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Editorial ✠

To some it may seem a bit late in the day to urge that the family and family life are important in the training of Christian children. Others may feel that Oscar E. Feucht's article on the place of the family in the educational work of the church is unnecessary, as though Lutheran families have known this all along and have acted accordingly. There may be still a third group which will see in the publication of this material another part of a conspiracy to downgrade parochial school education, especially as its objectives have to do with the imparting of the faith. All readers are assured that the latter is decidedly not the case, since the article is in no way an indictment of parochial schools or of parish education.

Life must always be joined to faith wherever adults are engaged in the delicate, important, and always joyous endeavor of speaking and living Christ to and before the young.

The article brings to mind a statement made to us years ago by a Lutheran father who said that he would always be a strong supporter of the Christian day school, because he knew of no better way to "unload" (his own word) the job of religious education on people who could do it better than he. He added that the job of religious education was not really his in the first place. Thus he was abdicating his duties toward his children, turning them over to the parochial school, and refusing to involve himself personally in the interior spiritual life of his children.

It seems Christian people must always be learning that the primary responsibility of spiritual education, that which Feucht calls Christian nurture, which is much more than just the imparting of knowledge (the noetic), rests on fathers and mothers. Conversely, part of that parental responsibility is to make use of the educational ministry which the church provides outside the home. A wise employment of these media will help parents discover what weaknesses exist in the church's program of education and will help to correct them. We believe that this interlacing of the task and its performance and its evaluation on the part of both family and school can only be enriching, deepening, and constructive for all people involved.

On the other hand, Feucht's article suggests that the church can render yeoman service in helping parents perform the assigned task competently. Perhaps parental education is as important as the education of children and adolescents. We know of very few Lutheran parishes where adult education is carried on, systematically and massively, apart from the Sunday services. Occasionally one hears of a "school of life" or "university of life" sponsored by a parish or a group of parishes and aimed specifically at adults, even more pointedly at parents. It is in this context that the article merits careful reading by all concerned with the education of the young.

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