

GOD-PLEASING POLICIES REGARDING OUR PUPILS  
WHO ARE MEMBERS OF OTHER CHURCHES

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"God-pleasing Policies Regarding Our Pupils Who are Members of Other Churches." This title is the one selected by the Board for Parish Education for this paper, which will attempt to lead us to understand on the basis of Scripture what our position must be toward children in our schools who are not of our fellowship. The question seems to have surfaced especially as it affects these children singing with their class in our worship services. I think, however, our discussion will have to face an even more basic question: Do children who are active members of other churches belong in our schools at all?

A partial list of the issues related to our topic will, I'm sure, convince you of its complexities and explosive potential. For involved in this study are our church fellowship principles, the nature of the call, proselytizing, the question whether organist, soloists and choirs are "leading in worship," the scope of Christ's mission command, the question when does a church cease being Christian, and the implications of Peter's words to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." A key question will be: Where does proper mission interest end and unionism begin?

The basic difficulty in determining God-pleasing policies regarding pupils who are members of other churches is that we find two clear Scriptural principles bumping together. On the one hand, we have God's fellowship policies which command us to keep our confession pure by avoiding those who persistently hold to false doctrine and by avoiding any activities which give the impression that doctrinal unity exists where it doesn't. On the other hand, we have the Lord's mission commission, our marching orders for this lifetime: "Go, make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." With these words God commands us to reach out to all with the Gospel, with the goal of leading them to a full understanding of what God has said and done. I'm sure we find ourselves in complete agreement with these clear Scriptural principles. The problem comes when we seek in a practical way to apply them in the specific situation of pupils who are members of other churches.

In this paper I propose to study first, THE SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP; then THE SCOPE OF CHRIST'S MISSION COMMAND; and finally THE WAY THESE APPLY IN OUR CHRISTIAN DAY SCHOOLS.

### THE SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Anyone who has been a part of our Wisconsin Synod for any time at all is aware that the issue of Church Fellowship has been the basis for much discussion and study in our midst. It was primarily this issue that led to our break with Missouri, and it is a consciousness of the Scriptural principles

of fellowship which distinguishes us from nearly all church bodies in this ecumenical age.

Just what are those Scriptural principles?

Through faith in the Savior we are united with our God and made a part of His intimate family. "For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3: 26-27) This saving faith at the same time unites us in an intimate bond with all other true believers. The Galatians passage we just read continues: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (v. 28) This is the oneness we have as members together in the Una Sancta, the invisible Holy Christian Church.

Faith in our hearts has to show, however. And so believers find themselves engaged in activities which spring from faith -- prayer, worship, use of the Means of Grace. The Holy Spirit leads us to seek and make use of opportunities to express our faith jointly with others -- for mutual strengthening and for public witnessing.

Such joint expression of faith by believers may take various forms -- pulpit fellowship, altar fellowship, prayer fellowship, fellowship in worship or mission work, fellowship in educational or charitable undertakings. Scripture, however, makes no distinction between the various kinds of fellowship activities. All are essentially one and the same thing -- church fellowship. In fact, Scripture sees fellowship even in such apparently innocent gestures as greeting one another with a fraternal kiss (Rom. 16:16) or showing hospitality in your home and wishing "God speed." (II John 10-11)

We are to practice church fellowship and work for it. For it is the Lord's desire that His church on earth be one. In His high-priestly prayer, Jesus prayed: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; That they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me." (John 17:20-21) Notice why He desires that unity: "that the world may believe that You have sent Me." Disunity and conflicts in doctrine within the Christian Church can't help but do harm to the cause of Christ in the eyes of the world. A truly united visible church would be a much more powerful witness to the truth of Christ.

The Lord clearly states, however, what must be the basis of any God-pleasing unity: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (I Cor. 1:10) God-pleasing unity comes when "all speak the same thing" because they "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." True unity comes when the Holy Ghost has led us to oneness in faith and confession. It is clear from Scripture that true unity has

to encompass all matters about which Scripture speaks: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (II Tim. 3:16) "For I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Rev. 22: 18-19)

Since God alone can see the heart and the faith there, the visible church has only one basis on which to judge unity or lack of it -- namely the confession a person makes. In other words, we can only go by what he says he believes and by what he shows to be his belief through the visible church body he chooses to join. As Paul wrote: "If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 8: 9-10) Where a study of one's confession shows a oneness of faith with us, we should rejoice in our unity and fellowship together for our mutual strengthening.

When an assessment of one's faith and confession reveals that he is not in full harmony with our God-given convictions, drawn from the Bible, one of two reasons may be behind it -- either a weakness of faith and understanding or else a persistent adherence to false doctrine.

The Bible says we all are weak in one way or another. Paul admitted about himself: "I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3: 10-14 NIV) Weakness, therefore, is not of itself reason to refuse or terminate church fellowship. In fact, we are commanded to do exactly the opposite: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men." (I Thess. 5:14) "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. 6:1-2) Through faithful preaching of the Gospel, we are to seek to build up the weak in faith, so they may find in Christ the strength to overcome their weakness and error.

Scripture makes it clear, however, that such patient working with the weak has a limit. We cannot continue indefinitely to treat as weak brethren those who insist on hold-

ing to false doctrine and practice. A refusal or a termination of fellowship becomes necessary as testimony to the seriousness of their error and for their preservation of our Scriptural purity.

The passages are clear and numerous that tell us to avoid any spiritual dealings with those who promote false doctrine and to avoid any action which could give them encouragement in their error. Listen to some of the passages: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you that that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:8-9) "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." (Mt. 7:15-19) "Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." (Mt. 16:6) "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away." (II Tim. 3:5) "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; For he that bids him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (II John 10-11) "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good works and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Rom. 16:17-18) "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness...from such withdraw yourself." (I Tim. 6:3-5)

It is necessary for us to sever our bonds with those who teach and believe falsely because one error is bound to produce others. As Paul says: "A little leaven leavens the whole lump." (Gal. 5:9) We must sever fellowship also because the toleration of a recognized falsehood is a denial of divine truth which fosters indifference and tends to undermine the entire truth. Jesus was pointing to this when He said: "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathers not with Me scatters abroad." (Mt. 12:30)

The Scriptural principles of church fellowship are quite clear then --

- 1.) We are to seek and encourage fellowship and oneness within the visible church.
- 2.) God-pleasing unity, however, can only be on the basis of oneness in faith and confession.
- 3.) Christian love will move us to patience and concern in dealing with Christians who demonstrate a weakness in faith and understanding.
- 4.) Persistent adherence to impenitence or false doctrine will force us finally to terminate all fellowship activities because they might encourage the person in his error and dilute our God-pleasing testimony.

THE SCOPE OF CHRIST'S MISSION COMMAND

The second major Scriptural doctrine which we must weigh as we consider the God-pleasing policies regarding our pupils who are members of other churches is the scope of Christ's mission command.

The all-encompassing scope of God's call of salvation is self-evident. "God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."(I Tim.2:4) That's why He told us: "Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations...." (Mt.28:19) "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."(Mk.16:15) That's why He said to the Disciples: "You shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and you shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."(Acts1:8)

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom.3:23) Because all men are condemned sinners, all need desperately to hear the Good News that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."(II Cor. 5:19) All need desperately to be told: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and your house."(Acts16:31) All men need this message because there's no other way for sinners. Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes unto the Father, but by Me."(John 14:6)

Saving faith in Jesus Christ is the only hope for condemned sinners. Such saving faith embraces an acceptance of who Jesus Christ is -- the true Son of God, conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. Saving faith embraces an understanding of what He did -- perfectly fulfilled God's righteous demands for us and sacrificed Himself to pay our guilt. Saving faith embraces a reliance on the Holy Scriptures as a full and reliable revelation of God's way of salvation.

To give clear and uncompromising testimony to God's Good News in Jesus Christ is our task and our privilege. It's also our burning passion because we know the eternal doom of those who do not hear and accept that testimony. As Christian missionaries, whether pastors, teachers, or laymen, we cannot let anything get in the way of this, our fundamental reason for existing as Christians. And certainly this is the fundamental reason we open Christian Day Schools, too, to firmly ground youngsters in the saving Word -- both the youngsters of our congregation and any others we have the privilege of instructing.

But are there any Scriptural curbs or restrictions placed on our zeal to preach the Gospel to everyone everywhere? A study of Scripture shows that some restrictions are indeed to be found.

In Acts 20:28, we read: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers...." Pastors and teachers of the Gospel are called by God Himself into specific fields of labor. The shepherd is not called to shepherd the whole flock of Christ, but rather that portion over which the Holy Ghost has

placed him. We firmly believe that God determines the place where the preacher is to preach and the teacher is to teach. Through the call, He determines the field and scope of one's work. And it's that call which makes us a pastor or teacher.

In the same way Peter speaks of feeding "the flock of God which is among you," (I Peter 5:2) The NIV captures the Greek better with its translation: "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care." Again shepherds are spoken of as having a special or particular realm of activity and particular sheep whom they are to shepherd.

Again in Hebrews 13:17, the Lord speaks of spiritual rulers as ones who will be called to give account for the souls entrusted to their care. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

Paul writes in Romans of his concern not to build on another's foundation, but rather to lay foundations where no Christian Church existed. "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation; But as it is written, To whom He was not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand." (15:20-21) The Christians in Rome were believers of Paul's fellowship, otherwise he wouldn't have written them the way he did in this letter. For some time Paul had desired to visit them and "be filled with your company," he says -- but his calling to preach to the Gentiles who hadn't heard of Christ detained him. Soon, Paul felt, as he traveled to Spain, he'd be able to pay them a visit. "For I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company." (v.24) The implication is clearly that Paul considered this stop in Rome a side-trip and occasion for mutual encouragement -- his real work was to get on to Spain in fulfillment of his call.

Later from his prison-cell in Rome, Paul wrote the Philippians: "And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will; the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds; But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." (1:14-18) While the motives behind the preaching of some of Paul's "brethren in the Lord" were clearly wrong, Paul was unwilling to publicly call them down. Rather, he rejoiced that the substance of the Gospel was preached -- even if by those seemingly unworthy of their pastorates.

The passages we have just read forbid any attempt on our part to entice away members from another congregation within our fellowship -- when they are fully and faithfully being served by that congregation (sheepstealing). It is clearly wrong, too, to interfere in a brother's pastorate, except by virtue of one's authority as a district official or visitor

These passages also apply in a more general way to proselytizing -- which is defined as "visiting members of a Christian congregation of another denomination with the intention of persuading them to leave that congregation and denomination." If the Word of God is being preached and the sacraments are being administered in that congregation or denomination, then the identifying marks of the Holy Christian Church are present and we know that the Church must be there. As God puts it, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." (Rom. 10:17) With regard to such churches and denominations we can take comfort from God's promises: My word "shall not return unto Me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it," (Is. 55:11) "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Mt. 18:20) We must never forget that the Gospel "is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16) or that the Word is "the sword of the Spirit." (Eph. 6:17)

In fact, God assures us that, even if there occur a total corruption of the public ministry, still the Gospel will have its effect. "Don't you know what the Scripture says of Elijah? how he makes intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed Your prophets and digged down Your altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what says the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." (Rom. 11:2-5)

We need to remember, too, with regard to the visible church, that the Bible speaks of true churches and false churches. But both are part of the Church because saving faith is found in each. The Galatians, for example, are called "churches" (Gal. 1:2), and Paul writes to them in loving concern -- even though grave errors were in their midst (v. 6-7). These Christians were erring through weakness and lack of understanding, but their faith still rested in the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ.

Considering the Lord's injunction to us to watch the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made us overseers, considering Paul's hesitancy to interfere in areas outside of his specific call, and considering God's working wherever the Means of Grace are in use, we must conclude that God does not give us freedom to intrude into the flocks of other shepherds who are administering the Word and sacraments -- even if mixed with error.

We must give clear and unwavering testimony to the truth, but not in a way that undermines the proclamation. The Jesuits' "The end justifies the means" is not the Lord's way. The urgency of the Gospel's message dare never be excuse to overlook God's divinely-inspired "let all things be done decently and in order." But rather whenever God gives opportunity we will give our testimony. In our worship services, including such choice occasions as weddings, funerals, baptisms, we will let the Good News of Salvation ring out. We will prepare meaty materials for distribution in neighborhood canvasses or to mail visitors at our services. We will seek opportunities

by means such as radio broadcasts or newspaper ads that say something.

And whenever a blood-bought soul comes to us -- by visiting our service or making a phone call or through an opening in a canvass -- whenever one comes to us, we must speak. "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." (I Pet. 3:15) When we are asked, "we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:20) We must witness to the truth, pulling no punches when the truth is at stake. Jesus called a Pharisee a Pharisee and a hypocrite a hypocrite. When God gives us the opportunity, we will fearlessly give witness to the hope that is in us. And bearing in mind the sorry state of doctrine in most churches today, we probably will be more ready and quick to speak out than maybe was considered proper in a more Bible-believing time in the past. We shouldn't find much trouble in handling these situations either, if we always remember that our purpose is not to gather another soul into our congregation but rather to help another soul see God's Truth.

It should be emphasized, too, that any Scriptural limitation with regard to members of other churches applies only to Christian churches. It is certainly God-pleasing to seek to win members of non-Christian churches, such as Unitarians, Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, etc. Since these churches deny the Trinity and Jesus Christ as the only way to salvation, what trace of God's Word and sacraments is to be found there has been emptied of all meaning. Members of such churches are heathen and doomed to damnation. They are the lost that we are commanded to evangelize.

We can safely conclude then--

- 1.) God's mission command is limited only by this one restriction: We do not have the God-given right to actively pursue members of other Christian churches where the Word and sacraments are being regularly used.
- 2.) We, however, have every right, and indeed the duty, to witness to the truth whenever God gives us the opportunity, whenever He leads others in their search for spiritual truth to seek assistance from us.

#### THE WAY THESE PRINCIPLES APPLY IN OUR CHRISTIAN DAY SCHOOLS

Christ's mission command says: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Mt. 28:19-20) The congregation's task is two-pronged: to nurture its members with the Gospel and the teachings of Christ and to reach out to those who have not as yet responded to God's grace in Christ. This should be the two-pronged aim of the school, too -- and indeed of all the congregation's undertakings.

In this regard, in the studies I made of admission policies to Lutheran elementary schools in our Synod and in the Missouri Synod, I found virtual agreement on the part of nearly all writers. It was fully agreed by all that children

of our own members must be our first priority. These children are the primary reason for the congregational school. I found agreement also that the second priority should be true mission prospects. This would include children whose parents are members of no church and those who are nominally members of a church but are clearly inactive. Since the great majority of people are more inclined to claim to be "Baptist" or "Methodist" than to write "Nothing," it is essential that an interview of some sort be held between the parents and the principal or pastor, in order to determine which children and families could be considered unchurched and so mission prospects. Our concern in enrolling those with no regular church of their own is that children, who otherwise would be receiving little or no Scriptural training, will now be instructed in God's Word.

All admission policies I have seen list children who are members of other churches as their last priority. One writer justified it this way: "We know that they are being educated and trained in the educational agencies of their church." While all policies I saw permitted the enrollment of children from other churches, in general two requirements were made of such families:

1. The parents must agree to full Lutheran training for their children. And in some cases were added the words: "and not to undermine it at home."
2. The parents must agree to some form of informational indoctrination in the Lutheran Church for themselves, taught by the pastor. For it is only right and logical that parents examine the religious teachings of the Lutheran school to see if they are willing to have their children taught that religion.

(One Missouri Synod writer suggested another requirement: "The children will conduct themselves as becomes Christian children so that...they will present no menace to the spiritual welfare of the other children.")

Ideally only non-members who agree to requirements 1 and 2 above should be permitted in our schools. And such non-members, even though they might consider themselves members elsewhere, could properly be considered mission prospects because they approached us to enroll their children and they stated their desire to learn from us more fully -- for themselves and their children -- what the Bible teaches. These would be mission openings we could seize without any qualms about it.

We have Scriptural problems, however, with those parents who are active and committed members of other Christian churches and are unwilling to agree to requirements 1 and 2. These, I feel, are outside of the purpose of our school. It certainly would violate the Scriptural principles against proselytizing for us to actively solicit the enrollment of such children. Moreover, there is no way you could be doing anything less in the classroom than proselytizing the children-- because all our training is to instruct and convince our pupils of God's truth as we believe it in the Lutheran Church. In addition, the mere presence of such children in our school would seem to violate Scriptural fellowship principles, for their enrollment could easily be taken as support of the unionistic idea that "the differences between the churches

aren't all that important -- as long as they're getting a 'Christian' education." And it would seem hard to justify their enrollment on the basis of weakness of faith and understanding when they have adamantly stated their intention of remaining with their church and its false teachings.

The argument is advanced: "If we open our church doors to people of other church-bodies, we cannot close our school-doors to them because the school is an arm and agency of the church." I'm not sure that argument is entirely valid, however. True, we invite anyone to our worship who is willing to come, and we're happy to have them. Our Christian principles, however, do put certain limitations on participation in the activities of the congregation. We exclude them from Communion; we'd never let them teach Sunday School or conduct a reading service; and we'd probably hesitate about letting such a member of another church become a regular usher or participate in our Voters' Assembly. And if that person insisted on holding to the particular false doctrines of his church and making propaganda for them in our congregation, sooner or later we'd feel constrained to do something about it.

A Missouri Synod writer saw no problem with such members of other churches in his school. He wrote: "The school should capitalize on another opportunity to win another soul and perhaps another family for Christ. Many came to Christ with the sole interest of being healed in their bodies by His miraculous power, but Christ always took advantage of the situation and offered to heal their souls as well."

In our circles, however, if one can live with active members of other churches in his school, he seems to justify it only as a "temporary situation" with the hopes soon of having only members and unchurched prospects there. We intend to do it that way in Jacksonville, too, but in all honesty this really seems the way of expediency rather than faithfulness to our doctrinal convictions. And even if we go to extra lengths to try to impress on people that by accepting their children we're not condoning their particular church, the impression of unionism seems a very real danger. With the lodge or the scouts, we say it's not good enough that our people participate, being mindful and watchful of the dangers there. We take a decisive stand because of the false and misleading impression their actions might give to others. Can we do anything less when it comes to our school?

And what about using pupils who are active members of other churches in our worship service? Scripture's fellowship principles speak clearly again. Those who are active members of another church not of our fellowship should certainly not be compelled to participate with their class in singing for our services. They should have to learn the songs and practice them just like anyone else in the class -- that's part of their school curriculum. But when it comes to their singing in the worship, they certainly would fall into the category of an organist or soloist as ones who "lead in the worship" by their music. The Psalms clearly include musical instruments and singing as important parts of worship. And Jesus says: "But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers

shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23-24) God-pleasing worship is that moved by the Spirit and built on the full truth of God's Word. Worship in truth can only come from one who knows and accepts God's truth. To justify singing by students who are members of other churches as a "class exercise" is unacceptable, too. We wouldn't want these children or any of our children to consider worship merely "a class exercise."

My remarks so far have dealt with compelling these students to participate in the worship. If on the other hand the children, with the agreement of their parents, volunteer and want to sing with their class in the worship service, that would seem to change things. They would in this way be moving into the class of mission prospects who are putting themselves under our care and choosing to participate in our worship service.

If we agree that enrolling children who are active members of other churches is at best a questionable practice, filled with potential problems and doctrinal pitfalls, then we should be able to agree on at least one practical point of enrollment policy. Such students should be enrolled on a "space-available" basis, and it should be clearly stated in the Handbook or somewhere that they are enrolled only on a year-to-year basis. We should never be caught in the position of having to turn away a member or a prospect because the classroom is filled with children of other churches.

#### SUMMARY

Out of this somewhat lengthy paper come, I hope, several clear statements from God about God-pleasing policies regarding our pupils who are members of other churches.

- 1.) God's fellowship principles compell us to show patience and concern for the weak in faith and understanding, but to avoid those who persist in error or a false confession.
- 2.) God's mission command is limited only by His command that we dare not intrude into the flocks of other Christian shepherds -- so long as the Word and the Sacraments are regularly used there.
- 3.) Our schools, as our churches, are there to nourish our people with God's Word and to get the Good News out to those who don't know it or accept it yet.
- 4.) The enrollment of active and committed members of other churches and especially their use in our worship services endanger clear practice of Scriptural fellowship principles and also open the door to violation of God's principles against proselytizing.