

# The Deaf Child's Advocate

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"It is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven,  
that one of these Little Ones should perish." Matth. 18, 14.

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# Is There, Perhaps, Another Way?

The suggestion has been made that, because of the great cost of maintaining a school for deaf children, it might be better to discontinue our school, to use the money spent on it for the employment of missionaries, who would dwell in the cities where the large state schools are located and give regular instruction to all of the pupils or, at least, to those of Lutheran confession, contending that a greater number of children could be reached and more good be accomplished. This suggestion has been made seriously, although without enough thought, for it is impossible to teach all children in the state school, because of the fact that these children belong to parents affiliated with every possible church and denomination. This suggestion has also been made very inconsistently, because those who offered it are strong advocates of the church school for the hearing children of the congregation.

Parents having deaf children are sending them to the state public school for the deaf because they have heard that missionaries to the adult deaf visit these schools, instruct the Lutheran children, and, finally, confirm them. These parents do this because they think they are doing the right thing and that their child is as well taken care of spiritually as it would be in a Christian church and day school. However, very many of these parents also are acting very inconsistently. Their hearing children they send to the day school of the congregation. They would not think of sending them all day to the public school and, after school, to the pastor for an hour's instruction.

What are we to say to these suggestions and to parents acting in their spirit? **Is there, perhaps, another way for the deaf child to get real doctrinal knowledge, real knowledge of the Law, of sin, the Law's wrath, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the means of Grace except in a day school under church control? Is there, perhaps, another way whereby the deaf children may be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, or educated up to the ideas and ideals of the Lord and to apply**

**them to themselves and all they do and regulate themselves into conformity with them—is there another way except in a day school for deaf children under church control?** To these questions we give a most emphatic and ever recurring **NO** for an answer. We say: **There is no other way.**

In making this statement, the Deaf Child's Advocate is not espousing, directly, the Ev. Luth. Deaf-Mute Institute of Detroit, Michigan, but is espousing the deaf child itself. In this, this paper is acting true to its name, acting in, and for, the best interest of the deaf child, acting as a true advocate, unselfishly. The Deaf Child's Advocate holds that the only way to give a deaf child true, understandable, abiding instruction in the Word of the Lord and to educate it up to the ideals of Christianity in faith and life is by daily instruction in a church school for deaf children. It holds that it cannot be done on children attending a state public school. Here are our reasons.

The course adopted by the state schools and their daily plans of activities leave no room for religious hours, leave no time to study the religious material that must be studied and absorbed by the mind, if it is to be the means by which the Holy Spirit calls, enlightens, sanctifies, and keeps in the faith, if it is to be of any spiritual value at all.

The pupils, being under the jurisdiction of the public state school, are out of control of the missionary to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the stand the school's superintendent takes towards our work. The missionary is, so to speak, at the mercy of his pupils. If they wish to come to the instruction class, well and good. If they refuse to come, what manner of discipline is at the command of the missionary to compel attendance and to compel the study at home of the lessons given them? Nothing is more destructive of success in teaching and progress of the pupil than irregular attendance. Either the frequently absent child loses because the teacher will not hold the regular attendants back because of the absentees, or the class

loses and, finally, gets nowhere. In a church school the religious instruction is a part and parcel of the curriculum and the daily plan of work, including the study hour in the evening, an all-important hour. Religious instruction in prayers, Bible history, and doctrinal instruction forms an integral part of the course. The only absentees are those who are indisposed. These are exceedingly rare, and the loss of time because of them is negligible. It is impossible to instruct a deaf child in a state school adequately, even if it could be done five days a week (which it cannot). Some pastors have daily instruction classes for children attending the public school of the hearing. Are they satisfied with this arrangement? and with the results achieved? All those who have a day school and the arrangement just now described and with whom the writer has spoken are not. And if this be so with hearing children, how infinitely more so will it be true if the children are deaf, handicapped in a measure unfathomed by us who can hear. We who have worked with the deaf child, in our church school, for almost a generation and know the extreme difficulty of the work and how the subject matter must be given drop by drop in order to enable them to digest it, we give it as our candid opinion that the deaf child attending the state school cannot be taught effectually the doctrines of God's Word, while under the jurisdiction of this school.

To these state schools go our missionaries to the deaf, all of them men who are sacrificing a lot daily in giving their lives and energies to the saving of the adult deaf who seem more steeped in worldly-mindedness than the hearing. To the obstacles confronting the instruction in religion in state schools, as described in the preceding paragraph, others are added. One of these is the very limited opportunity our missionaries have to visit the deaf schools and give instruction to such as they may reach. Some may be able to make these visits twice a week, but these cases are rare. Others may be able to go once a week, and some can go monthly once or twice. Granting the maximum of visits, gives a year's total of eighty hours, and stretching this instruction over three or four years

looks like a lot of time at the disposal of the teacher. However, it only looks that way. This total time given to one child is cut down immensely by the fact that the missionary has under his tutelage children of all grades of advancement and children in various stages of instruction. It is comparable to the teaching of all grades in a one-room school by one teacher. To do justice to the various grades, each grade must be taken separately. How much time, then, can be given to one grade? If all the children get the same instruction, some will be benefitted; others will receive little or nothing. Such an arrangement, even with hearing children, would be disadvantageous. What must the results be, if these children are deaf? Contrast with this the systematic, step-by-step, grade-by-grade instruction which is possible in a church school, where the subject matter is adjusted to the child's knowledge of language. Contrast this with the time at the disposal of the church school. Beginning with the second grade, fifteen to twenty minutes a day for at least 185 days a year. This increases, in the fourth grade, to forty minutes a day for every day in the school year. In the sixth grade this is increased to an hour and a half a day, thirty minutes being devoted to Bible history and one hour to doctrinal instruction. Some may think that the secular branches suffer by this arrangement.

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#### THE DEAF CHILD'S ADVOCATE

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## THE 59TH SCHOOL YEAR OPENS WEDNESDAY AFTER LABOR DAY

The purpose of the Institute is to give our Lutheran deaf children and other deaf children a proper secular education and a Christian education in conformity with the Confessions of our Church.

Its purpose is, in short, that of the Christian parish or day school.

The course comprises the teaching of the English language, of arithmetic, drawing, penmanship, geography and United States history, the history of the Old and New Testaments, the teaching of the chief Bible doctrines preparatory for Holy Communion and communicant church membership. It teaches speech and lip-reading to all deaf capable of learning it. It teaches these deaf by the oral method. It uses writing, finger spelling, some signs in the teaching of those deaf that cannot be taught orally.

A Kindergarten is conducted for young children, which means, practically, all beginners.

The course, exclusive of the Kindergarten, is mapped out to be covered in seven years.

Only deaf and deafened children from six to twelve years of age (older children are accepted, if they have been to another school before), whose mentality is normal and who are not afflicted with a communicable disease, are accepted as pupils.

For tuition charges and other information write the Editor of The Deaf Child's Advocate.

Our slogan: "Every Lutheran Deaf Child a Pupil of our Lutheran Deaf-Mute Institute."

Friends of the Institute, who prefer sending their gifts directly to the school, please forward to our treasurer: Mr. William Hopf, 4009 Virginia Park, Detroit, Michigan.

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While it is true that some studies, like geography and history, cannot be given so intensively as in a state school, the time spent in religious instruction does more to build the mind of the deaf and make them know and understand language than almost any other study can. Even if this smaller intensity in the teaching of geography and history would mean a loss, the spiritual gain of the child far, far surpasses and outweighs it. See Phi. 3, 7:8. No layman, or even a teacher not working with the deaf, has an idea of their limitations to receive, digest, and absorb ideas, above all, abstract and religious ideas, to connect these ideas up with words, have the words, again, recall vividly and rapidly the ideas they represent, and to learn to express ideas in correct, grammatical language. **Time** is the one factor you need, if anything is to be accomplished with the deaf child. People expect a hearing child to pass through eight grades before it ought to be confirmed and admitted to Holy Communion. And even with these children, we say, the work has just **begun**. Is it not positive folly to think that a deaf child can be brought

to confirmation in less time than a hearing child? Ought common sense not tell us that a deaf child, because of its terrible handicap, ought to have at least 50 per cent more time allowed it for instruction in every line than is given a hearing child and what our Ev. Luth. Deaf-Mute Institute is doing in the line of religious instruction and education is but a mere start, the very necessities only, which must be augmented and built up after confirmation?

Thinking over what just has been said, can parents who have deaf children and are zealous for their spiritual knowledge and advancement come to any other conclusion and conviction than the one that their children ought to be in a church school as well as, and even more so than, their hearing children and, acting on this conviction, do the only right thing by the deaf child and send it to their one and only church school at Detroit, even though the way be a little far for some, and thus help to make true the Institute's slogan: "Every Lutheran deaf child a pupil of our Ev. Luth. Deaf-Mute Institute."