

Education and Missions

The Evangelical and Reformed Church has always made the Christian education of its people a central concern. Occupying first place, of course, is Christian nurture in the home. Along with this interest are found efficient Sunday schools, church school instruction in the German language, and catechetical classes. Although German classes and church services are fast disappearing nowadays, emphasis still falls on the instruction of confirmands or new members among the youth. The pastors take great pride in conducting this part of their church work.

On these strong foundations academy, college, and seminary training may be added, depending on one's vocational choice and one's circumstances. It is, therefore, possible for a student in this denomination to carry through a complete educational program under church auspices.

Among the German Reformed in the United States, many fine schools have been established since 1787, when historic Franklin College was founded. Three of these are Ursinus College at Collegeville, Pennsylvania, named after the co-author of the *Heidelberg Catechism*, Hood College for women at Frederick, Maryland, estab-

lished in 1893, and Heidelberg College, founded in 1850 at Tiffin, Ohio. The Evangelicals established but one college, namely, Elmhurst College, at Elmhurst, Illinois. Founded in 1871, Elmhurst originally emphasized pre-ministerial studies.

The supply of E & R pastors for Iowa churches has come from several main sources, among them the Theological Seminary at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Central Theological Seminary at Dayton, Ohio, Mission House at Plymouth, Wisconsin, and Eden Theological Seminary at Webster Groves, Missouri. Central is no more, however, having merged with Eden at the time of the denominational union. Thus, with Iowa's ministerial supply already well provided for at near-by points in adjacent states, neither branch of the E & R Church deemed it necessary to establish an additional institution.

It has thus been possible for Iowans to concentrate their support in the one distinctively Iowa institution established under church auspices—the Evangelical Deaconess Hospital at Marshalltown. It was on July 11, 1894, that the Friedens (Peace) Evangelical Church of Marshalltown was organized by the Rev. Herman Wagner, with twenty-six charter members. One of the most farseeing pastors of Friedens church was the Rev. Karl Rest, who served from 1910 to 1918. Pastor Rest was much interested in the work of Christian deaconesses, and through his influence the Evangel-

ical Deaconess Society was founded in Friedens church on March 30, 1913. In April the Wood Sanitorium was purchased and the building of a hospital proposed. It was no sooner said than done, Deaconess Hospital being dedicated in January, 1914. A month later the first patient was admitted to the institution, which, at present, is affiliated with the Iowa Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. During 1951 the millionth patient — a baby girl — was received.

In addition to performing his regular duties as pastor, Rest served as the hospital superintendent for seventeen years, until his death in 1930. His congregation insisted on helping the hospital financially and paying his salary, too. This, for a small flock, entailed great sacrifice. As superintendent, Rest did not content himself merely with one small building, but went ahead with an expansion program in 1916. Two years later a three-story brick home was built for nurses. Rest also purchased a farm in 1920 and today there is a prize herd of cattle to provide milk for the institution. Other plant improvements were added later, and in 1945 space for future demands was acquired. Following Pastor Rest, the Rev. Adolph Matzner served as superintendent and chaplain from 1931 to 1950. The present superintendent, the Rev. H. C. Buchmueller, took charge in 1950.

The facilities of Evangelical Deaconess Hospital include 150 beds and 25 bassinets. Much re-

modeling and modernization was completed in 1951. The X-ray department has the most modern equipment. The School of Nursing has been accredited since 1916, instruction being under the guidance of the Evangelical Sisterhood. In 1951 twenty-three young ladies were graduated, and sixty-three students enrolled. Bi-weekly vesper chapel services and daily devotions at the breakfast table help in giving the nursing education program an orientation in the Christian philosophy that undergirds the institution's life.

Historians have often noted how effectively the sixteenth century reformers made use of the printing press. Since 1827, numerous publications have circulated among the constituent branches of the E & R Church in the United States, the *Magazine of the German Reformed Church* first appearing in that year. In 1850, *Der Friedensbote* came out for the Evangelical group. At present, the two chief papers are *The Messenger* and *Der Friedensbote*. In addition, there is a paper published in Hungarian for the churches of the Magyar Synod, while a paper in the Czech language, published at Cedar Rapids, is edited by the Rev. Milo Filipi, pastor of the Czech Reformed Church. The latter, an interdenominational journal, is the only one of its kind in the world today.

Next to the ministry of its colleges and publication centers, home and foreign missions stand at the forefront of the E & R "Kingdom Service"

program. At the time of the Merger in 1934, the "E" group was aiding 100 workers in 130 fields under the Board for Home Missions, while 12 missionaries were sent out to Honduras and 32 to the Central Provinces of India by the Board for Foreign Missions. Similarly, the "R" group in 1934 had 135 pastors serving in 176 mission churches through the Board of Home Missions, and 45 workers in Japan and 27 in China serving under the Board of Foreign Missions. The American School for Boys in Baghdad (Iraq) was also staffed by the Reformed group. Since the Merger, the home and foreign missionary work has been integrated and maintained by the E & R Church.

Other evidences of the Pietistic background out of which the Evangelical and Reformed Church has come are the numerous orphanages, hospitals, deaconess institutions, and old people's homes maintained in the United States. For nearly seventy-five years, also, the German Reformed group has conducted the Winnebago Indian mission (founded in 1878) at Black River Falls and Neillsville, Wisconsin. For forty-six years the Rev. Jacob Stucki labored among the Winnebago, being succeeded in 1930 by his son, Rev. Benjamin Stucki. In all of the enterprises mentioned Iowans take part through their membership in the local E & R congregations, by serving on committees, and by their donations to the national and international work of the Church as planned by

the various official boards. It is appropriate here to note the great interest which is excited among E & R people in Iowa by their devotion to the benevolence work of the Church in all its phases; it is tribute enough that people everywhere speak of "the spirit of the Iowa Synod" when talk turns to the support of Christian work the world around.

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