN THE SUBJECT

Until very recently, little had been done in the field of nursery education. Therefore, written material on the subject is not too plentiful. More has been written

from a secular viewpoint than from the viewpoint of Christian education.

However, a few pieces of material on the church-related nursery are available. The Methodist Church has published a mimeographed pamphlet on the church-sponsored weekday nursery school.[4] The First Baptist Church, Ruston, Louisiana, has two mimeographed brochures, one of which lists ten problems a church faces in beginning a weekday nursery, and tells how some of the problems may be overcome.[5] The second outlines their program and plan for organization and administration. It also contains a list of equipment companies and a book list.[6] From time to time such magazines as The International Journal of Religious Education[7] and Religious Education[8] have printed articles on church-sponsored nursery schools.

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[4] N. n., Church Sponsored Through-the-Week Nursery Schools and Kindergartens, (Nashville: Department of Christian Education, The Methodist Church, May, 1952), unpaged pamphlet.

[5] N. N., Problems, (Ruston, Louisiana: First Baptist Church, n. d.), unpaged brochure.

[6] N. n., The First Baptist Nursery-Kindergarten, (Ruston, Louisiana: The First Baptist Church, n. d.), unpaged brochure.

[7] The International Journal of Religious Education, Chicago: Division of Christian Education, National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

[8] Religious Education, New York: Religious Education Association.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The following aspects of the subject have been dealt with in the report. Chapter two is a historical sketch showing the development of nursery education. Chapter three gives a picture of the preschool child, and names some of the values and contributions of the church-sponsored nursery school. In chapter four are listed certain standards set up for nursery schools, together with an evaluation of work done in the schools surveyed. These standards were used as a check-list in evaluating the work. Certain trends and current practices based on the answers to the questionnaires are also set forth in chapter four. Chapter five contains the general summary and conclusions reached.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF NURSERY SCHOOLS

I. SECULAR SCHOOLS

Earliest schools and their source of inspiration. Educational interest in the preschool child is quite a modern venture. The actual nursery school movement did not develop until the twentieth century. However, sporadic attempts at the education of the very young reaches back to the seventeenth century.

Plato recognized the importance of early training in human development, and advocated a community nursery as a proper part of the ideal state. However, Comenius[9] (1592-1670) is generally considered the father of the idea of providing schools for small children. Locke (1632-1704) furthered the cause by stressing the importance of early habit training; Rousseau (1712-1788) popularized educational theory; and Pestalozzi (1746-1827) supplied important contributions in the area of method. Froebel (1782-1852) also played his part. Although he is commonly called the founder of the kindergarten, his methods and educational objectives were particularly suited to nursery education.

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[9] Supra p. 20.

Infant Schools. The Infant Schools of France and England were among the first efforts to educate young children. In their beginnings, some schools, such as those established by Robert Owen, enrolled children as young as three years of age. These Infant Schools, however, were the progenitors of the modern primary school, rather than the kindergarten or the nursery school as such.

Jean Frederic Oberlin[10] (1740-1826), a young Lutheran pastor, opened the first Infant School at Walbach, France, in 1769.[11] In 1837 Infant Schools were authorized in France, and state aid was begun for them in 1840.[12]

The Infant School of England arose under the inspiration of Robert Owen, proprietor of the cotton mills at New Lanark, Scotland, who opened a school at New Lanark in 1816.[13] Owen believed that man is entirely the product of circumstances and environment, and that it is impossible to begin too early in implanting right habits and forming good character. In this view of beginning training at an early

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[10] Supra p. 20.

[11] Kai Jensen, "Preschool Education", Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Walter S. Monroe, editor, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952), p. 859.

[12] Ellwood P. Cubberley, The History of Education, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920), p. 600.

[13] Grace Owen, editor, Nursery School Education, (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1928), p. 11.

date, he is upheld by modern religious educators. He believed that child nature is so plastic that it might be moulded into anything which one wished, and that "the infants of any one class in the world may readily be formed into men of any other class."[14]

Owen opened the schools to care for the children of persons who were employed in his mills. Children could be enrolled at the age of three. The curriculum for children younger than six was summed up as "whatever might be supposed useful that they could understand,"[15] and was made up, for the most part, of singing, dancing, and play. Moral instruction was made a prominent feature.

The Infant Schools were based on the idea of small-group work, and were usually conducted in harmony with the new psychological conceptions of instructions worked out by Pestalozzi, and which had by that time begun to be introduced into England. Owen stipulated that "the children are not to be annoyed by books".[16] However, Owen's followers, James Buchanan and Samuel Wilderspin, soon forgot his stress

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[14] Cubberley, op. cit., p. 630.

[15] Ibid., p. 631.

[16] Frances Weld Danielson and Jessie E. Moore: Three Years Old, (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1936), p. 7.

on favorable environment, and laid their emphasis on definite instruction.

The Infant School idea was introduced in America by Owen in 1826. In that year he established a school at New Harmony, Indiana.

Development of nursery schools in England. The first bona fide nursery school, according to modern definition, was established in England in 1909 by Rachel and Margaret McMillan. In 1913 a second school was opened in Deptford, England, by the McMillan sisters. This inspired the whole nursery school movement in Britain through its demonstration of how large a proportion of the physical defects in children entering school could have been prevented by open air conditions and good care during early years. Emphasis on the improvement of health has always been primary in the nursery schools of England. This is pointed up in a work edited by Grace Owen in which one-fourth of the book is devoted to a discussion of health.[17]

During World War I Margaret McMillan and Grace Owen established a number of nursery schools for preschool children in the London slums to improve health conditions, and to care for the children of war workers. Later on, teachers

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[17] Owen, op. cit., 156 pp.

who worked with these pioneer leaders were invited to the United States to demonstrate the English idea.

Leaders in nursery education in England desired from the very first to make nursery schools a part of the public school system. The Education Act of 1902 permitted children to attend public elementary school at the age of two.[18] Nursery schools were made a permissive part of the English school system by the Education Act of 1918.[19] However, their growth was slow. Of the twenty-five schools recognized by the Board of Education in 1923, less than half were entirely financed by the government; the rest were partially maintained by private subscriptions raised by their managing committees.[20]

Grace Owen writes of the situation in 1928:

> All persons interested in the Nursery School movement deplore that though ten years have passed since the Nursery School clause in the Education Act of 1918 was accepted, there are still no more than twenty-six recognized Nursery Schools in the country. In this respect the Nursery School movement has made no apparent headway since this book was brought out in 1920. And yet the situation is very different now from what it was then. During the last eight years public opinion has been slowly responding to repeated appeals from authoritative sources, information as to results and the striking benefits to the children of existing Nursery Schools has been widespread, and has attracted public attention increasingly. Press notices have multiplied. The appall-

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[18] Ibid., p. 14.

[19] Loc. cit.

[20] Owen, op. cit., p. 3.

> ing situation brought about by overcrowded houses, dangerous traffic, unemployment, and ignorance of child care has been steadily forcing the problem of the "under fives" to the front, in spite of general preoccupation with the needs of the adolescent.[21]

Through persistent effort the preschool educators finally won the battle, and the nursery schools became an integral part of the educational system of England. This was accomplished by the Education Act of 1944.[22]

American Schools. The full developmental significance of the preschool years was not actually recognized in this country until about 1920. Our earliest nursery schools started primarily as laboratories to gather statistics on child study and development. These were usually under the auspices of a college or university. A cooperative nursery school was started by a small group of faculty wives at the University of Chicago in 1915; and one was established by Miss McLin, director of the Child Education Foundation Training School in the same year.[23] Other early schools included one opened in New York City by Miss Harriet Johnson working under the Bureau of Educational Experiments in 1919;[24]

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[21] Ibid., p. 5.

[22] Jensen, op. cit., p. 860.

[23] Loc. cit.

[24] Loc. cit.

the Merrill-Palmer School at Detroit in 1921;[25] a school at 69 Bank Street, New York City; one in Boston; and one at Teachers' College, Columbia University.

In 1924 Miss Harriet Johnson established her own school in New York City, the Harriet Johnson Nursery School, which is still in existence. This was founded with the conviction that preschool education of the right sort helps to lay the groundwork for a happy life as a useful member of the community. The school established by Miss Johnson represented a departure from the previous schools, because of its difference in objectives. In 1928 the following statement was published regarding nursery school objectives:

> Typical among the main objects of modern nursery schools are: to provide opportunity for controlled research, to establish experimental laboratories for the study of educational methods, to furnish facilities for training preschool teachers, to provide for the cultural and general training of college women, to train teachers for home economics, to demonstrate the best methods of child care, to permit parents to participate in the group care of little children, and to train junior and senior high-school students.[26]

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[25] Gertrude E. Chittenden et al., Essentials of Nursery Education, (Chicago: National Association for Nursery Education, 1948), p. 5, citing Mary D. Davis and Rowena Hansen, Nursery Schools; Their Development and Current Practices in the United States, (Washington, D. C: United States Government Printing Office, 1933).

[26] Twenty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, p. 43, cited by Rhoda Kellogg, Nursery School Guide, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Riverside Press, 1949, p. 376.

This helps to support the statement that the first nursery schools were established for every purpose except for the primary one of educating and guiding children. In all cases, the children's needs were more or less subordinated to the interests of the adults. Even the philanthropic schools existed primarily to serve parents who could not keep children at home. However, as the importance of the preschool years became more widely recognized, the emphasis began to be placed on the child and his development.

With educational development as the goal, the nursery schools increased rapidly in number. In 1920 there were only three nursery schools for the entire country recorded with the United States Office of Education.[27] By 1924 there were twenty-eight schools in eleven states.[28] Four years later, in 1928, the number had climbed to one hundred seventeen.[29] Three hundred forty-three schools were reported in 1930, and authors estimated the actual figure at about five hundred.[30]

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[27] Jensen, op. cit., p. 860.

[28] Anna F. Betts, The Nursery Child in the Church School, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1930), p. 20.

[29] Jensen, op. cit., p. 860.

[30] Loc. cit.

The nursery school movement was given added impetus in 1933 when the Emergency Relief Act included nursery schools as a part of the program designed to supply work for unemployed persons. Before the opening of the Works Progress Administration schools, there were three main types of nursery schools: the philanthropic, the college research, and the private. The private were largely of the cooperative parent type or of a commercial kind. The philanthropic and the research schools developed the main body of theory and practice which was more or less followed by the private schools. The Works Progress Administration schools, under the Emergency Relief Act, were for the most part set up in neighborhood surroundings somewhat comparable to the philanthropic schools, and they served a clientele whose ways and needs were comparable. Most of the children were from families receiving public relief and similiar low income groups. The buildings and equipment of many of these schools were also more like those of a settlement school than of a college research school. In addition to handicaps because of lack of buildings and equipment, these schools had to rely on unemployed people for a staff, and on the intricate coordination of the nursery school service with many other Works Progress Administration projects. Although a few of the schools had received full academic approval when they were liquidated in 1943, the nursery school educators were never

fully satisfied with their practices. These "emergency" schools aided the underprivileged, and their work was more closely related to that of the day care center than to the bona fide nursery school.

In November, 1942, government assistance was made available to public nursery schools under the Community Facilities Act, commonly known as the Lanham Act. The primary purpose of the Lanham schools was to provide care for the children of war workers. In areas where new buildings and equipment were available for the schools, certain standards regarding facilities were automatically possible, and where well-equipped Works Progress Administration schools were taken over, educational standards survived. However, in some cases the schools were substandard and offered custodial, rather than educational services. In some areas where leaders were interested in making the program educational, technical help was sought from the college research schools, but because of inexperienced leaders, and lack of time to study and adapt the theories supplied, this was not always successful.

The Lanham schools proved that nursery schools are good for all children. Previously, only two groups of children had had the advantage of nursery education: the underprivileged, who were cared for in day nurseries or in settlement work; and the privileged, who attended the college

research schools. Lanham schools gradually developed status with a new group of children and parents. These parents used the nursery school, not because they were forced to do so or as a matter of educational belief, but because the nursery school was a part of the functional situation in which they found themselves. For the first time everyday American working people put their children in nursery schools as a routine part of education. At the beginning of the program, the presence of children in such schools was looked upon largely as a war tragedy. At the end of the program their attendance was viewed as an enviable privilege which should be more widely extended.

During the war years, the number of schools had increased rapidly, until by 1945, the peak year for government schools, there were 1481 schools operating with government assistance, and about 1000 private schools.[31] In the following year, March, 1946, the Lanham Act was abolished, and federal aid ceased. Many schools were forced to close because of lack of funds, but some were kept going by mothers' cooperatives, or were taken over by sponsoring agencies such as Junior Leagues or Chambers of Commerce.

The current situation regarding nursery schools is an awareness of their value by the general public, but there is

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31 Jensen, op. cit., p. 860.

an insufficient number of secular schools to accomodate the number of children whose parents wish them to be enrolled. This fact should give churches an added incentive to use the situation presented them by providing Christian nursery schools to help meet the demand.

Close association with the universities of the country has kept the standards high, and encouraged an attitude of investigation for the best methods of development. The leaders in the field believe that the increase in the number of nursery schools should be only as rapid as trained personnel becomes available.[32]

The National Education Association makes an appraisal of secular nursery schools as they are today:

> The private nursery schools will probably continue to increase. Many of them maintain high standards, excellent facilities, and programs. They offer services which the public schools have postponed too long. Some of them are connected with teachers colleges, universities, research or clinical centers. They may be used as demonstration schools. These nursery schools have made and will make a large contribution to public education. Others of the private nursery schools are fly-by-night agencies, here today and gone tomorrow. They are money-making enterprises to exploit the predicament of mothers working in industries or mothers who are professional women in neighborhoods and localities where the public authorities have provided no help. The personnel in such day care centers (they cannot properly be termed

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[32] Lola O. Taylor, "Origin and Development of Nursery Schools in the United States and England," (unpublished Master's thesis, Graduate School of the University of Cincinnati, 1942), p. 65.

schools) may be untrained. The quarters may be unsafe, unsanitary, and unhealthful. The program may represent the minimum of care. The whole enterprise may be characterized as opportunistic, charging all that the traffic will bear.

. . . . . .

As for nursery schools maintained on federal, local, or private housing projects, they will in most instances be integrated with the public school system. This integration will not always mean their removal to a nearby elementary school. For reasons of plant facilities and geographical availability there may be advantages in having the nursery school and also the kindergarten and the primary grades within the cluster of homes they serve. On the other hand, such nursery schools, when publicly operated, will be open to all children close by regardless of whether they live within the boundaries of any particular real estate development. Such nursery schools will be housed in buildings owned or leased by the local schoolboard. Their direct administration will usually be a responsibility of the principal of the elementary school that serves the same district.[33]

In 1950 there were public school nursery schools in nine states: Alabama, California, Illinois, Michigan, Montana, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Washington.

II. CHURCH-RELATED SCHOOLS

The origin and development of church-related nursery schools is not so well known as is that of secular schools. Much of the history of its development can be stated only in general terms.

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33 Educational Policies Commission, Educational Services for Young Children, (Washington, D. C: National Education Association of the United States and the American Association of School Administrators, 1945), p. 26.

Early efforts. Two of the men whose names are connected with the beginnings of early childhood education were churchmen. John Amos Comenius, who is frequently called the father of the idea of education of small children was a Moravian bishop.[34] Like most theologians of his day, he believed in the total depravity of children, but he also believed that education could correct such evil tendencies. He felt that no one should be a parent who did not have unbounded faith in the possibilities of children. Along with this view, he believed that many parents were incapable of instructing their children. His philosophy of education was that the child should be regarded, not with reference to his youthful shortcomings, but rather with a view to the purposes of the Divine Mind.

Comenius advocated the early training of children, and felt that it was unwise to delay training until children were of public school age, because tendencies which had been acquired in early childhood would be difficult to overcome at such a late date.

Jean Frederic Oberlin, the founder of the first Infant School, was also a clergyman.[35] He was a young Lutheran pastor in Northeastern France. Oberlin organized the schools

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[34] Cf. p. 7.

[35] Cf. p. 8.

in all the villages of his rural parish in order to give informal training to the small children of his congregation.

Factors influencing the organization of church nursery schools. Although he is not usually thought of as being connected with the preschool education movement, Horace Bushnell was very influential in religious education circles with his theory that moral and religious education should begin at birth, the aim being that the child should grow into a Christian person without ever knowing that he was a sinner.[36] This is in line with the teaching of Robert Owen, who was a thorough-going naturalist. He believed that man was by nature good, and if trained and educated from birth under the right circumstances, he might be made a valuable member of society.

Sunday morning classes for nursery age children have been in existence in some churches for a number of years, although they were developed at a later date than classes for older children. The church-sponsored nursery school may be thought to be an outgrowth of the Sunday nursery class in the same sense that so many other movements in religious education are outgrowths of the Sunday School, as the church realizes the need for finding additional time for religious education besides the Sunday morning period.

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[36] Horace Bushnell, op. cit., 407 pp.

Beginnings of church-sponsored nursery schools. The actual beginnings of church-sponsored nursery schools are difficult to trace. These schools have simply sprung up in one place and another. Denominations as such have done very little about them except to urge people constantly to maintain high standards and to refrain from starting a nursery school unless the highest possible standards can be met.

One of the earliest church-sponsored schools in this country was begun in the Second Presbyterian Church in West Newton, Massachusetts, in the fall of 1930, under the leadership of Rev. Frank Grebe.[37] It is believed to be the first such venture in New England. Another pioneer in the field was the Riverside Baptist Church in New York City. Both of these churches still operate weekday nursery schools.

Present status of church-sponsored nursery schools. The present status of church-sponsored schools among Protestant denominations is best seen by the attitudes toward nursery schools of some of the leading denominations. The prevailing attitude seems to be that denominational heads are in favor of such schools in local churches, provided that the churches can maintain high standards for the schools.

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[37] Frank Grebe, Minister of Education, The Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, N. Y., personal correspondence with the writer, May 7, 1953.

A committee on the re-study of religious education within the Presbyterian Church in the United States has issued the following statement:

> Nursery school education has become a highly specialized field, and careless work may do more harm than good. Locally, efforts in this direction may be fully justified. But the effort to promote week-day nursery schools denominationally should, in the opinion of the committee, either be done with exceptional care and thoroughness, or not at all. We do not see that the thorough-going policy is at present a feasible one for the denomination.
>
> The committee wishes to insist that we are not offering adverse judgments. . . . We are only proposing that as of the present the effort to promote them denominationally seems out of proportion.[38]

Somewhat the same opinion is shared by the American Baptist Convention. In regard to the status of nursery schools in that denomination, Lois Blankenship, director of children's work, writes:

> As yet we do not have any printed guidance materials for setting up a weekday nursery school in a local church. We are reluctant to promote weekday nursery schools in general and are fearful that if we publish materials it will seem to our churches that we are urging them to start weekday nursery schools.
>
> When we find churches with adequate facilities and concern, we work personally with them in establishing their system.[39]

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[38] n. n., A Re-Study of Religious Education, (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1948), p. 33.

[39] Lois Blankenship, Director of Children's Work, American Baptist Convention, personal correspondence with writer, February 24, 1953.

The Methodist Church has one piece of material which it sends to churches contemplating a weekday nursery. This is a mimeographed brochure seven pages in length, entitled Church Sponsored Through-the-Week Nursery Schools and Kindergartens. It discusses the setting up of a church-sponsored nursery school or kindergarten with reference to its purpose, administration, housing and equipment, teaching staff, registration of children, work with parents, finances, curriculum, and schedule. The last two pages give a suggested bibliography for workers in the nursery school or kindergarten.

A prominent authority in religious education work made the following statement relative to church nursery schools in general:

> In some situations nursery schools have been started in churches by people who have had an excellent background of training and experience in work with nursery children. They have seen the need for such a school as a community service, either because the available facilities were inadequate or because there was no nursery school work.
>
> In other situations church leaders have simply been zealous and eager to do something, and have started nursery schools without enough careful planning. This, of course, is true of other nursery schools as well as church-sponsored ones.[41]

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[41] Alice L. Goddard, Director of Children's Work, Division of Christian Education, National Council of Churches, personal correspondence with the writer, April 20, 1953.

Number of schools. Because of the fact that there are constant changes in the number of nursery schools in existence, and because it is almost impossible to get an accurate count of all church-sponsored schools, it is difficult, if not impossible, to give exact figures regarding the number of schools in existence in the United States at the present time. In order to show the constant changes in nursery schools, the following example is cited. At the beginning of this study, questionnaires were sent to one hundred nursery schools taken from a directory of nursery schools compiled two years previously. Of this number, eleven questionnaires, or over 10 per cent of the total, were returned with the notation that the school was no longer in operation. However, according to the best information available, there were about 370 recognized church-sponsored nursery schools in the United States in 1950.[42] The division of schools among the three major faiths were as follows: Protestant, 194; Roman Catholic, 100; and Jewish, 76.

The majority of these schools were concentrated in a few states. New York led the list with sixty-two schools. New Jersey was second with thirty-two. Four other states

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[42] Clark E. Moustakas and Minnie Berson, Compilers, A Directory of Nursery Schools and Child Care Centers in the United States, (Detroit: The Merrill-Palmer School, 1951), 171 pp.

ranked high in the number of schools. They were: California with twenty-nine; Tennessee and Ohio each with twenty-six; and Illinois with twenty-three. This means that over half, or 53.5 per cent, of the church-sponsored nursery schools of all faiths were concentrated in six states. Twelve states reported no church-sponsored nursery schools.

This general trend was repeated in the distribution of Protestant schools. The six leading states were: Tennessee with twenty-four schools; New York with nineteen; New Jersey with eighteen; Ohio with sixteen; South Carolina with fifteen; and Washington with twelve. Again, the proportion of Protestant church-sponsored schools in the six leading states was 53.5 per cent. There were no Protestant church-sponsored nursery schools in thirteen states.

Of the one hundred Roman Catholic schools recorded, over one-third of them were located in three states. These states were: Illinois and New York each with twelve schools, and Montana with eleven schools.

Thirty of the Jewish schools, or 39.4 per cent of the total number, were located in New York City and environs.

III. SUMMARY

In this chapter the development of the secular nursery school has been traced from its beginning up to the

present day. The nursery schools in England in the early part of the twentieth century were established primarily for the improvement of health, while those in the United States were used in the early days for the purpose of studying child development.

The number of nursery schools in this country increased greatly during the 1930's, when funds for nursery schools to serve needy families were made available by the federal government. Government aid was continued during World War II under the Lanham Act. When federal assistance for nursery schools ended in 1946, many schools closed because of lack of funds, but others continued to operate under the sponsorship of a civic club, or through a mothers' cooperative. At the present time, there is an insufficient number of good secular schools to meet the demands of parents who wish their children to have nursery school training.

The origin and development of church-sponsored nursery schools is not so well known. They have appeared in various places as churches saw the need either of helping working mothers, or of extending their program of Christian education. On the denominational level, it is the consensus of opinion that as yet many of the local churches are not in a position to carry on a weekday program for nursery children. Hence, little has been done to promote church-sponsored schools. However, the policy of most denomina-

tions has been to help those individual churches who wish to organize weekday nursery schools, and to urge constantly that high standards be maintained.

The next chapter concerns itself with the need for nursery schools as shown by the psychology of the preschool child.

CHAPTER III

THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD AND THE NURSERY SCHOOL

I. A PICTURE OF THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD

The child of nursery school age is just emerging from infancy into childhood. He has become an individual; he has developed a personality. Although there is a wide range of individual differences among three-year-olds, there are certain accomplishments and characteristics which describe the average child.

The pre-school child physically. The child of nursery school age has made more rapid strides in physical development during his lifetime than he ever will again during the same brief span of years. He entered the world weighing from six to nine pounds. By the age of three, the normally-developed child weighs about thirty-one pounds,[43] or about four times as much as he weighed at birth. The average three-year-old is about thirty-seven inches tall,[44] or about one and one-half times his original length.

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[43] Marjorie M. Green and Elizabeth L. Woods, A Nursery School Handbook for Teachers and Parents. (Sierra Madre, California: The Sierra Madre Community Nursery School Association, 1948), p. 35.

[44] Loc. cit.

Along with this rapid growth, he has learned many skills. He began life more helpless than any bird or animal, and had to have all of his physical needs met by an adult. Now, he has mastered the elements of self-care, so that he can wash his own face and hands, feed, and dress himself. He has developed from a baby who at birth could not even lift up his head to a child who can stand erect, walk, and run. From an undifferentiated, uncontrolled mass of movements, he has learned muscular control resulting in planned, purposeful movements.

The pre-school child mentally. Mentally his accomplishments are no less spectacular. At birth his mind was undeveloped, and he had no memories stored up. Now, his mind is busy every conscious moment attending, remembering, reasoning, selecting, feeling, willing, striving.[45] His picture of the world is inaccurate, however, because of lack of experience, and his productive imagination needs infinitely careful guidance.

At birth his sole method of communication was crying. By the age of three he has learned the rudiments of a language, so that he has a vocabulary of about two hundred

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[45] Elizabeth Whitehouse, The Children We Teach, (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1950), p. 127.

seventy-two words,[46] and can express himself in three- and four-word sentences.

The pre-school child socially. At birth, the baby knew no social world. His only interest was in himself and the satisfaction of his wants. Although the three-year-old is still basically egocentric, he has developed great curiosity about people and things in his environment, and he spends most of his time exploring and investigating.

He is aware of his peers, and likes to be near children of his own age, but he is more interested in adults than in children, because the adults supply his wants. He loves eagerly, and demands love. He is rapidly developing a sense of independence which is frequently interpreted by his parents as obstinacy.

The pre-school child religiously. Morally and religiously, the young child is an imitator. Up until his fourth year, he acquires his knowledge of right and wrong solely by imitation. His moral habits and attitudes are largely a reflection of that which he finds about him. The child who is reared in a Christian environment may be expected to have a religion characterized by love, trust, and con-

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[46] Josephine C. Foster and Marion L. Mattson, Nursery School Education, (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1939), p. 17.

fidence. The child whose only acquaintance with the names of Deity is to hear them used as oaths may have an attitude of fear, prejudice, hatred, and suspicion toward God.

II. VALUES OF THE NURSERY SCHOOL

Although the idea of nursery education is now widely accepted and approved, there are still many arguments raised against placing the three-year-old, who is just emerging from babyhood, into an educational agency outside his own home.

Objections to nursery school education. There are three major objections raised to nursery school. The first is that the nursery school encroaches on the home. However, the nursery school in no sense takes the place of the home, nor is it expected to do so. It supplements it by providing experiences not possible in the average home, but it does not relieve the home of its responsibility. On the contrary, one of the functions of the nursery school is to make parents more aware of their responsibilities, and to help them in the guidance of their children.

Most nursery schools have three-hour sessions five days per week. In the survey conducted as a part of this study, it was found that over one-half of the nursery schools

reporting had half-day sessions.[47] Thus, the child is able to be at home about twenty-one hours of the day. Only in cases where all day care outside the home is necessary, should the three-year-old be separated from his home and family for more than half a day.

A second objection encountered is that children of such an early age do not need to be educated. This school of thought maintains that all the child needs is to be let alone to develop as nature intended. In practical experience this theory does not obtain, for if left to develop as he will, the child often finds nature and his environment too much for him. Careful guidance is never more important for the proper development of the child than in the pre-school years, because those years lay the foundations for habit formation and character training for all the rest of life.

A more valid objection is the third one. This is the protest that a group situation, such as is found in the nursery school, is over-stimulating for small children. For some children who are over-excitable, this is true, and they should not be placed in a nursery group until steps have been taken to solve this problem. However, in the well-managed nursery school groups are kept small so that chil-

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[47] Cf. infra p. 52.

dren will not become over-stimulated and so that there will be opportunity for individual guidance. The National Association for Nursery Education suggests twenty as a maximum number of children in one group, and specifies that younger children should be in still smaller groups.[48] The Methodist Church recommends fifteen to twenty children as the ideal size of group.[49] The normal child of three or four years needs an opportunity to work and play with his contemporaries, and he will readily adjust to the nursery school situation.

Values to the child. Any nursery school, secular or church-related, can do much for the development of the preschool child. It offers children their earliest opportunity outside the home to live with a group their own age, and thus to develop attitudes toward themselves and others that are basic to their learning to live in a democracy. The preschool teaches the importance of other persons. It helps children to learn to share. This is especially important for children who have no brothers or sisters, or none near their own age. A further contribution is the opportunity

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[48] n. n., Some Ways of Distinguishing a Good Nursery School, (Chicago: National Association for Nursery Education, 1942), unpaged pamphlet.

[49] n. n., Church Sponsored Through-the-Week Nursery Schools and Kindergartens, unpaged.

for the child to increase in self-assertiveness, independence, self-control, and sociability. The activities of the nursery school provide the child with many experiences which could not be duplicated in most homes.

From the standpoint of health, the nursery school offers added opportunity. Almost all states require children to have a thorough health examination by a physician before admission to a nursery school. In addition, many schools have daily inspection by a nurse or other qualified person, and children who show symptoms of illness are sent home until they recover. Making parents aware of illness or physical defects enables them to have these difficulties cared for in their initial stages.

Betts has this to say:

> On the health side, the nursery school has had a most telling influence. Medical opinion is unanimous in saying that a large proportion of physical defects noted in children attending the public school could have been prevented if there had been medical attention during preschool age.[50]

Play is the child's way of life. It is more than mere pastime or recreation. It is the means by which he learns about the world around him. It is the means by which he grows socially, intellectually, and physically. It is as important to the young child as sports, social

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[50] Betts, op. cit., p. 22.

events, and business are to his parents. Yet, many children today are denied the privilege of playmates and plenty of play space. This is true of both the poverty-stricken and the well-to-do. Modern city living ignores the child's need of a place to play. Crowded apartments and small houses have little room for indoor play. Outdoor play is as much, if not more, restricted. The tenement child is forced to play in the street or the alley, while the penthouse child may use the city parks provided he does not walk on the grass.

The nursery school recognizes this need and makes provision for it. It provides plenty of both indoor and outdoor play space. Even the nursery schools located in city skyscrapers have arranged outdoor play space by using rooftops for playgrounds. In the nursery school a child finds plenty of playmates. He finds a variety of carefully-chosen toys which provide entertainment at the same time that they are aiding his development.

All of these benefits may accrue to the child enrolled in any well-managed preschool program. However, the nursery school which is sponsored by a Christian organization is able to add a plus-quality which makes it stand out above the secular schools. These Christian schools not only provide the above-mentioned benefits, but they have a definite religious emphasis. They can make an even greater impact

upon the child than does Sunday School, because most schools meet daily, while Sunday School is a one-day-a-week program. Consecrated staff members through their attitudes and actions can give a religious character to the entire program. Through the use of songs, prayers, and stories, and through practical lessons in daily Christian living, the church-related week-day school can make a profound influence on the religious development of the young child, and can foster his desire for a personal relationship to God. Moreover, by being at church during the week, the child comes to feel at home there, and has opportunity to know his church and minister at an early age. These early good impressions of church stay with an individual all through life.

Values to the home. The nursery school does not substitute for the home. It supplements the home, and attempts to aid parents in the task of rearing their children. This fact was mentioned twelve times in the questionnaires received from nursery schools. Through attending parents' meetings, reading material recommended by the nursery staff, and by observation, parents receive helpful suggestions for more successfully carrying out their responsibility.

Foster and Mattson state that any persons who have close contact with young children influence the home and par-

ents, whether or not they intend to do so.[51] Good health habits, obedience, self-reliance, and other desirable traits acquired at school naturally carry over into the home. Ten schools referred to this fact in their replies.

The Christian influence of the church-sponsored nursery school also carries over into the home. Through personal contacts with the teacher in formal conferences and informal conversations, parents, and in turn, families are reached who would probably not be brought into direct contact with the church in any other way. In the forty-four replies received in this study from nursery schools, four nursery school directors mentioned this aspect of their influence, while one stated that the "carry-over" was not as great as they desired.

Many instances could be cited of how prayers, songs, and Bible stories learned by the children in nursery school influence the home. It has been reported by schools that children who learn table graces and learn to pray in nursery school demand these table graces and morning and evening prayers at home, where previously prayer had not been a custom.

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[51] Foster and Mattson, op. cit., p. 309. Cf. infra p. 60.

Lillian DeLissa gives an example of this:

> One little boy returning from his first week in nursery school taught his "Mummy" how to say her prayers. With his eyes closed and an intent expression upon his face his voice rose and fell as he chanted, "Love, love, love, love. . . ." His mother came to the nursery to discover what it meant. "It didn't mean no sense," she said, "but it made me feel like it was a prayer."[52]

Values to the local church. The program of weekday education contributes to the life of the local church by creating a greater interest in the Sunday program of the church. In the survey of forty-four church-sponsored nursery schools which was conducted as a part of this study, seven reported that the nursery school brought new members into the Sunday School, while fifteen reported that it brought new families into the church. Five mentioned the fact that it was a means of continuing the church's program throughout the week, while four stressed its extension of the church's influence through reaching families with which the church would not otherwise have contact.

Other benefits mentioned by those who replied to the questionnaire were: a closer tie between the church and its organizations; strengthening the tie between church and home; and training workers in nursery education which makes for better teaching in the Sunday program. Two churches

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[52] Lillian DeLissa, op. cit., p. 184.

found that meeting the high standard required for weekday church nursery school equipment and facilities provided excellent facilities for the Sunday nursery class and kindergarten class.

Values to the community. The local church is a part of the community in which it is located. Its responsibility is to serve the community, first in a spiritual capacity, and then in the sense of social, educational, and cultural uplift. A weekday nursery program can do all of these things.

The spiritual influence of the nursery school, and its outreach has already been noted. Its social significance is almost as great, especially in areas where there are underprivileged families. The nursery school in such communities provides love, Christian training, and good care for needy children. Some schools give several tuition scholarships for such children.

Through the education and guidance of both the children and their parents, it helps to raise the community standards. In the words of one nursery school director, the church and its school "becomes a lighthouse in many areas that are semi-blighted."[53] The presence of the nursery

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[53] Gudrun Muller, director, Lutheran Deaconess Day Nursery, 1802 North Fairfield, Chicago, Illinois, personal communication.

school in the community not only educates individual parents to their own responsibility, but it helps to develop a sense of responsibility in the entire community regarding the proper care and attention for young children. This awakening to responsibility helps to prevent delinquency, both of children and parents.

In communities made up of persons from many racial backgrounds, the nursery school can perform other services. It brings together the persons of different nationalities, and helps to break down their prejudices. The children learn to play together. The parents, in bringing their children to the school and attending parents' meetings, become acquainted and learn to appreciate those whose backgrounds differ from their own. In their contacts with friendly, interested leaders of the nursery school, foreign-born parents are helped to learn American ways and to adjust to their new environment.

Every church is interested in having good relations with the community in order that it may advance the work of Christ. The nursery school aids in this respect, according to answers received in the survey of church-sponsored schools. Eight directors reported that the school was looked upon by the church as a community service project. Six mentioned that the citizens themselves regard it as a

community asset, while three stated in more general terms that it fosters community-church relations.

III. SUMMARY

This chapter has given a picture of the preschool child physically, mentally, socially, and religiously, and has endeavored to show how the well-managed nursery school may benefit the three year old child. It has also shown the additional advantages of a Christian nursery school, beyond those offered by the secular school. The values of the church-sponsored school to the child, to the home from which he comes, to the local church, and to the community have also been discussed.

Chapter four contains an evaluation of the forty-four church-sponsored nursery schools which responded to the questionnaire used in connection with this study. These schools were evaluated in the light of standards set up by both secular authorities and authorities in the field of religious education.

CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION OF FORTY-FOUR CHURCH-SPONSORED NURSERY SCHOOLS

I. AIMS AND PURPOSES OF NURSERY SCHOOLS

Certain standards for nursery schools, such as grouping of children, space, health and safety regulations, educational standards for teachers and directors, and housing facilities, apply to both secular and church-sponsored schools. However, in some respects, standards for the two types of schools differ, because of their difference in purpose.

Purposes of secular schools. Authorities in the secular field include a variety of aims and purposes for the nursery school. Owen, an early English writer, stresses social development. She says of the nursery school:

> 1. It creates an environment which the little child can master and feel to be his own.
>
> 2. Children find adult friends who have plenty of time to play with them, answer their questions, and wait for them while they slowly learn to perform all the little duties of their daily life.
>
> 3. It gives the child companionship with children of his own age.[54]

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[54] Owen, op. cit., p. 20.

Foster and Mattson state that the specific aim of the nursery school is to safeguard the health of the child and to promote his physical, mental, social, and emotional development.[55] The Association for Nursery Education of Southern California gives its aim in general terms: "Nursery education provides for the optimal development of children during their preschool years."[56]

Concerning aims, Kellogg writes as follows:

> . . . The purpose of the nursery school is not only to help the child develop his own individual capacities in suitable fashion, but it is also to socialize him -- that is, to teach him to enjoy the company of others and to have others enjoy his company.[57]

An analysis of these aims shows that the concern of secular leaders in the field is for social development, in the main. In none of the examined objectives was there mention of developing moral habits or of developing the child's religious nature.

Aims of the church-sponsored school. While the secular school directs its energies toward the physical, mental, and social development of the child, the church's

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[55] Foster and Mattson, op. cit., p. 4.

[56] Green and Wood, op. cit., p. 133.

[57] Kellogg, op. cit., p. 214.

primary interest should be in the child's religious development. Blankenship says that the ultimate objective of Christian education should govern all of the church's activities in that field:

> The "great objective" toward which the total program of Christian education in the church is directed is "the new person in Jesus Christ." All materials and methods used should be such that work toward the objective. They should seek to lead to the experience of conversion, and also to lead to the growth which comes in a life surrendered to Christ.
>
> In planning for children in terms of their maturing capacity, we shall interpret the "great objective" to mean that our chief task is to lead every pupil to have fellowship with God through an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and to follow the Christlike way of living.[58]

In line with the "great objective", Betts lists the following specific aims for the nursery school:

1. To cultivate in the child a consciousness of the kindly presence of God as a loving Father and Friend.
2. To acquaint the child with the thought of Jesus as the gift of God.
3. To furnish the group situations and activities by means of which the child may learn to adjust himself to others.
4. As a special application of the preceding objective, to help break up or prevent wrong habits that are forming and to establish right ones.
5. To teach young children the spirit and method of helpfulness.

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[58] Lois Blankenship, Our Church Plans for Children, (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1951), pp. 6-7.

> 6. To acquaint the child with the church as a building, a place where he may go and find a pleasant room, attractive playthings, happy activities; and also as a place that tells him stories about God and about Jesus, and teaches him songs and prayers, and finally about the Bible.[59]

Undoubtedly, many in stating objectives, would give a more prominent place to the use of the Bible than does Betts. However, with this modification, these aims could well be adopted for the church nursery school.

Purposes revealed in the survey. In response to the question in the survey, "What is the purpose of the school?", a variety of answers were given. Eleven stated that their purpose was to give preschool training in a Christian environment. Nine said that it was to serve working parents. Seven replied that it was to serve the community, and seven to give experience to the children in group living. There were five who summed up their purpose as the promotion of the emotional, social, mental, and aesthetic development of the preschool child. Three looked at it as an opportunity to promote preschool training. Others gave the following answers: to build character; to provide play space in a crowded city; to provide wholesome, happy care for children requiring it; to keep homes together and help lone parents care for their children; to provide a foundation for Chris-

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[59] Betts, op. cit., pp. 37-41.

tian citizenship; and to serve underprivileged children. It would seem that more schools should have included Christian training in their statement of purpose.

II. STANDARDS FOR NURSERY SCHOOLS

Standards set up for secular schools. Various authors and nursery school associations have compiled standards which they set forth as "measuring sticks" for nursery schools. One set of standards, listing seventeen points on which a nursery school may be judged, has been worked out by the National Association for Nursery Education.[60]

Kellogg has worked out a chart of standards arranged in three columns.[61] The first column lists the basic requirements which must be fulfilled before a school can be opened, and represents a standard below which no school should fall. The second column gives the recommended conditions for public nursery schools; and the third lists the maximum conditions to show at what point there is too much of a good thing.

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[60] National Association for Nursery Education, op. cit., unpaged.

[61] Kellogg, op. cit., pp. 456-72.

In these two lists of standards, the one representative of standards devised by an association of nursery schools, and the other list set up by an individual nursery school authority, no mention is made of an opportunity for religious development of the children, or of moral standards required for the staff. A church-sponsored nursery school should include the high standards set up for teacher training, equipment, housing, and health. However, there will need to be set up certain standards pertaining to its religious emphasis.

Standards related to Christian education. Standards basic for the church-sponsored nursery school include:

1. Each member of the staff should be a Christian who regards the work of guiding young children as a field of Christian service.

2. The governing body of the nursery school should be composed of Christians who recognize the opportunities for Christian education which are presented by the nursery school situation.

3. The entire program should be religious in character. This will mean using opportunities in casual conversation to make children aware of God as a loving Heavenly Father, of Jesus as the gift of God, and of the Bible as God's Word; the use of Bible stories, Christian songs, and

prayers; and grace before meals. Through the example of the staff, the children should be helped to feel reverence for the church and the Bible. They should be helped to feel that they are an important part of the church.

4. Effort should be made to bring the whole family into fellowship with Christ, and with the church. This includes not only the mother, who is most likely the one who brings the child to nursery school and who is most frequently thought of as the parent of the child, but also the father and other members of the family.

Religious emphases found in the survey. The religious emphasis in a school is determined by its aims. If its aims coincide with the "great objective" of Christian education,[62] there will be a strong religious emphasis. If, however, its aims are more closely related to those of the secular nursery schools, there will be less religious emphasis. In the questionnaire no question was asked regarding the religious emphases given in the nursery schools. Such questions were omitted in the survey in order to discover whether those replying would sense its importance.

Several showed through responses and through circulars which they enclosed that there was a definite religious

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[62] Cf. supra, p. 45.

content in their program. In fact, one mentioned as a unique feature the religious nature of the entire program. Sixteen indicated a religious emphasis in either their answers concerning purpose, or their answers concerning the benefits which resulted from their work. Seven mentioned some type of worship service for the children. One church has a fifteen-minute worship service each day in the church sanctuary.[63] Three mentioned the use of prayers, and two spoke of using Bible stories and sacred songs. One commented on the need for more church-centered nurseries, and more trained Christian teachers. By "church-centered" was probably meant "church-sponsored." Two mentioned a Christian experience as a qualification for their teachers. Others indicated their religious emphasis by such comments as the following: "We urge church attendance!" "children are taught the idea of thankfulness"; and "the school helps to develop spiritual awareness."

Eleven made no mention of religion. However, this fact could not be construed to mean that the Christian faith is completely overlooked, since no direct question was asked concerning religious emphasis. Nevertheless, it would seem to indicate that these nursery school leaders do not consider it to be of primary importance.

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[63] Brick Presbyterian Church, New York, N. Y.

Requirements for admission. Almost all states require a physical examination by a physician before a child may be enrolled in a nursery school. Kellogg recommends this, and that a written record of the findings be filed by the school.[64] In eight of the schools surveyed, the physical examination was their only requirement for admission. Six specified age as their only requirement. Three included ability to make satisfactory transportation arrangements among their prerequisites.

Some schools used mental and social development as "measuring sticks". Of the five which included mental development and intelligence, one gave "readiness" tests to applicants for enrollment. Personal interviews were used by some schools. Four based their decision regarding admission on the interview, and whether they felt that the child would fit in with the group.

Those schools which catered to a particular type of clientele had more specific requirements. Economic, social, or emotional need was the basis in four schools. Two enrolled only the children of working mothers, while two others included either children of working mothers or those with economic, social, or emotional needs. In one cooperative

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[64] Kellogg, op. cit., p. 470.

school, only children whose mothers could participate were accepted.

In contrast to these more rigid requirements, five schools listed no requirements, and one school accepted the first thirty applicants. Two schools gave preference to children of church members in the matter of enrollment.

Probably because of the limitation in the number of children who may be admitted, the church-sponsored schools are in a position to set up more exacting requirements than the secular schools, who usually make no specifications except for age and a health examination. The Methodist Church suggests that registration be open to members of the church first, then after a specified time, to the public.[65] They also suggest the requirement of a doctor's certificate regarding the child's health, and a signed statement from the parents indicating their willingness to cooperate with the school.

Length of sessions. The forty-four nursery schools reporting were about equally divided between half-day and full-day sessions. Twenty-five schools had half-day sessions. Of this group, twenty met five days per week, while one school met two mornings each week. Two met three mornings

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[65] n. n., Church Sponsored Through-the-Week Nursery Schools and Kindergartens, unpaged.

per week. One school which operated five days per week enrolled children for three, four, or five days per week.

One school had sessions for nursery children in the morning, and kindergartners in the afternoon. This suggests a solution to the church which would like to provide weekday classes for both groups, while still operating on a small budget, or with a limited amount of space. The same teachers and room space could be used for both groups. A variation of this plan was found in another church which held two duplicate half-day sessions for nursery children, thus making it possible to accomodate twice as many children in the same amount of space.

Among the schools reporting, nineteen had full-day sessions. Many of these served children of employed mothers, or children from homes where there was an economic problem. Sixteen of these schools operated five days per week. Two had sessions six days per week, and one reported six and one-half days of nursery school. It is reasonable to assume that this figure includes the Sunday morning session of the nursery class.

Finances. The Methodist Church makes the following suggestions for meeting the finances of the nursery school:

> Most churches charge a small tuition fee for each child. The amount varies from about $6.00 to $12.00 per month. It is usually payable a month in advance.

> This money simply helps with expenses. The church kindergarten or nursery school is not operated for profit. Often the tuition cares for the salaries and teaching supplies and the church furnishes light, water, and heat. Sometimes classes or other church groups give a scholarship to a worthy child who could otherwise not attend.[66]

A wide variation was found in the amount of tuition charged by schools. Of the twenty-five half-day schools reporting, only three were not self-supporting. Among the half-day schools operating five days per week, the tuition ranged from twenty cents to $1.71 per day. The median figure for tuition was eighty-two cents per day. The average tuition for this group was eighty-seven cents per day.

The tuition rates suggested by the Methodist Church are between thirty and sixty cents per day. Only four of the schools surveyed charged sixty cents or less per day. In view of those facts, it would seem that it is necessary to charge slightly higher tuition than that suggested by the Methodist Church, unless the nursery school is subsidized by the church.

The average tuition for the full-day schools was $1.20 per day. The rates for full days would necessarily be higher since children must be served a nourishing lunch at noon. Also, a staff working all day must be paid higher wages than one which works only half-days. The median

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[66] Ibid.

tuition was $1.40, with rates ranging from thirty cents to $2.50 per day. Five of the schools which operate all day did not give their tuition rates, but stated that they used a sliding scale based on the family's ability to pay. Only six of the full-day schools were self-supporting. This can be explained by the fact that these schools have, in the main, children from low-income families which are unable to pay tuition rates high enough to cover all the expenses.

Enrollment and attendance. The enrollment in the schools reporting ranged from fifteen to eighty-seven. The median figure for the forty-three schools which reported their enrollment was 39. The average enrollment reported was 41.3 pupils.

Of the thirty-nine nursery schools which reported their average attendance, the mean was 34.2. The median was 31, with attendance in the schools ranging from ten to seventy-five.

Teacher-pupil ratio. Kellogg recommends for nursery schools an over-all teacher-pupil ratio of one teacher to eight pupils.[67] The National Association for Nursery Education suggests one teacher for not more than ten children.[68]

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[67] Kellogg, op. cit., p. 468.

[68] National Association for Nursery Education, op. cit., unpaged.

The range in teacher-pupil ratio for the nursery schools surveyed varied from one teacher for four children to one for nineteen children. The median figure for the forty-one schools answering this question was one teacher for 10 pupils. The arithmetic mean was one teacher for 10.3 children. Sixteen schools showed a ratio higher than the recommended ratio of one to ten. According to this standard 36 per cent of the schools were understaffed.

Qualifications for teachers. In the matter of qualifications for teachers, the nursery schools surveyed showed lower standards than in any other category examined. Eighteen schools used only teachers with college degrees. Of this number, ten schools required that the teacher have specialized training either in nursery school or in early childhood education. Two schools preferred college graduates, but would accept teachers having some college work. State certification of the teachers was the qualification listed by seven. These three categories of qualifications accounted for twenty-seven of the schools, or 61 per cent of the total number.

The remaining 39 per cent of the schools had much lower standards for their teachers. For ten of them, the only requirement listed was experience with the age-group. Seven of the questionnaires did not state any qualifications

or else gave answers which were too vague to classify. Only two of the schools specified that the teachers should be Christians.

The National Association for Nursery Education in its recommendations for teacher qualifications states that the teachers should be specifically prepared to teach in nursery school, that the preparation should have been secured in an approved teacher education institution, and that the teacher should have had supervised student teaching.[69] Kellogg lists a number of personal characteristics along with a college degree for teachers.[70] According to the qualifications set up by these authorities, the standards of seventeen of the schools surveyed were too low. The inability of many church-sponsored nurseries to pay top wages may be one reason why some of them have been satisfied to employ teachers who were not well-qualified. A second reason may be that not all of the churches are aware of the importance of employing an expert for the task. In the minds of some leaders, there may still lurk the idea that anyone who is fond of small children is qualified to teach them.

It is nothing short of appalling to find that only two of the nursery schools who replied to the questionnaire

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[69] Loc. cit.

[70] Kellogg, op. cit., p. 467.

require that the teachers be Christians. The teacher is the greatest factor in the success or failure of the nursery school. If the teacher is not a Christian, she will have little, if any, interest in the Christian training of her pupils. Even if she attempts to introduce Bible stories and prayers into the daily program because it seems the thing to do, they may have little influence, for young children are quick to detect insincerity in adults. One of the basic requirements for every worker with children in a church-sponsored nursery school should be that the individual be a Christian.

Method of recruiting children. That the best method of advertising is satisfied customers was borne out in the replies to the question concerning the methods used to recruit children for the nursery school. Twenty-two, or one-half, of the schools used no advertising. Of this number, fifteen reported that they had a waiting list of pupils. One school which did advertise reported a waiting list. Eleven schools reported that their advertising was done by word of mouth, which is equivalent to no special advertising on the part of the school.

Among the schools that did advertise, a number of methods were used. Announcements in the church bulletin were used by six schools; and six advertised in the local newspaper. Other methods of advertising mentioned were: catalog or brochure, sign on the church, radio announcements,

letters to mothers of pre-school children in the neighborhood; canvassing; posters; and a parade and festival by the children. Although using a catalog or brochure for recruitment purposes was mentioned only twice, many of the schools surveyed publish attractive brochures which should aid considerably in helping people to get acquainted with the nursery school.

Parent-school relations. Kellogg, whose philosophy of education is child-centered, keeps parental contacts to a minimum. This is borne out in her statement regarding the relationships of the nursery school to parents.

> Parents need to be told in writing of the school's rules and regulations which apply to them. This is best done through parent bulletins which can be typed, mimeographed, or printed. Subjects to be covered are: auspices of the school, fees, rates, date of payment, refunds for absence, hours of school service, health regulations, names of staff members, and other information or suggestions that are of interest to parents.[71]

She feels that nursery schools are not in a position to undertake parent education. On this subject, she says:

> For nursery schools of the type we are discussing only incidental teacher help to parents is commendable, and parent education should be left to other agencies for these reasons: teachers have neither the time nor the qualifications to conduct organized parent education; parent groups seldom have the homogeneity needed for group education; when teachers teach both parents and children relations become too involved and conflict-

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[71] Kellogg, op. cit., p. 324.

> ing; special staff for parent education is costly, is not easily integrated into the nursery school, and functions better from a base of adult education; the most fundamental parent education needs to be done before the child reaches the nursery school age; and the nursery school, having not yet solved its own basic problems, cannot take on such a large additional order as parent education.[72]

However, the subject of parent education is not one which can be lightly dismissed. Foster and Mattson state that all teachers of young children are engaging in some type of parent education.

> The question, "Does your nursery school engage in parent education?" can receive nothing but an affirmative answer. Intentionally or not, any person who has close contact with young children will have an influence upon the parents of those children, will in other words be "educating" them. Some of this education will be good; some will be mediocre; some, unfortunately, will be poor. But education of one sort or another there will be. The questions to be decided are: "To what degree shall the school try to change the parents' attitudes?" and "What methods shall be used?"[73]

They suggest many types of parent education which may be used by the nursery school. These include: social meetings; actual participation of parents by using mothers as helpers, or letting parents furnish transportation for the children; work nights to make things for the school, and paint or repair toys and equipment; visits to the school for observation; parent conferences; study groups; lectures and reading matter for parents; exhibits; and informal parent-teacher contacts.[74]

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[72] Ibid., p. 320.

[73] Foster and Mattson, op. cit., p. 309.

[73] Loc. cit.

The National Association for Nursery Education takes a view similiar to that of Foster and Mattson, and would consider parents as well as children. They recommend parents' meetings, counselling, occasional use of parents as helpers, and welcoming parents to observe, discuss policies, or make suggestions.[75]

Many of these ideas could be adopted by the church-sponsored nursery school, and could be used with a Christian emphasis. Magazines, leaflets, or mimeographed material relating to Christian education in the home could be distributed to parents. One of the most important means of parent education for the Christian nursery school is the contact of the parents with the Christian teacher through casual meetings when bringing the child to school, or through conferences of a more formal nature. The skilled teacher will use these opportunities to present the child's need for a Christian home, and the parents' need of Christ and the church to help them in becoming better parents.

Although no question regarding parent education was asked in the survey, many made reference to it in their replies. It was discovered by comments made in the questionnaires that at least seven of the nursery schools had par-

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[75] National Association for Nursery Education, op. cit., unpaged.

ents' meetings, and three had mothers' clubs. Two of the schools had family parties at the church. News sheets were sent to the homes by two of the nursery schools. One school had a weekly radio program geared to the parents' level, and aimed at adult or parent education. Many indicated that they counselled with parents when the need arose.

Actual participation of parents in the nursery school was found less frequently than attempts at constructive parent education. One of the schools replying was a cooperative school conducted entirely by parents. One school had a mothers' council which helped to decide the policies of the school. Mothers in one of the schools helped through the mothers' club by making things to be used in the nursery school.

The only question asked in the survey which related to parents' participation was, "Are mothers used as helpers?" This brought thirty-six negative answers. The following affirmative answers were given: yes, two; occasionally, two; only in emergencies and for extras, two; often, one; and as secretary and to assist, one.

Both in the answers to the questionnaire and in published materials regarding parent-school relationships, it was apparent that most authorities and nursery school directors think only of the mother as the parent of the nursery school child. Most authors in referring to parents use the

pronoun, "she," indicating that they do not recognize the important part of the father in rearing a child. While the mother will most likely be the one to bring the child to nursery school, the school should seek to work with both parents, not just with the mothers. Fathers should be included in parents' meetings, conferences, work nights, and social meetings. Some fathers may be able to participate in other ways, such as in providing transportation for the children.

Health inspection. One of the aims of a good nursery school is to improve the health of its pupils. Besides a thorough physical examination before entrance, it is important to inspect the children upon arrival each morning. Those showing signs of illness should be sent home until they recover. This is recommended by both Kellogg[76] and the National Association for Nursery Education.[77] The schools in the survey rated high on this point. Of the forty-four schools in the survey, 38 provided health inspection. Of the remaining six schools, two had inspection at the beginning of the year; one had an examination before entrance and at mid-year by a physician; and three had no health inspection at all.

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[76] Kellogg, op. cit., p. 470.

[77] National Association for Nursery Education, op. cit., unpaged.

Religious and racial tolerance. In answer to the question, "Are children of all faiths and national backgrounds accepted?", thirty-seven schools replied in the affirmative. Four schools accepted no negro children. These four schools were located in Maryland, Missouri, and New Jersey. One school reported that it accepted all faiths, but not all races. Two of the schools questioned were primarily negro centers, and had no white children enrolled.

Unique or unusual features found. As a group, the nursery schools reporting showed a great deal of originality and many individual differences. Directors and teachers in the various schools have evidently adapted their programs to meet the particular needs of the group they serve.

The nursery schools in underprivileged communities have done much in the area of social service, and in the improvement of health. Many of these schools indicated that they furnished cod liver oil to the children. One school gave the children sun lamp treatments.

A nursery school in the heart of a large industrial city accepted children who did not speak English, and helped them to learn the language. Three schools reported that they accepted physically handicapped children. Others mentioned the fact of meeting a need for a particular type of nursery school, such as being the only non-profit nursery

school in the city; the only church-sponsored nursery school; or the only one meeting three days per week.

Other unusual features reported which show ingenuity and originality were: a commencement program at the close of the year, an attractive news sheet about nursery school happenings, homemade equipment, and continuous in-service training for teachers.

III. SUMMARY

In this chapter the aims and purposes of both secular and church-sponsored nursery schools have been discussed. It has been shown that since the aims of these two types of schools are different, their philosophy of pre-school education is different. This, in turn, means that in certain respects their standards for nursery education differs.

From facts discovered in the survey of forty-four church-sponsored nursery schools, an evaluation of these schools was made, judging them in the light of secular standards and standards for religious education. The following factors as found in the schools surveyed have been discussed: religious emphases; requirements for admission; length of sessions; finances; enrollment and attendance; teacher-pupil ratio; qualifications for teachers; method of recruiting pupils; parent-school relationships; health

inspection; religious and racial tolerance; and unique or unusual features found in individual nursery schools.

The following chapter contains the summary of the thesis and the conclusions reached as a result of the study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It was the purpose of this study (1) to discover the values of the church-sponsored nursery school to the child, the family, the church, and the community; and (2) to evaluate the work being done by church-sponsored nursery schools by measuring them against the standards for nursery schools set up by leaders in the secular field and in the field of religious education. The survey included about one-fifth of the nursery schools in the United States which are sponsored by Protestant churches. From the results of this survey a number of conclusions have been formed.

There appear to be two distinct types of nursery schools under church auspices. The one type, which is of a philanthropic nature, is found chiefly in large cities. Such schools are usually located in areas where there is economic need and where many mothers are employed outside the home. Most of the nursery schools of this type are in session for a full day. Tuition rates are low, and the schools are subsidized either by the sponsoring organization, or by funds from the local Community Chest or a similiar philanthropic organization.

The other type of nursery school serves its own church membership as well as the surrounding neighborhood. These

schools usually are conducted for half a day, and are an extension of the Sunday morning nursery class. Most of these schools charge sufficient tuition to make them self-supporting. This type of school is found most frequently in large churches whose membership is in the upper middle-class economically.

For the most part, the nursery schools are well-staffed, as far as numbers are concerned. However, about one-half of the schools had too low educational standards for their teachers.

On the part of some schools, there seems to be a lack of emphasis on Christian education. These schools apparently have failed to make their aims, and thus their programs, any different from well-managed secular schools. Unless churches make their nursery schools a vital part of their program of Christian education, and unless there is a definite Christian emphasis, the nursery school in the church fails to justify its existence. Other schools indicated by their replies to the questionnaire that their aims and objectives were in line with the "great objective" of Christian education.

A number of needs in the field of church nursery schools is apparent. Among many people, there is almost complete ignorance regarding any type of preschool education. Even more widespread is the ignorance of the opportunity for

the local church in preschool education. There is a need for more material to be written on the subject, both to acquaint the public with nursery schools in general, and to point out the advantages of a church-sponsored school. Secondly, there is a need for more material to be written for leaders in Christian education. The challenge and opportunity of nursery school work should be presented, and the methods for establishing and conducting a Christian nursery school should be shown.

As seen by the fact that many church-sponsored schools have waiting lists of prospective pupils, and that in a number of states there are no church-sponsored schools at all, there is need for more nursery schools to be started by churches which are able to maintain high standards. Also needed is a greater degree of stability among the schools. A nursery school should not be established unless there is reasonable certainty that it can be continued as a permanent part of the church's program.

The greatest need among the schools which already exist is for more well-trained Christian teachers. The field of nursery education is a highly specialized one, and there are a limited number of people who are well-trained in the field. However, the much higher quality of work which can be done by well-trained teachers makes this demand for training essential. It is to be hoped that among Christian

young people, there will be seen the opportunity for Christian service through this work with young children, and that more young people will prepare themselves for preschool education work.

Besides the evaluation of the nursery schools surveyed, the thesis has included a study of the values of preschool education in general, and the additional advantages provided by the church-sponsored nursery school. The study has also included a sketch of the history of the development of secular and church-sponsored nursery schools.

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APPENDIX

SURVEY OF CHURCH-SPONSORED WEEKDAY NURSERIES

Name of school_____ Address_____

Sponsoring organization_____ Name of person in charge_____

No. enrolled__ Average daily attendance__ Ages of children__

No. of days per week school is operated_____

Is tuition charged?_____ How much?_____

Other methods of financing_____

No. of trained workers_____ No. of untrained workers_____

Are mothers used as helpers?_____

Is health inspection provided?_____

Method of recruiting children_____

Requirements for enrollment_____

Are children of all faiths and national backgrounds accepted?_____ What is the purpose of the school?_____

_____

Brief outline or description of daily program

What features of the school do you consider unique?_____

_____

What values or contributions do you feel the school is making
(1) to the child?

(2) to the home from which the child comes?

(3) to the church?

(4) to the community?

Comments_____