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ATTITUDES OF THE PARENTS WITH CHILDREN IN THE SCHOOLS OF THE GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ASSOCIATION TOWARD THE SUPPORT OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

by
David Earl Kass

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Education)
in The University of Michigan
1972

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Frederick W. Bertolaet, Chairman
Assistant Professor Richard A. Huston
Professor Ray E. Kehoe
Professor Kenneth Ludema

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated, with love,

to my wife, Karen.

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David E. Kass

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this investigation is to explore the expressed attitudes of the parents with children in the Grand Rapids Christian School Association regarding the nature and extent of the parents' demands for Christian schools in the Grand Rapids area. In this paper the term Christian schools is used to denote the schools that are members of the National Union of Christian schools.

This investigation is occasioned in part by the current financial difficulties in the Christian schools. It is also warranted by a continuing commitment by a significant number of American citizens who choose to patronize such schools, despite the apparent ease with which they could patronize local public schools. The financial problem is parrallel to similar problems in other nonpublic schools. Well over a million students have changed from the nonpublic to the public schools in the last six years.

President Nixon has shown by his actions that he is not indifferent to the crisis in the nonpublic school systems. In March, 1970, he created the President's Panel on Nonpublic Education. The Panel is examining the special needs and problems of the non-public schools.

In the President's speech of March 3, 1970, he said:

> The nonpublic elementary and secondary schools in the United States have long been an integral part of the nation's

> educational establishment. They supplement in an important way the main task of our public school system. They provide a diversity which our educational system would otherwise lack. They give a spur of competition to the public school through which educational innovations come, both systems benefit, and progress results.
>
> Should any single school system--public or private--ever acquire a complete monopoly over the education of our children, the result would neither be good for that school system nor good for the country. The nonpublic schools also give parents the opportunity to send children to a school of their own choice and of their own religious denominations.

In August, 1971, President Nixon reaffirmed his commitment to provide government assistance to nonpublic schools in a speech before the Knights of Columbus in New York. He was alarmed by the trend of the closing of nonpublic schools. President Nixon felt he should do all he can in order that our nation may have the best public and nonpublic school systems.

The Chambers of Commerce have shown concern in supporting education for all children. They have proclaimed the following:

> Whereas, the Chamber of Commerce, both nationally and locally, has judiciously pursued a course of positive leadership in an atmosphere of competition, freedom and diversity, and historically has fashioned this laudable public image, and,
>
> Whereas, the Chamber of Commerce has traditionally supported quality education for all children, and,
>
> Whereas, President Nixon has declared the American nonpublic schools a national asset, and further stated, "This government cannot be indifferent to the potential collapse of such schools;" Governor Milliken and the Michigan Legislature have included the financing of nonpublic schools as an essential part of Michigan Educational Reform,
>
> Therefore, be it resolved that the Chamber continue to encourage its members to support quality education for <u>all</u> millage campaigns and the effort to provide more adequate finances for the nonpublic schools in accordance with the plan developed by the Governor and Legislature of Michigan.

The crisis in nonpublic schools has brought new awareness to the leaders in the State of Michigan that the State is responsible for the education of all Michigan children. In 1970, the

legislators of the State of Michigan passed a school bill that gave aid to nonpublic schools. The aid amounted to $319,000 for the Grand Rapids Christian School Association. The aid lasted for only three months because the people of Michigan voted in November, 1970, in favor of a constitutional amendment which prohibited such a form of support.

The early American educational system in the United States began with nonpublic schools. Mc Elroy (1971) relates an interesting fact that the tradition of private nonpublic schools was so strong that the first U.S. Commissioner of Education was once ordered off a farmer's land at gunpoint because he proposed that all citizens in Rhode Island be taxed to support a public school system.

The first Christian school, under the sponsorship of a society of parents with membership in the Christian Reformed Church, was erected in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1874. This was an outgrowth of the decision of The General Assembly of the Christian Reformed Churches in 1970. The Assembly held to the principle that the school is the training institute of and for the church, and therefore every congregation should try to establish a school. Article twenty-one of the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church in 1914 stated:

> The consistories shall see to it that there are good Christian schools in which the parents have their children instructed according to the demands of the covenant. (VanDellen and Monsma, 1967. p.272)

In 1892, the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church stated explicitly that societies should be organized for education, and

that this was the task of the parents and not the church. Article twenty-one of the Church Order was changed in 1965. It is now Article seventy-one, stating:

> The consistory shall diligently encourage the members of the congregation to establish and maintain good Christian schools, and shall urge parents to have their children instructed in these schools according to the demands of the covenant. (VanDellen and Monsma, 1967. p.272)

Over the years societies of parents have established separate school systems in various areas of Grand Rapids and throughout the United States and Canada. Each system with one or more buildings has its own school board.

Some studies were done in the Grand Rapids area regarding the possible advantages of merging the several school societies into one large association. One important study of the Christian schools of Grand Rapids, Michigan, was undertaken by the University of Michigan Bureau of School Services. Dr. Ray E. Kehoe pointed out in his recommendations in this study that a merger would create a better school program.

In 1969, eight school systems in the Grand Rapids area, by society vote, merged to form the Grand Rapids Christian School Association. Presently, the Association has nearly 5,000 students enrolled. Approximately 90 percent of the students belong to the Christian Reformed Church. There are approximately 2,000 Christian Reformed families and close to 200 non-Christian Reformed families supporting the Association with tuition and gifts. The non-Christian Reformed families have approximately 425 students attending the Christian schools.

The Grand Rapids Christian School Association has been

eager to become more involved in the education of disadvantaged youngsters. The Oakdale Christian School, with a student body of approximately 9 percent black children and nearly 4 percent Cuban children enrolled, has been particulary active in this area.

The Oakdale Christian School has responded to the needs of a changing neighborhood by creating a learning center. A report appeared in the May, 1972, issue of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association's Newsletter as follows:

> In February of 1971, the Oakdale District Board and the Association Board of Trustees approved the Oakdale Learning Center as an experimental project to assist (1) College—community cooperation in teacher training, (2) developing more effective educational programs (3) testing educational methods and techniques which may apply to other Christian Schools, and (4) approaching the problems of an "inner city" school that is presenting a Christian Education.
>
> This experimental project required $19,000 be raised from Foundations or individuals for the school year 1971-72. These funds were to be raised from sources other than parents and Churches. We are happy to report the $19,000 needed for the school year 1971-72 has been raised. One donor contributed over $10,000 for 1972 to assure the continuation of the Oakdale Learning Center for School year 1972-73.

The Grand Rapids Christian School Association has twelve administrators and two hundred twenty-five classroom teachers. Of this group 42 percent have their masters' degrees and 38 percent have graduate credits beyond a masters. Two administrators have their doctorate.

The Grand Rapids Christian School Association Newsletter (March, 1972) discloses that the school Association owns and operates seven elementary schools, five junior high schools and two high schools. There is a fleet of thirty school buses. The assets are $10,079,000 and debts of $1,019,500. The debt retirement is not a part of the cost of education or general operating

fund, but is a separate fund. For this fund a special appeal is made to the business community and to younger and older people who do not have children presently in the Christian schools.

The Grand Rapids Christian School Association is a member of the National Union of Christian Schools. The National Union of Christian Schools has 305 member schools with 63,612 students. The schools are located throughout the United States and Canada, with one member school in Mexico City.

The private Christian schools are schools which are not governed by public agencies or by the church. They are state approved, independent, parent-owned, and non-profit private schools which provide a full, daytime program of education for children in grades kindergarten through grade twelve.

Need for the Study

The educational, social and financial consequences of the crisis in the Christian schools requires reliable data for policy decisions affecting future development. Values and attitudes of the supporters of the Christian schools must be prominently included in the structure of the decisions to be made. This study will help those in the position of leadership to decide the best possible alternatives regarding the future of the Grand Rapids Christian Schools.

The Christian schools were established for religious reasons. The primary aim of the Christian parents in securing an education for their children is to give the children a Christian education. They want a school that has the same basic philosophy

as the home. The school subjects must be explained and interpreted from a Christian viewpoint.

In essence the Christian school system is God-centered, whereas, the public school system in keeping with state legislation governing it is man-centered. In the past, Christian parents have been religiously motivated to send their children to the Christian schools. Are they still sending their children to the Christian schools because of their religious commitments? Or, are parents sending their children to the Christian schools because they are aware of the critical problems in the public schools? If the Christian schools are going to continue as they have in the past, there must be the religious motivation. What are the present motivations of the parents?

The rising cost of education is a serious problem for the parents. Some parents are withdrawing their children from the Christian schools because it is too costly to keep them there. Parents are continually asked to give more money in the form of tuition, pledges and collections in the church. The rising cost of education is due to inflation, increased teachers' salaries, improving the quality of education and other fringe benefits.

The present cost of education for the 1971-72 school year in the Grand Rapids Christian School Association is $700 for each elementary student and $800 for each secondary student. The non-Christian Reformed parents pay 85 percent of the cost of education by means of tuition and pledges. The Christian Reformed parents pay 75 percent of the cost of education by tuition and pledges. The Christian Reformed churches make up part of the deficit with

church collections. In addition, the Christian school Association has occasional fund raising drives. These drives include businesses, industries, and people who do not have children in the schools of the Association. In spite of these efforts the Association had a three year deficit of $360,000 by August 31, 1971. The aid of $319,000 owed by the State was received in the summer of 1971, leaving a deficit of $41,000.

The need for the study was established by personal interviews with a number of prominent members of the academic community. Mr. Philip Elve, Superintendent of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association, said there is a great need for this study to help understand where the emphasis should be in our schools. Do the parents want the emphasis on a clear cut Christ-centered education, or do they want the emphasis on the social and high academic standards without the religious emphasis?

Mr. Ivan Zlystra, Department Administrator of School Relations of the National Union of Christian Schools, expressed a tremendous need for this study. He said that there must be a positive parental attitude if our Christian schools are going to move forward. Mr. Zlystra is very interested in this study because he is one of the sixteen members of the President's Commission on School Finance and a member of the President's Panel on Nonpublic Education.

Dr. Ray E. Kehoe, Professor at the University of Michigan and Director of a study of nonpublic schools for the President's Commission of School Finance, suggested that this study be carried out. Dr. Kehoe proposed that it could be a prototype and could be

used nationally.

Dr. Donald Erickson, University of Chicago expert on non-public schools, said he is interested in the results of this study for use in his future writings on nonpublic schools. This study could be helpful for predicting the outlook of the Lutheran schools, Seventh Day Adventist schools and other nonpublic schools.

This study will help in effective decision making in such administrative matters as future building programs, curriculum programs and the need to expand services to others because the leadership will know the attitudes of the parents with children in the Christian schools.

Statement of the Problem

This study is a descriptive study of the opinions of the parents with children in the schools of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association that describes a structure of values and attitudes toward the support of Christian schools.

Some of the factors the author will especially investigate are:

1. The attitudes of the parents regarding the importance of a Christ-centered education.
2. The attitudes of the parents regarding the success the Christian schools are having in the achievement of a Christ-centered education.
3. The attitudes of the parents regarding the social (church) pressures that influence their decisions to send their children to the Christian schools.

4. The attitudes of the parents regarding the motivations for sending their children to the Christian schools, i.e., type of children attending, teachers with views that are compatible with the parents' views, discipline, and quality of academic education.
5. The attitudes of the parents regarding the financial support of the Christian schools.

Statement of the Delimitation

This study involves only the parents who presently have children in the schools of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

A researcher reviews related literature before he undertakes a study of his own in order to obtain insight into his task. The review helps to give a researcher a sense of direction and an overview of his task.

The study at hand is one of the attitudes of parents toward the Christian schools. Therefore, it was necessary to review studies of attitudes toward nonpublic schools.

Much interest has been focused on nonpublic schools in the past few years. President Nixon especially heightened interest in nonpublic schools by creating the President's Panel on Nonpublic Education in 1970.

Economic Problems of Nonpublic Schools is a report of a study project conducted under the auspices of the President's Commission on School Finance. Dr. Fahey, director of the Office of Education Research at the University of Notre Dame, stated in the report that the "absolute dearth of attitudinal surveys pertinent to independent and other-than-Catholic church-related institutions" necessitated the study to include only findings from studies of Catholic schools.

Fahey (1971) further stated in the report:

> Studies of attitudes toward nonpublic schools (Catholic included) are few and far between. While most officials within the nonpublic sector explicate the need for such research, the costs involved are often prohibitive. Of those studies which have been undertaken, many are sorely deficient in methodological sophistication and utilizable output. Frequently, quality has been sacrificed for expedience, or rendered unattainable for lack of sufficient funds. (p.12)

The key issues found in the review of attitudinal studies of Catholic education and a national survey of attitudes toward nonpublic schools were:

1. What are the values of Catholic education?
2. What are the perceptions of the relative effectiveness of public and nonpublic schools?
3. What were the attitudes of the Catholics toward the financing of Catholic schools?

Types of Catholic Attitudinal Studies

The attitudinal surveys varied in method and instruments depending on the objective of the survey. For example, the Roman Catholic Secondary School Study, Corpus Christi is an attitudinal survey that was conducted for the expressed purpose of assessing the feasibility of introducing a Catholic high school in the diocese. Consequently it was limited in scope. There was a random sample of one out of every ten names on the parish list. However, information on the number of respondents this represents and the response percentage was not reported. In contrast, the study of Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Boston: The Voices of the People by Donovan and Madaus (1969) was extremely well conducted. The study was initiated in order to obtain data regarding the attitudes of citizenry toward Catholic education in Boston. The results were to be used for facilitating effective planning for the future.

The officials of the archdiocese of Boston contracted Donovan and Madaus of the Catholic Education Research Center at Boston College to do the research. The principal authors received assistance from Louis Harris Associates in designing and implementing the questionnaire.

The Harris staff refined the instrument and pretested it in New York City. It was again refined and pretested in the Boston area. The instrument for the lay Catholic was finalized on the basis of the Boston pretest. A separate instrument was designed for each of the sample groups.

The attitudinal study in the Archdiocese of Boston included a tightly drawn probability sample of non-Catholic adults as well as non-Catholic clergymen and public school administrators. The Harris staff interviewed the following sample: 1,721 adult lay Catholics (of whom 501 were parents of parochial school children), 1,060 adult lay non-Catholics, 144 Catholic priests, 197 teaching sisters, 102 lay teachers in Catholic schools, 147 non-Catholic clergy, 63 public school board members, and 23 superintendents of public schools.

Another excellent attitudinal study that was very helpful to this author was the Catholic Education in St. Louis: An Attitudinal Study by Holtz, Lovely, and Kiekbusch (1970). The study was initiated in order to obtain data regarding the attitudes of Catholics toward Catholic education in St. Louis. This study also was conducted for the purpose of facilitating effective planning.

The St. Louis sample consisted of all Catholic clergymen, religious and lay teachers plus every twentieth person on each

parish roll. The questionnaires were mailed to the sample. Approximately 3,000 or 50 percent of the archdiocesan clergymen as well as religious and lay teachers returned their questionnaires. Of over 5,000 individuals who received questionnaires, only 2,000 or about 30 percent responded to their questionnaires.

The reader of an attitudinal study should keep in mind that there is a rapid change in society and people may change their attitudes over a period of time. The results of an attitudinal survey freeze attitudes at the point in time when the respondent answers the questionnaire or responds to the interviewer. From one attitudinal survey the reader cannot assume how the same respondents would react to the same set of questions at a later point in time. The limitations of attitudinal surveys must be recognized.

Values of Catholic Schools

The fundamental question in the attitudinal studies of Catholic education is "Why do Catholic parents send their children to Catholic schools?" The researchers asked the basic question in various ways, however, there is overwhelming agreement in the research concerning the answer. Greeley and Rossi (1966), Cahill (1968), Donovan and Madaus (1969), Friend (1970) and Holtz, Lovely, and Kiekbusch (1970) are studies strongly suggesting the answer is a religious-moral reason.

The results of the attitudinal study in the diocese of Boston deserves close attention because of the expertise in sampling procedures and instrumental design as well as the conduct, supervision, and validation of a large number of interviews.

Donovan and Madaus (1969) state in the Boston study why the Catholic parents send their children to Catholic schools rather than to public schools:

> Better religious training (43-59%), better quality (41-48%), discipline (18-50%) lead the list of reasons. The presence of religious teachers was mentioned by twenty percent of junior high school parents and forty-five percent of high school parents and eight percent of the elementary school parents. Nineteen percent of elementary school parents said they sent their children to Catholic schools because they themselves had attended parochial schools.
>
> The priests, sisters, and lay teachers also identified religious training, better quality and discipline most frequently as reasons parents elect Catholic schools. Twenty-one percent of the sisters felt that parents selected Catholic schools because of the dedication of the sisters. One in four priests saw parents seeking relief from their responsibility for religious training. The vast majority of the non-Catholic clergy and public school officials saw religious training or indoctrination as the principal reason Catholic parents select a Catholic rather than a public school. Discipline and tradition were also mentioned frequently by both groups. In summary, the reasons most often mentioned for electing a Catholic rather than a public school by the parents and special samples were: better religious training, better quality education, discipline, and family tradition. (pp. 176,179)

In the St. Louis study the respondents were asked to select four of fourteen reasons why a family would send their son or daughter to Catholic schools in St. Louis. Holtz, Lovely, and Kiekbusch (1970) report the results of the five major reasons as listed in rank order:

1. Catholic schools teach children about God, Christ and religion.
2. Catholic schools train children to be honest, truthful and moral.
3. Catholic schools discipline children to respect authority.
4. Catholic schools teach children to practice their religion.
5. Catholic schools take a personal interest in their children. (p.67)

Holtz, Lovely, and Kiekbusch (1970) further state:

From a statistical point of view, the above five items

> dominate the selection. Seventy-two percent of all respondents placed Number 1 among the four most important reasons. Sixty-seven percent saw Number 2 as one of the four most important reasons, 54 percent Number 3, 48 percent Numbers 4 and 5.
>
> There is more than a statistical bond between the items receiving overwhelming endorsement. All five items come from two of the six categories of responses. "Religious" (1 and 4) and "Personal" items (2,3, and 5) were selected over "Academic," "School Operation," "Social," and "Practical" items.
>
> All groups analyzed exhibit strong tendencies in favor of the five items. Slightly more clergy (84%), and Religious Teachers (71%), placed item 5 among the top four than did Lay Teachers (64%), and Lay Catholics (69%). Number 5 is the only one included in the top five which did not draw a steady pattern of support. Teachers, lay and religious, placed this item in the top five. Fifty-five percent of Religious Teachers and 57 percent of the Lay Teachers placed item 4 among the four most important reasons for Catholic schools. Only 30 percent of Lay Catholics and 39 percent of the Clergy saw Number 5 as the majority of teachers did. (p.68)

The attitudinal studies of Catholic education also report why Catholic parents do not enroll their children in the Catholic schools. For example, in the Boston study, Donovan and Madaus (1969) state:

> The most frequently mentioned reason, given by better than four out of ten respondents over thirty, the ratio is closer to three out of ten for those under thirty, was simple expediency. That is, a Catholic school was unavailable, too far away, or otherwise inaccessible. The tone of these replies suggested that many more would have sent their children to Catholic schools rather than public if the opportunity were available. Close to three out of ten elementary and high school parents thought the public school gave an education as good as or better than that given by Catholic schools. The ratio drops to one out of four for parents under thirty. Twelve percent of the elementary school parents and eighteen percent of the junior high school parents wished to avoid large classes in the Catholic schools. This reason was given by only seven percent of the high school parents, however. Eighteen percent of junior high school parents and eight percent of high school parents did not wish to switch their children from the public school where they began their education to a Catholic school. At least one out of ten parents or better felt they could not afford the Catholic schools. This ratio doubled for those parents under thirty. The desire to have their children meet and mix with children of other faiths was mentioned by close to one out of ten parents under fifty-five. Sixteen percent of the parents of elementary school children between forty and fifty-four felt

too much religion was taught in the Catholic schools. (p.167)

Perceptions of Quality Education of Public and Catholic Schools

It is obvious that part of the demand for Catholic education varies as the perceived quality of Catholic schools when compared to public schools varies. The higher the perceived quality of the public school in the area, the lower the demand for the Catholic school.

The studies in the Archdioceses of Boston (Donovan and Madaus, 1969) and St. Louis (Holtz, Lovely, Kiekbusch, 1970) indicate that Catholic parents who are better educated, younger and in the higher income brackets are more critical of the quality of Catholic school education. For example, the Catholic parents in St. Louis County of the suburban area rated Catholic schools as inferior to public schools. However, parents in the St. Louis proper area rated the Catholic schools as superior to public schools. Also the perceived quality of the Catholic schools in the city of Boston proper was significantly higher than the public schools. The Catholic parents who live in communities outside of Boston rated the public schools as superior to Catholic schools.

In studies by Cahill (1968), Donovan and Madaus (1969), and Friend (1970), the Catholic parents indicate that Catholic schools are better than public schools in preparing for marriage and family life; teaching moral virtues such as honesty, truthfulness and industry; and the sisters and teachers are better teachers because they show more personal interest in their pupils. However, the Catholic adults generally feel that the public schools

have better guidance and counseling services; better prepare pupils for work in later life; have better physical education programs; make better provision for slow learners; offer a wider range of courses; and do a better job of teaching students to think for themselves.

Attitudes of Catholics Toward the Financing of Catholic Schools

There are financial difficulties in the Catholic schools due to social and religious change and also the increase of educational costs. The rising cost of education is a result of smaller classes, better buildings, increased teachers' salaries, modern educational equipment and inflation. In the Boston study ten percent of Catholic parents state that they feel they could not afford the Catholic schools.

It is obvious but very important to realize that the received financial resources of Catholic schools are voluntary contributions. This fact put the financial resources of Catholic schools in a very vulnerable position. An attitudinal change toward the value of Catholic schools will likely change the action of the person toward the financing of the Catholic schools.

The sources of income for Catholic schools are tuition fees, parish funds, and grants or loans from the diocese. One should not overlook the contributions made by faculty members who are of the religious vocations, i.e., sisters and priests. The religious faculty member receives a salary that is considerably less than a lay teacher receives in the Catholic schools.

The tuition fees generally cover only a small proportion of

the educational costs. The increased educational costs are mainly transferred to the Catholic Church at the parish level. When the cost to the parish becomes too much to bear, the school is forced to close.

Catholic schools are closing at an alarming rate. Dr. Fahey (1971) states in the summary report of Economic Problems of Nonpublic Schools:

> In 1969, the most recent Catholic investigation into school closings revealed 295 elementary and 80 secondary schools failed in that year and displaced 63,697 students.

Also he states:

> By 1980, Catholic school enrollment may decline by 52 percent to a total student body of two million students. Elementary schools will suffer the greatest loss, 58.1 percent, while secondary schools will decline 31.5 percent. Other nonpublic school enrollment is expected to decline 16 percent by 1980.

According to the literature reviewed, the explanation of the decline in Catholic schools is the change in the attitude or preference toward the value of Catholic schools. As was pointed out, regardless of age, education, income, or place of residence, Catholics generally perceive Catholic schools superior to public schools in terms of religious instruction as well as personal and social development. They perceive public schools superior in academic offerings, efficiency, practicality, and convenience. The Catholic parents choose the Catholic schools when the religious-personal values dominate and they choose the public schools when the efficiency, practicality, and academic values dominate.

The Catholic parents who value the practical and academic are better educated, younger and in the higher income brackets. This group is moving into the surburban areas and placing their

children in public schools. The group that could financially help the Catholic schools the most is withdrawing their contributions.

The roots of the problem of financing Catholic schools are deep and numerous. There is no simple solution to such a profound and complex problem.

In summary, the overwhelming majority of Catholics perceive the unique aspect of Catholic schools to be its religious-moral dimension. On the basis of the attitudinal evidence, it appears that the support for Catholic schools can be expected to decrease in direct proportion to the decrease in the amount of value parents place on the religious-moral dimension of education.

Review of a National Survey

A national survey was conducted for the purpose of obtaining an assessment of what the citizens think and believe regarding non-public schools. How the Public Views Nonpublic Schools by Gallup (1969) was a joint effort of the staff of A Study of the American Independent School and the staff of Gallup International.

In the pretesting of the questionnaire of this survey it was discovered that the public is not familiar with the term "independent," but classifies nonpublic schools as either "private" or "parochial." The public classified Roman Catholic as "parochial" and the rest of the church related schools as "private." Generally this is true although Lutheran schools are parochial schools also.

There were 1505 adults interviewed. The interviews were conducted in all areas of the country and in all types of communities selected by random methods.

In some communities there can not be found all three types of schools. Obviously it is difficult for citizens to discuss the private and parochial schools if they are not well informed regarding them.

Gallup (1969) states:

> By almost every test, the public reveals little knowledge about nonpublic schools, especially about private non-church schools. On the other hand, the public is also not well informed about the public schools—even those in their own communities. (p.2)

The overwhelming majority of citizens accept the present three-school system as desirable. Gallup (1969) probed this idea with the following question: "As you know, there is talk about taking open land and building new cities in this country. New cities, of course, would include people of all religions and races. If such communities are built, should there be parochial and private schools in addition to public schools?" The responses to this question show that 84 percent felt there should be parochial and private schools; 12 percent responded negatively; and 4 percent had no opinion. The reason given for favoring the three-school system is, "There should be a right to choose." (p.5)

Under our present system of education in the United States parents have a choice of schools for their children. However, if the parents choose a nonpublic school there is a cost involved. Gallup (1969) tried to gain insight into the importance of money in the decision regarding the schools by the following:

> If you had the money, or if your children could get free tuition, would you send them to a private school, to a church-related school (parochial), or to a public school?
> The responses of those who live in areas where private and parochial schools exist are, of course, the most meaningful.

In the private and parochial school areas these results were obtained:

Would send children to private school	30%
Would send children to parochial school	29%
Would send children to public school	41%

When the figures for private and parochial schools are combined, the total exceeds that for the public schools, but it is interesting to note the balance of enrollment that would result in the three sectors according to this response. Americans seem to place a high value on the availability of alternatives. (p.5)

Many citizens value the private and parochial schools and are willing to pay the cost for this alternative. The respondents in three-school areas were asked why parents send their children to parochial schools. Seventy-eight percent of the sample responded with one of the following three responses as stated by Gallup (1969):

1. Because they were raised as Catholics to believe that the only schools to send their children to are parochial schools.
2. No person is completely educated without exposure to all sciences. You can't teach Biology without Theology.
3. Because they want them to believe in God and grow up to be nice citizens. (p.10)

Respondents in three-school areas were also asked: "What are the chief reasons why parents send their children to private schools?" Sixty-four percent of the sample responded with one of the four following responses as stated by Gallup (1969):

1. Private schools give children more individual attention.
2. Students get a better preparation for college.
3. Private schools can get better teachers.
4. The public schools are bad scholastically. (p.9)

Also, half of the citizens (49%) felt that private schools do a better job of building character and instilling a sense of values. Thirty-nine percent felt the public schools did a better job in these areas and twelve percent of the respondents had no opinion.

Gallup respondents were also presented the following question: "If you were to rate the quality of education received by children in your community, which would you say is best - private, parochial or public schools?"

Gallup (1969) states the following responses:

Private	14%
Parochial	15%
Public	43%
All equal	20%
No opinion	8%

In conclusion, the Gallup research indicates considerable overall demand for the nonpublic schools. The national survey is in agreement with the attitudinal studies of Catholic education that the unique aspect of Catholic schools is the religious-moral dimension. The American citizens appear to cherish the priniciple of freedom of choice.

CHAPTER III

RATIONALE FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

It is necessary to give some historical background information to the readers who are not familiar with the Christian schools in the Grand Rapids area.

Historical Background of the Christian Schools

The Christian schools are a cultural tradition for the Christian Reformed parents. This tradition goes back to the year 1586, in the Netherlands. At that time the government of the Netherlands had no separation between the church and the state. It promoted and sponsored both religion and education. The state church was the Reformed Church and the government used the Reformed Churches to establish and supervise its schools. The schools were Christian and distinctly Reformed because the government and the churches were committed to the Reformed faith.

The Synod of the state church of the Netherlands met in 1586, and produced a document, "The Church Order of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands." An article regarding Christian schools was adopted in this church order. It read as follows:

> Everywhere consistories shall see to it that there are good school masters, who shall not only instruct the children in reading, writing, languages and the liberal arts, but likewise in godliness and in the catechism. (VanDellen and Monsma, 1967. Preface)

The same above article was adopted by the Synod of the State Church of the Netherlands in the year 1618. This article is called Article twenty-one of the Church Order of Dordt (1618-19).

There was close cooperation between the church and the government regarding the schools. They were so closely associated that they even had a law that required the school masters to hold membership in one of the Reformed churches. The school masters in the Netherlands were under the supervision of the consistories and were accountable to them for adherence to doctrine and Christian conduct. The consistories required that the schoolmaster subscribe to the Reformed confessions of faith. He had to give proof of knowing the catechism and he had to demonstrate his ability to teach the catechism in the schoolrooms.

During the 1850's, a group of people from the Netherlands migrated to the state of Michigan. In the year 1857, they formed the Christian Reformed Church and adopted the Church Order of Dordt (1618-19) to guide them in their church government. However, the conditions in the new world required adjustments and new approaches regarding the establishment of Christian schools. The Christian schools in the new world were separate from the church and were organized under the sponsorship of a society of parents.

> The first Christian school, under the sponsorship of a society of parents, was erected in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1874. (Christian Home and School, March, 1970. p.2)

The first Christian school was an outgrowth of the decision of The General Assembly of the Christian Reformed Churches in 1870. The Assembly was convinced that the school is the training institute of and for the church, and therefore every congregation should

try to establish a school.

In 1892, the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church stated explicitly that societies should be organized for education, and that this was the task of the parents and not the church. Article twenty-one of the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church in 1914, stated:

> The consistories shall see to it that there are good Christian schools in which the parents have their children instructed according to the demands of the covenant. (VanDellen and Monsma, 1967. p.272)

Article twenty-one of the Church Order was changed in 1965. It is now Article seventy-one, stating:

> The consistory shall diligently encourage the members of the congregation to establish and maintain good Christian schools, and shall urge parents to have their children instructed in these schools according to the demand of the covenant. (VanDellen and Monsma, 1967. p.272)

It is interesting to see how the church order has changed regarding the Christian schools. In the beginning, in the Netherlands, the church order charged the consistories to insure that there were good Christian school teachers. Later, in the United States, consistories had to see to it that they had good Christian schools in which the parents had their children instructed. And then in 1965, the church order stated that the consistories should encourage the parents to maintain good Christian schools and should urge the parents to have their children instructed there. We can see that the church has changed her position from one of demanding the parents to send their children to the Christian schools to the position of a free choice on the part of the parents in instructing their children in the Christian school or public

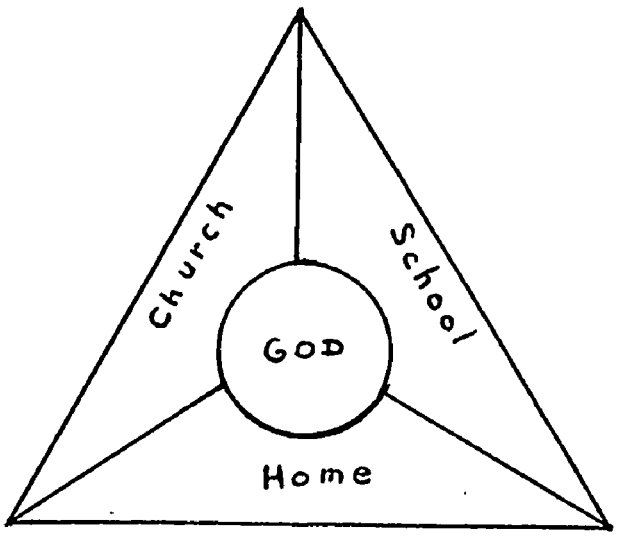
school. The Christian schools in the United States were originally established because the church rulers demanded it of the parents. At present the Christian schools are maintained because of the parents desire to secure an education for their children that is compatible with the home and the church. They want a school that has the same basic philosophy as the home. They feel the school subjects must be explained and interpreted from the Christian viewpoint. As DeJong (1954) stated:

> Every area of life belongs to Christ. (p.132)

Philosophical Basis

Parents with children in the Christian schools are committed to Christian education and are willing to sacrifice so their children may attend the Christian schools. The parents hold to the philosophy that secular and religious aspects of life should not be separated.

The church, school and home should be God-centered. This can best be represented by a symbol.



The Christian schools are an extension of the Christian homes and a Christ-centered education is given. This means everything in the Christian school focuses on Christ and all school subjects are explained from a philosophy that is based on the Bible. This is well stated in the Grand Rapids Christian School Handbook (1969) as follows:

> The student must be taught the history of human thought and behavior—sympathetically, honestly and "from the inside." At the same time he must be taught to view all of this in the light of Christian presuppositions and Christian philosophy. In the process he is growing in his understanding of the Christian view of life and the world, espoused in general by the school and Christian community. The student must have such a system so that he may order and direct his life properly under God.

The Bible as it is interpreted by the Calvinistic standards is the basis for the Christian schools. Paragraph III of the Grand Rapids Christian School Handbook (1969) states:

> The Christian school is the expression of a Christian philosophy of life. It brings together man's faith in God and its manifestation in his daily living. The Christian school attempts to make real in the lives of students the goals of a Christian culture: namely, the reformation and refinement of mind, of moral awareness and choice, and of creative expression and participation.
>
> Christian education is founded upon the covenant which God established with man, as expressed in the Holy Scriptures (Gen. 17:7).[1] This is a relationship agreed to by parents also for their children, and it is an agreement which the children of Christian parents entered by commitment on the part of their parents. This covenant encompasses all truth for the Christian, touching every realm, every sphere, and every relation of life.
>
> Christian schools attempt to strengthen and develop: a) A faith that God exists and that He has redemptively revealed Himself in Jesus Christ; b) an awareness that

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[1]Gen. 17:7 (The Living Bible) reads, "And I will continue this agreement between us generation after generation, forever, for it shall be between me and your children as well. It is a contract that I shall be your God and the God of your posterity."

> God's existence and revelation make a difference for every facet of life; and c) a conviction that there are unchanging principles of truth which makes systematic knowledge possible, of goodness which makes morality really binding, and of beauty which, because it is related to both truth and goodness, frees the spirit for its discovery and enjoyment.

The following verses taken from The Living Bible charge the parents—not the church or state—with the responsibility for the training of their children:

> You must teach them (God's commandments) to your children and talk about them when you are home and out for a walk; at bedtime and the first thing in the morning. (Duet. 6:7)

> Teach a child to use the right path, and when he is older he will remain upon it. (Prov. 22:6)

> How does a man become wise? The first step is to trust and reverence the Lord. Only fools refuse to be taught. Listen to your father and mother. What you learn from them will stand you in good stead; it will gain you many honors. (Prov. 1:7-9)

Christian parents send their children to the Christian schools because of a religious conviction. Garret (1961) supports this idea with the following statement:

> The biblical view claims that man cannot treat his educative experiences as ends in themselves. While man is an earthly creature who must learn many facts and skills, he fulfills his highest capacities and abilities best when he is living in proper spiritual relationship with God.

This religious conviction produces a conscience that will not allow these Christian parents to send their children to a school where the school subjects are not taught from a Christian viewpoint. De Koster (1972) points up that these parents' consciences have caused them to build their own school system:

> Laws which tax parents for the support of one educational system while their consciences oblige them to develop another parallel system are laws which have the effect of interference in the free exercise of religion—in the realm of education. We know that from long experience. With us, too, this is not

> a fly-by-night fad, or incidental to a way of life. We stand on generations of sacrificial obedience to conscience, witnessed by a massive educational plant and comprehensive educational system.

It is extremely important that the teachers in the Christian schools are Christians. The Calvinistic Action Committee (1951) declared:

> One who would teach in the Christian school must in his person have matured reasonably into manhood and womanhood in Christ.

The teachers are models for the students to imitate. Christian teachers create a Christian atmosphere in the school. They must demonstrate by their words and actions that they are Christians. This is necessary because they explain the school subjects from a Christian viewpoint founded on the Bible according to a Calvinistic interpretation. De Blaey (1970) stresses how the role of the Christian school teacher differs:

> More specifically, based on such differences between the two systems the role of teacher in the Christian school should exhibit an internal structure significantly different from that of the public school teacher. For the role of Christian school teacher greater importance will be given to those social-psychological attributes that are concerned with religious beliefs and the relationship of those beliefs to education. For example, the teacher is expected to believe in the inseparable nature of religion and education; he is expected to believe that all subjects must be taught in a religious framework; he is expected to believe that specific churches are the closest to the "true" church. (p.41)

More is required from the Christian school teacher than from the public school teacher. Beyond satisfying the legal requirements, such as a state teacher's certificate, and knowledge of his subject and classroom control, the Christian school teacher must have a belief, a philosophy that is in agreement with the school's philosophy. He must have a personal commitment to Jesus Christ

as the Lord of his life.

The Christian school's philosophy as stated in the handbook of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association is:

> Our program seeks to develop the students' ability to know God and relate himself and the created universe to God. Through the study of His Word and works, the school seeks to realize the potential of the individual as the image of God, through the development of God-given capacities, for the enjoyment of the world as God's creation in all its cultural richness.

De Kruyter (1952) states that in the Christian school methodology must recognize the personality of the child and his relationship to God as its basic directive.

In the Christian school the mathematics class is taught from a different perspective than in the public school. In the public school they study the facts and say how wonderful and intelligent man is. In the Christian school they give credit to God for creating a person who has intelligence and the ability to discover the mathematical principles that God has made.

DeJong (1955) stresses the point this way:

> For the sake of emphasis it should be stated again that all knowledge finds its true source only in God. Reformed theologians believe that the best scientific knowledge and the finest clinical skills are incomplete without their relation to God. For example, mathematics teaches that four times four is sixteen. This is true for regenerate and unregenerate alike. Yet mathematical formulae are true because God is truth. He creates these truths as eternal verities. Thus a mathematician may know mathematical laws and formulae perfectly, yet fails to be a "complete man" until he understands their source is in God. (p.98)

Education is more than mere facts. It involves a philosophy of life. Education includes a system of thinking and interpretation. It is important to a Christian parent that the philosophy of the school and the home are compatible. They want

the school to teach values and the value system needs to be more basic or complete than the law permits in the public school.

Most nonpublic schools operate primarily because they can teach without restriction a particularized value system. Moral and spiritual values are extremely important. These values must be emphasized all the time, not just on Sunday. Walton states in the Interim Report of the President's Panel on Nonpublic Education:

> It is worth recalling that in 1776 Thomas Paine wrote in Common Sense that "when we are planning for posterity, we ought to remember that virtue is not hereditary." (p.8)

Parents of children of school age are required by law to send their children to school. However, the courts have upheld that parents have the right to decide if their children attend a public or nonpublic school. In the famous Pierce vs. Society of Sisters case, the United States Supreme Court in 1925, decided that the state does not have power to force all the children into public schools. It was affirmed that it is primarily the right of parents to educate their children. As Mr. Justice Mc Reynolds explained for the court:

> Under the doctrine of Meyer vs. Nebraska, 262, U.S. 390, we think it entirely plain that the (Oregon) Act of 1922 unreasonably interferes with the liberty of parents and guardians to direct the upbringing and education of children under their control. As often heretofore pointed out, rights guaranteed by the Constitution may not be abridged by legislation which has no reasonable relation to some purpose within the competency of the state. The fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments in this Union repose excludes any general power of the state to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the state; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations. (268 U.S. 534)

The religious groups want their own institutions of learning based on the grounds that the religious and secular aspects of education cannot be separated. Facts and skills are not religious per se but when a person starts to use and interpret facts the basic philosophy of a person comes into play. His values and attitudes are very important in making his decisions.

The Christian schools in Grand Rapids, Michigan, are not the only school system that values a Christ-centered education. For an example, Coiner (1963) states why the Lutherans value a Christ-centered education:

> Because of their theological base, the goals of Lutheran elementary schools have always been different from those to which the public (state) schools aspire. Lutherans consider the public school a necessary and salutary institution, gladly supporting it as such and having their children attend it when a parochial school is not available. At the same time Lutherans are convinced that the public school is limited in helping them to prepare for their major mission in life.
>
> Though the public school may take a positive attitude towards religion and toward moral and spiritual values, it cannot give a positive Christian education. The public schools do not teach that positive Scriptural truth which rightly motivates moral and spiritual values and conduct. Obviously they cannot substitute for the task which home and church must do in Christian education. The church-related school, which does not face the problem of religious pluralism and is free to teach Biblical doctrines, can do much more specific work in Christian education. In other words, what the public school cannot do in making education Bible-based, Christ-centered, and life-directed, the Lutheran school can properly and effectively accomplish. (p.9)

Another Lutheran, Bickel (1956), makes the following statement of the Lutheran position:

> Lutherans maintain full-time religious schools because they believe in the unitary nature of education. Lutherans find it impossible to divorce the sacred from the secular. To them religion, or the fear and love of God, supplies the only adequate motivation for the development of talents and the dedication of one's life to the service of God and man. Thus religion undergirds the whole of life. (p.80)

Greeley and Rossi (1966) pointed up the significance of the religious home and the effectiveness of the religiously based school in their study regarding Catholic education. They state:

> ....for all practical purposes, the religious impact of Catholic education is limited to those who come from highly religious families. (p.368)

The agreement in philosophy by the home, church, and school is the bulwark for the Christian school. This agreement makes a strong foundation for the school. The goals of the Christian school can be realized because everyone in the group is working toward the same goal.

In his study of the parent-controlled Christian schools DeJong (1955) states:

> The goals of the parent-controlled school are very clear. The child must be developed as a total personality for the glory of and in the service of God. These goals, as far as measurement is possible, are being accomplished. The purpose of the whole curriculum structure is to point the child to his ultimate aim and purpose in life and to prepare him fully for life-long Christian service. Methods and discipline are carried out in the spirit of love and devotion, for the child belongs to God. The practical results of such a program cannot be easily measured. The conservative character of the Christian Reformed Church is being preserved today in spite of the forces of liberalism. The unanimity of purpose and theology in these churches is somewhat amazing in this day of varied theological opinion within denominations. The homogeneity of the racial group is maintained. Service to the church by the ministry and to the world in general by Christian doctors, lawyers, and business men is very impressive. How much of this is due to the school cannot be accurately measured; but that a great deal is due to the Christian school can hardly be doubted. Products of these schools have made outstanding contributions in every field of learning. (p.127)

In conclusion, the parents with children in the Grand Rapids Christian School Association choose the Christian schools because of their philosophy. The value system of the overwhelming majority of the parents demands that their children be educated in a Christian

atmosphere that is compatible with their home environment. The strength of the Christian schools lies in the complete agreement within the group of parents regarding educational objectives and goals.

Oppewal (1963) stated that the Christian school system:

> ....has its roots in an intellectual tradition, namely Calvinism, a cultural tradition, namely that of the Netherlands, an ecclesiastical tradition, namely, the Christian Reformed Church, and a religious tradition, namely, the Bible. (p.34)

CHAPTER IV

THE INVESTIGATION

Introduction

This attitudinal survey represents an attempt to tap the attitudes and discover the taste and preference in regards to the parents with children in the Christian schools in the Grand Rapids area. The purpose of this investigation is to explore the expressed attitudes of the Christian parents with children in the Grand Rapids Christian School Association regarding the nature and extent of the parents' demands for Christian schools in the Grand Rapids area.

Parents as a group play a key role in the Christian schools because they supply the children and the money. The extent of participation is dependent upon the parents' attitudes toward Christian education.

In recent years more parents are taking their children out of the Christian schools and placing them in the public schools. This situation makes it imperative for those in leadership roles to be sensitive to the parents' opinions.

The opinions of the parents with children in the Christian schools in the Grand Rapids area are an essential and strategically important basis for decisions concerning the future of the Christian schools in the Grand Rapids area. To know the opinions of the parents will not lighten the decision-making process but now, more

so than ever before, those in the decision-making positions in making their policies must take cognizance of the attitudes of the parents who patronize the Christian schools. In these critical times in the Grand Rapids area there must be more sensitivity to the opinions of the parents. These opinions must be heeded because they are real in their consequences. Donovan and Madaus (1969) state how important opinions are:

> Opinions <u>are</u> facts, a special and complex and varying order of facts to be sure but inescapably they are facts. They describe a structure of values and attitudes which are every bit as real as the condition of buildings, the number and qualifications of personnel, the dollar income and outlay, etc. Secondly, and even more importantly, these values and attitudes which undergird opinions are the ultimate determiners of these so-called "hard facts." Facts, whatever their order of reference, are not inherently either "hard" or "soft." They take on a texture only in the relative context of the value based perceptions of people. The stock-market, for example, may be financially as solid as the Rock of Gibralter, but if enough people <u>feel</u> that it is soft, the fact may well be changed. Conversely, the perception of strength may provide muscle where (by other measures) little or none is present. To put the point more directly, when people perceive the facts as real, they are real in their consequences. (p.3)

It must be realized that opinions do change. They can change even in a relatively short period of time, therefore, a continuous check should be made.

The future of the Christian schools is dependent upon the values and attitudes of the supporting parents. There must be good communication between the school and home in order to make the best decisions regarding the future education of the children in the Christian schools.

Instrument Design

This is the first time a doctoral study has been done to

investigate the attitudes of parents with children in the Christian schools. Therefore, it was necessary to design a new instrument for the purpose of obtaining a profile of opinions to determine the attitudes of these parents toward the Christian schools. (See Appendix B.) The author of this study reviewed the instruments of the various related literature to obtain ideas for the new instrument. The instrument used by John D. Donovan and George F. Madaus in the attitudinal study involving the Catholic schools in Boston, 1969, was most helpful.

The author spent much time asking the leaders in the Christian schools for pertinent issues to be investigated. Their suggestions were used in drawing up the first draft of the instrument.

This instrument was designed specifically for the group of parents with children in the Christian schools, therefore, the jargon or language used by this group was utilized. An example is question two of the questionnaire: "Is it important to you to have the school subjects explained and interpreted from a Christian viewpoint?"

If this questionnaire was to be sent to the general public in Grand Rapids it would have to be completely redesigned. The language in the questionnaire would be changed so those receiving it would understand the terms used. In a questionnaire to the general public statements would be used instead of questions. For example, question one: "Is it important to you to have Bible classes taught in the Christian schools?" (a) Definitely (b) Probably (c) Uncertain (d) Probably not (e) Definitely not;

would be changed to: "Bible classes should be taught in Christian schools." (a) Strongly agree (b) Moderately agree (c) Undecided (d) Moderately disagree (e) Strongly disagree.

Both types of questionnaires, the question type and statement type, were presented to a sample of persons. There was total agreement within this sample of persons that the question type of questionnaire was the best for this unique group. They felt that the question type was more personal.

The format of the questionnaire was designed so that it would be only two pages. Only the most important questions were used. It was understood that if the questionnaire was too long, many people would not take the time to complete and return it.

The first draft of the instrument was presented to the Superintendent of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association for comments and suggestions. Superintendent Elve and the author met each week for three weeks to refine the instrument. Some questions were dropped and many questions were reworded.

The second draft was presented to over twenty educational leaders for refinement. This group included college professors from Calvin College and the University of Michigan, superintendents of schools, principals, teachers, school psychologists, an editor, a minister, and a president of a school board.

The third draft was presented to the above group for approval. It was then pretested in Grand Rapids by housewives, etc. The author interviewed the participants in the pretest to be certain all the questions were understood and to check their response to the questions to be sure they answered the questions the way they

intended to. On the basis of the pretest and interviews, the instrument was finalized.

Method of Securing Data

All 2204 families who have children in the schools of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association constitute the sample. Parents or supporters who do not presently have children in the above named schools were not included in this study. The list of parents was furnished by the Grand Rapids Christian School Association. The addresses are recorded on the computer at the Calvin College Computer Center.

The author had decided that the best way to obtain the data necessary for the study would be to send out questionnaires by mail to all the 2204 families who have children in the schools of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association.

The author did not use personal interviews for the following reasons: 1. There was good control over the survey. 2. A select group of people was involved and the jargon or language that this group uses and understands was employed. 3. There was a pre-test or trial run on a group of Christian parents with children in Christian schools in the Grand Rapids area to make sure the questionnaire was satisfactory. These parents were not members of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association. 4. A high proportion of returns would be received according to previous small studies the Grand Rapids Christian School Association had done in the past. 5. This group of parents is extremely interested in their schools and no doubt would welcome opportunity to express their opinions.

The questionnaires were mailed on November 18, 1971. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter signed by the superintendent and the president of the school board. The cover letter conveyed the message that the opinions of the parents are very important for policy decisions and the school board urges 100 percent cooperation. (See Appendix C.) A self-addressed, stamped envelope was enclosed for returning the questionnaire.

There were immediate follow-up messages sent home by the principals of each school in the Grand Rapids Christian School Association urging full participation in the survey by all parents.

The questionnaires were returned to the investigator's home. The answers from the questionnaires were transferred to I.B.M. answer sheets as they were received. The investigator used the scanning machine at The Calvin College Computer Center to read the I.B.M. answer sheets. The scanning machine automatically reads the pencil marks on the answer sheet and punches the information on computer cards.

All computer cards were punched and checked and double checked for mistakes at Calvin College. There was a trial run of the computer cards on the Calvin College computer which gave a summary result but no detailed analysis. The computer at The University of Michigan was used for in-depth analysis.

Treatment of Data

On December 21, 1971, the information from 1579 questionnaires was fed into the I.B.M. 360 Fortran IV computer at The University of Michigan. This represented approximately 71 percent

return.

After December 21, 1971, another 70 questionnaires were returned but they were too late to be used in the computer analysis. A total of 1647 questionnaires was returned. This figure is approximately 75 percent of the number of questionnaires mailed.

Over 1600 homes took an active part in the study by returning their questionnaires. Not only did they answer the questionnaires but over 800 parents took the time to write comments in response to the following statement on the questionnaire: "On the back of this page or in a separate letter, please express your opinions concerning any matter related to Christian schools which may not have been covered or on which you wish to elaborate or comment." The comments were helpful for gaining insight into why a person responded the way he did.

Dr. M. Clemens Johnson, of The University of Michigan, superivsed the author in the use of the computer programs. The PSCF BLITZ - Bivariate Frequency and Percentage Tables, and Statistics program was used for analysis. This program was developed by the Institute for Social Research of The University of Michigan. The computer printed out over 300 pages for detailed analysis.

The PSCF BLITZ is designed to mass produce bi-variate frequency tables which compare all spread variables with all control variables. In this study the spread variables are the items under the Personal Data part of the questionnaire. For example, the ages of the respondents are read across the top of the table and each column under each age group represents their respective answer.

The control variables are always considered to be the rows of the frequency table. In this study the control variables are the possible answers chosen for each of the twenty-five questions and they are listed along the side of the table. In the cells formed by the intersection of the rows and columns are recorded the percentages responding to the variables in the manner represented by that cell. These tables allow an investigation to determine if there is a relationship between the spread variable and the control variable.

In this study the chi-square test is used to compute the statistical significance of difference in responses between groups. This is a statistical test that enables one to determine, within given limits of probability (P .05 level), when a relationship occurs between the spread variables and the control variables or whether the relationship is due simply to chance.

The spread variables are:

1. The respondent group (husband, wife or both).
2. The age group (21-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56 and over).
3. The levels of education group (elementary graduate, high school graduate, some college, college graduate, beyond college graduate).
4. The vested interest group (teacher, school board member, minister).
5. The use of Christian schools group (use only Christian schools, use Christian and public schools).
6. The school attended by respondent group (attended primarily the Christian elementary and secondary schools, attended

primarily non-Christian schools).

7. The church membership of respondent (member of Christian Reformed Church, member of non-Christian Reformed Church).
8. The level of income group (below $8,000, 8,000-9,999, 10,000-11,999, 12,000-15,999, 16,000 and over).

The control variables are the possible answers chosen for each question. They are: (a) Definitely, (b) Probably, (c) Uncertain, (d) Probably not, and (e) Definitely not.

The analysis in this study will be presented mainly in the terms of percentages because this type of discussion can be the most meaningful for the purposes of this study. The percentages that appear in the tables were rounded to the nearest whole percent. In some cases the parents did not respond so the percentage is not always a total of one hundred percent unless the percentage of these non-responses are added to the percentages of the responses.

In February, 1972, a summary report of the study was published in the Grand Rapids Christian School Association Newsletter because of the interest shown. The Newsletter is sent to approximately 9,000 homes of people who are interested in Christian education in the Grand Rapids area. Appendix D contains the Newsletter report. Also, a summary report was published in the May-June, 1972, issue of The Christian Home and School. The magazine is devoted to the cause of education in the Christian home, and in the parentally controlled Christian day school. The magazine is published ten times annually by the National Union of Christian Schools.

Description of the Sample

The sample in this study, consisting of parents who presently have children in schools of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association, will be discussed in detail in the ensuing paragraphs.

Table 1 presents the age distribution of the parents.

TABLE 1

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF PARENTS WITH CHILDREN IN THE GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Intervals	Number	Percent
21 - 35	331	21%
36 - 45	652	41%
46 - 55	521	33%
56 and over	75	5%
Totals	1579	100%

The distribution in the four age groups shows the highest proportion in the thirty-six to forty-five age group (41%) and lowest proportion in the fifty-six and over age group (5%). Thirty-three percent of the parents are in the forty-six to fifty-five age group and 21 percent in the twenty-one to thirty-five age group. The youngest category is not a large proportion. This fact would suggest that the student population in the future may be declining in the Grand Rapids Christian School Association unless this trend is reversed. Also, it must be realized that the over all school population in the Grand Rapids area is decreasing each year because the birth rate is decreasing.

It is beyond the scope of this study to investigate the reasons why parents have taken their children out of the Christian school and placed them in the public school. However, it is important to know if only the younger parents are taking their children out of the Christian schools or if all age groups are involved. It would be important to know the reasons for the switch. Some of the possible reasons are:

1. Disagreement with the philosophy of Christian education.
2. The cost of Christian education is prohibitive.
3. Too high academic level in the Christian school for slow learners.
4. Disagreement over discipline.
5. Moved out of a Christian school area.

In conclusion, Table 1 points out that the Christian schools will be in demand for many years because the largest proportion of parents are in the thirty-six to forty-five age group and this group will need Christian schools for some years ahead.

TABLE 2

EDUCATION OF PARENTS WITH CHILDREN IN THE GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Intervals	Husband		Wife	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Elementary school graduate	157	10%	159	10%
High school graduate	439	28%	645	41%
Some college	384	24%	436	28%
Four year college graduate	235	15%	209	13%
Other (beyond college)	324	20%	74	5%
No response	40	3%	56	3%
Totals	1579	100%	1579	100%

The parents of the children in the Grand Rapids Christian School Association are well educated. Over half of the parents have had education beyond high school. Over 1600 have gone beyond high school as compared with 1400 who did not go beyond high school. Not only have they gone on to school, a high percentage have a college degree. Thirty-five percent of the men and 18 percent of the women have a college degree. It is interesting to note that one out of five men have gone beyond college. Sixty-two respondents (4%) indicated on their questionnaires that they have their doctorate. One-tenth of the respondents did not finish high school.

TABLE 3

GROSS FAMILY INCOME OF PARENTS WITH CHILDREN IN THE GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Intervals	Number	Percent
Below $8,000	120	8%
8,000 - 9,999	186	12%
10,000 - 11,999	309	20%
12,000 - 15,999	465	29%
Over 16,000	450	28%
No response	49	3%
Totals	1579	100%

Twenty-nine percent of the parents grossed between $12,000 and $15,999 in 1971. This is the largest group of the five categories. Twenty percent earned less than $10,000 in 1971. Twenty-eight percent had incomes in excess of $16,000.

It is evident that these parents as a group earn a great deal of money. The median income for the group in 1971 was approximately $13,500.

TABLE 4

THE RESPONDENT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Intervals	Number	Percent
Husband	479	30%
Wife	268	17%
Both	815	52%
No response	17	1%
Totals	1579	100%

The majority of the parents (52%) worked together on the questionnaire. Thirty percent of the men and only 17 percent of the women filled out the questionnaire.

Over 800 people took time to write additional comments on their questionnaires. This was helpful for gaining insight into why a person responded the way he did.

This response of many written comments and the fact that the majority of the parents worked on the questionnaire together shows the great interest these parents have in the education of their children.

TABLE 5

USE OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY THE PARENTS WITH CHILDREN IN THE GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Intervals	Number	Percent
Christian schools only	1468	93%
Both Christian and public schools	86	6%
No response	25	1%
Totals	1579	100%

The vast majority of the parents (93%) use only the Christian schools. Six percent use both Christian and public schools.

Some of the parents wrote on their questionnaires that they used the public schools also because the academic standards at the Christian school were too high for one of the children in the family who is slower in school work or because the Christian school does not have Special Education classes. One parent wrote:

> In our case, the child spent three years to accomplish two years of learning. Our child has been in the public school for over one year. He has now attained the degree of achievement considered normal for his class and is presently doing work to put him in the upper one-half of his class.

Another parent stated:

> All of our children are in the Christian school with the exception of one, who was referred to Special Education which is not offered in our Christian school.

More than one parent mentioned that the Christian schools should have Special Education classes.

TABLE 6

ATTENDANCE PRIMARILY IN THE CHRISTIAN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS BY PARENTS WITH CHILDREN IN THE GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Intervals	Husband		Wife	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	1039	66%	1003	64%
No	504	32%	526	33%
No response	36	2%	50	3%
Totals	1579	100%	1579	100%

Approximately one-third of the parents have not had the advantage of a Christian school education. About two-thirds of the parents had attended the Christian schools. It is encouraging to the Christian school system that many parents are sending their children to the Christian school because of a desire and not out of family tradition. Over 200 families responded that neither parent had a Christian school education.

TABLE 7

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH BY PARENTS WITH CHILDREN IN THE GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Intervals	Number	Percent
Yes	1389	88%
No	163	10%
No response	27	2%
Totals	1579	100%

The vast majority of the parents (88%) have their membership in the Christian Reformed Church. Only 10 percent of the parents do not belong to the Christian Reformed Church. Other church groups that are involved in the Christian schools are the Reformed Church of America, Baptist, Non-Denominational, and other Protestant churches.

The large majority are from the Christian Reformed Church because this church is responsible for establishing the Christian schools. However, the Christian Reformed Church has no formal authority over the schools, and their organizational structure encourages involvement of parents from other churches with Calvinistic beliefs.

In summary of the sample, the parents with children in the schools of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association are rather young, well educated, have good incomes, use mainly the Christian schools, were primarily educated in Christian schools and are members mainly of the Christian Reformed Church.

CHAPTER V

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents a narrative description of the results of the study with tables and quotations from the respondents to document the narrative.

Data were gathered to explore five areas of attitudes of the parents regarding: 1) the importance of a Christ-centered education; 2) the success the Christian schools are having in the achievement of a Christ-centered education; 3) the social (church) pressures that influence their decisions to send their children to the Christian schools; 4) the motivations for sending their children to the Christian schools; and 5) the financial support of the Christian schools.

Examination of Area One

The attitudes of the parents regarding the importance of a Christ-centered education is the first area of investigation to explore regarding the nature and extent of the parents' demands for Christian schools in the Grand Rapids area.

The questions in area one focus upon attitudes toward the uniqueness or distinctiveness of the Christian schools. A positive response or an important rating was equated with positive attitude

and positive demand for Christian schools. A negative response or a low rating was interpreted as a negative attitude and negative demand for Christian schools.

"Is it important to you to have Bible classes taught in the Christian schools?" elicited the following responses as they appear in Table 8.

TABLE 8

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU TO HAVE BIBLE CLASSES TAUGHT IN THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	1407	89%
Probably	107	7%
Uncertain	27	2%
Probably not	27	2%
Definitely not	6	0%
No response	5	0%
Totals	1579	100%

There is strong agreement among the parents that it is important to have Bible classes taught in the Christian schools. Ninety-six percent of the parents have responded positively as compared with the negative response of only 2 percent.

Over ten parents wrote on their questionnaire that a main reason they sent their children to the Christian school is because the Bible is being taught. The non-Christian Reformed parents are

the main group to write this comment.

Some of the comments that were written are:

> The Bible which is the most important book in the world is being taught.
>
> The Bible is taught, also, prayer.
>
> So my children may learn more about the Bible.
>
> My child wanted the Bible training and Christian companions.
>
> In order to have a good foundation for adult life, daily Bible study other than home and church is a necessity. First heart knowledge and then regular Bible knowledge on a day by day, week by week, and year by year basis.

There is overwhelming agreement within the total group that it is important to have Bible classes taught in the Christian schools. However, the responses to question one are statistically significant regarding the vested interest group and levels of education group. There is no significant difference in the other spread variables.

The responses to the question: "Is it important to you to have Bible classes taught in the Christian schools?" by the parents' level of education are presented in Table 9.

TABLE 9

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU TO HAVE BIBLE CLASSES TAUGHT IN THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS?

Response	PARENTS' LEVEL OF EDUCATION											
	Elementary Graduate		High School Graduate		Some College		College Graduate		Beyond College		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Definitely	150	96%	418	95%	358	94%	193	82%	251	77%	37	92%
Probably	6	4%	11	3%	17	4%	27	11%	45	14%	1	2%
Uncertain	1	0%	4	1%	3	1%	3	2%	13	4%	1	2%
Probably not	..	..	4	1%	4	1%	7	4%	11	3%	1	2%
Definitely not	..	..	2	0%	1	0%	1	0%	2	1%	..	..
No response	..	..	..	..	1	0%	2	1%	2	1%	..	..
Totals	157	100%	439	100%	384	100%	235	100%	324	100%	401	100%

$X^2 = 94.17$ S.

The chi-square for Table 9 is 94.17. This means there is a significant difference in the responses of the five levels of eudcation of the parents at the .05 level.

"Is it important to you to have Bible classes taught in the Christian schools?" The "definitely" response to this question is varied inversely with a higher level of education. The parents with the least formal education are much more definite (96%) regarding their answers. The parents with the most formal education are least definite (77%) regarding their response.

The greatest demand for Bible classes is expressed by the parents with the elementary graduate level of education. They expressed no negative demand. In contrast the parents with college degrees and beyond expressed a 4 percent negative demand.

There is much agreement among the elementary graduate level, high school graduate level and some college level in their respective responses. Also, there is much agreement among the college graduate level and the beyond college level in their responses. However, there is a significant difference in the responses between the group that has less than a college degree and the group that has a college degree and beyond college.

The vested interest group gave their responses to the question: "Is it important to you to have Bible classes taught in the Christian schools?" as shown in Table 10.

TABLE 10

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU TO HAVE BIBLE CLASSES TAUGHT IN THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS?

Response	VESTED INTEREST GROUP							
	Chr. School Teacher or Administrator		Present or Past School Board Member		Chr. Ref. Minister		Not Applicable	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Definitely	112	77%	272	91%	26	64%	997	92%
Probably	23	16%	15	5%	8	20%	61	6%
Uncertain	3	2%	7	2%	3	7%	14	1%
Probably not	6	4%	4	1%	3	7%	14	1%
Definitely not	1	1%	2	1%	1	2%	2	0%
No response	1	0%	1	0%	. .	. .	3	0%
Totals	146	100%	301	100%	41	100%	1091	100%

$X^2 = 67.95$ S.

For Table 10 the chi-square is 67.95. This means there is a significant difference in the responses of the vested interest groups at the .05 level.

"Is it important to you to have Bible classes taught in the Christian schools?" Responses to this question by the vested interest group are less positive and more negative than the non-vested interest group. The vested interest group are people who are influential in the church and in the community by reason of their occupational roles. These people are ministers, teachers,

school administrators, and school board members. They have a vested interest in the decisions to be made and they occupy special positions that give them information for contributing to decision making. The similarities and differences of responses among the influential people and comparing these responses with the other respondents provide important comparative basis for decisions regarding Christian schools.

The Christian teachers and administrators expressed responses that are nearly in agreement with the school board members. The Christian school teachers and administrators expressed a 93 percent positive response and the school board members expressed a 96 percent positive response. The Christian school teachers and administrators expressed a 5 percent negative response and the school board members expressed only a 2 percent negative response. The school board members expressed a 96 percent positive response as compared with an 84 percent positive response by the ministers. The school board members expressed a 2 percent negative response as compared with a 9 percent negative response by the ministers.

The readers attention is directed to the responses of the Christian Reformed ministers in Table 10. There is not unanimity in their responses. It is expected that the general feeling would be the same as one parent expressed on the questionnaire:

> If Bible is not taught in the Christian schools we do not have to have any Christian schools as this is one of the very important reasons why we want our children in a Christian school.

An important comment from another parent:

> Christian education should be for anyone who is willing and able to sacrifice to send their children to a school

where God is recognized as most important in their life. Back to God and His Word is still the beginning of wisdom.

Another parent wrote:

Bible classes are extremely important to us, as parents, but should be taught only by enthusiastic, born-again believers. Not just everybody should be allowed to teach this subject (no reflection on present staff).

The ministers possibly see the Bible classes as a duplication of the educational program of the churches or as one minister wrote:

Answer one depends on the nature of Bible classes, could conflict with the role of the church.

Another minister wrote:

I feel that often, especially on the high school level, the school is doing the work the church should do, or taking over the work from the church—i.e., organizing evangelistic outreach groups, special Bible study groups, or other religiously oriented activities. Often times school teachers and counselors fail to consult with the pastors of local churches on these activities, or about problems students from their churches have about life, school, home, vocation, and relationship to God. Sometimes, to put it very bluntly, I think the school is trying to do everything, even the things that are not in its sphere within the Christian community. It is in this connection that as parents we often run into another problem; namely, that of conflicting views and practices on matters of Christian conduct, especially in the area of amusements. At home the student is trained by the parents that he should not go to movies or engage in certain practices during the week or on Sunday. Yet some teachers openly oppose and even ridicule this home training and either encourage or teach the student to do the opposite. Perhaps some may plead the freedom of the teacher to be himself. But let's not forget he or she has MY children under instruction, and in such case the parents' wishes, and not the teacher's viewpoint, has priority. If not, then the teacher directly contributes to the breakdown of authority and discipline in that house. This problem also arises oftentimes in connection with certain views and teachings about origins, the Bible, the church, etc. This only creates confusion and divided loyalties for the student; and a crisis of confidence and trust on the part of the parents concerning what is going on in the school. These are some of the things that parents and teachers should discuss and come to a common mind on even more so than salaries and buildings, etc.

Some other parents have reservations regarding Bible classes. They write:

> Referring to the teaching of Bible, we feel that somehow this should be improved upon. Comments from our own and other children indicate that they are "turned off"—it is "stuffed down our throats"—"too compulsory and extremely boring." These are almost direct quotes from two of our children who are good students and, we believe, serious Christians. Sometimes we believe it is harming them more than helping them. Should it be compulsory every year?

Another parent responded with:

> I have some reservations on the value of Bible as it is taught in the Christian schools. Much of it is facts which is not of vital importance. Much of it is indoctrination—not education. Even though their Bible teacher (junior high) was a favorite, they hesitated to reveal questions or doubts. They were convinced that this would lower grades immediately.

Another parent said:

> Our uncertainty stems from wondering if it (Bible classes) becomes a crutch for some parents whose homes could be stronger and parent-child relationship better if more Bible study were built into home life and a feeling that we have made Bible study in schools more academic than spiritually rewarding, and that it might better be used at all levels to generate in the students an appreciation of the abundant life in Christ resulting from being completely turned over to Him.

A minister replied:

> The churches and home ought to have better Christian education programs and training making Christian elementary schools less necessary. We feel our children could benefit from a public school education due to strong religious instruction in home and church and some children in public schools could take their place in Christian education at school.

Another minister tells his views on Bible classes and Christian schools.

> I am not interested in Bible teaching at the school because the home and church are very adequate structures and more natural agencies to do this. I like to see an integral Christian teacher teaching his discipline and tying in with the whole of life.
>
> Bible instruction, isolation and/or association are not

> my reasons for desiring Christian education and then when even one teacher is a poor teacher or does not put into practice the teachings of Jesus in his daily performance the cost becomes too high.
>
> I am really in favor of private enterprize education, that a corporation of Christian educators (Christian schools) should sell competitively a superior education.

Another minister commented as follows:

> Bible history has a place as it fits into the whole scheme of history. Interpretive Bible (except that which is incidental in the various classes) belongs to the church, the minister, the catechism class and the other educational aspects of the church life. I do not believe that Bible classes or organized chapel services for that matter, are essential to the being of a Christian school. If opening devotions are conducted and the subjects taught 100 percent from the Biblical perspective we will really have a Christian school.

The above comments point out that the Christian school is established for a reason that is more basic than Bible study classes. All the above comments dealing with the importance of Bible classes in the Christian schools came from parents who are very definite in their response to the next question: "Is it important to you to have the school subjects explained and interpreted from a Christian viewpoint?" The responses to this question are shown in Table 11.

TABLE 11

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU TO HAVE THE SCHOOL SUBJECTS EXPLAINED AND INTERPRETED FROM A CHRISTIAN VIEWPOINT?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	1513	96%
Probably	41	3%
Uncertain	10	1%
Probably not	9	0%
Definitely not	2	0%
No response	4	0%
Totals	1579	100%

There is overwhelming agreement among all parents that it is important to have the school subjects explained and interpreted from a Christian viewpoint. Ninety-nine percent of the parents responded positively as compared with the negative response of less than 1 percent. The parents are more definite in their answer to this question than any other question. Ninety-six percent responded with "definitely" and 3 percent responded "probably." Less than 1 percent are uncertain.

Table 12 is presented to demonstrate there is no significant difference according to age groups regarding their responses to the question: "Is it important to you to have the school subjects explained and interpreted from a Christian viewpoint?"

TABLE 12

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU TO HAVE THE SCHOOL SUBJECTS EXPLAINED AND INTERPRETED FROM A CHRISTIAN VIEWPOINT?

Response	PARENTS' AGE									
	Age 21-35		Age 36-45		Age 46-55		Age 56 and over		No response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Definitely	303	94%	627	96%	495	96%	73	100%	14	100%
Probably	12	4%	14	2%	15	3%	. .	. .	. .	. .
Uncertain	2	1%	5	1%	3	1%	. .	. .	. .	. .
Probably not	2	1%	5	1%	2	0%	. .	. .	. .	. .
Definitely not	. .	. .	1	0%	1	0%	. .	. .	. .	. .
No response	4	0%	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .
Totals	323	100%	652	100%	516	100%	73	100%	14	100%

$X^2 = 23.16$ N.S.

The chi-square for Table 12 is 23.16 and is non-significant although the "definitely" response varied directly with the ages of the parents. The "definitely" response according to age groups is 94 percent by the youngest parents (age 21-35), 96 percent by the next oldest parents (age 36-45), 96 percent by the next oldest parents (age 46-55) and 100 percent by the oldest parents (age 56 and over).

The negative response to this question is less than 1 percent for any age group. This is extremely important because explaining

and interpreting the school subjects from a Christian viewpoint is the basis of the Christian school. A negative response shows a negative demand for Christian schools. If the Christian schools are to exist there must be a great demand for them and there is the demand!

Many parents wrote comments which prove the tremendous importance to them that the school subjects are explained and interpreted from a Christian viewpoint. One parent put it this way:

> "Christ is Lord of all, all things were created by Him and for Him." (Col. 1:16)
> "He upholdeth all things by the word of His power." (Heb. 1:3)
> "The earth is Jehovah's and the fulness thereof." (Ps. 24:1)
> These quotations are enough to understand that school subjects cannot be truly explained and interpreted apart from a Christian viewpoint.

Other comments are:

> I am 100 percent for Christian schools as long as they are distinctively Christian in principle, and will consider it a pleasure to support these schools as I am enabled.

> Basic to all of the questions is whether or not the education is really Christian.
> Christ is and should be central in all our thinking.

> [In the Christian school] Life as a whole is oriented to the reality of the Lordship of Christ and a life-style appropriate to this reality is encouraged.

> To reinforce Christian philosophy of all of life.

One parent summarized his thoughts as follows:

> Christian education arises out of a Reformed view that all of life ought to be of God's concern; therefore, it only follows education must come under His rule. It should be to His honor and regulated by His Word.
> Christian education can never mean that it becomes such by simply inserting "some of this" and adding "more of that." Christian education is that which seeks to be God-centered

because these children are God's. To think less than that is to remove the basic rationale for Christian education. As Fulton Sheen put it once, "Christian education chooses not to let God come in by the back door as it must be done in public education."

Table 13 presents another view regarding how important it is to have the school subjects explained from a Christian viewpoint.

The parents were asked to rank the following statements in the order of their importance to explain their decision to enroll their children in the Christian school. They were asked to put number 1 by their most important reason, number 2 by their next most important reason, etc.

Column one of the results shows the percentage of those who chose that answer for their most important reason. Column two shows their second most important reason, etc.

TABLE 13

RANKING REASONS IN THE ORDER OF THEIR IMPORTANCE TO EXPLAIN THE PARENTS' DECISIONS TO ENROLL THEIR CHILDREN IN THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

	1	2	3	4	5	
a.	2%	10%	28%	39%	14%	a. Christian schools have good discipline.
b.	81%	11%	5%	2%	0%	b. School subjects are explained from a Christian viewpoint.
c.	2%	4%	8%	14%	60%	c. My church encourages me to send my children to the Christian school.
d.	8%	34%	26%	18%	8%	d. Christian schools have superior academic standards.
e.	7%	39%	26%	18%	5%	e. My child can associate with other Christian children in school.

An examination of Table 13 reveals that the most important reason why parents enroll their children in the Christian schools is that the school subjects are explained from a Christian viewpoint. This reason is ranked number one by 81 percent of the parents and the next most important reasons received only 8 percent and 7 percent respectively.

Some parents wrote in their reason for enrolling their children in the Christian schools. The following comments are interpreted by the author to mean the same basic idea as school subjects are explained from a Christian viewpoint:

A total Christian perspective on life is taught.

Interaction with teachers who are committed to a Christian view of all of life.

Subjects taught by evangelical Christians.

To be treated as a Christian person by a Christian teacher to teach the complete child in a Christian way.

Christian schools teach my child to live a Christian life as an adult.

Daily exposure to a dedicated Christian teacher.

Teachers are Christian teachers and have Christian life values.

My child is taught Christ and Christian principles.

Teachers have Christian commitment and desire to teach.

The important rating given to the Christian viewpoint explanation of school subjects shows a very positive demand for Christian schools.

A more detailed discussion of the important reasons why parents enroll their children in Christian schools will be presented in the examination of area four.

This completes the discussion of the first area of investigation dealing with attitudes of the parents regarding Christ-centered education. In conclusion, the overwhelming positive responses to these questions in area one by all parents give strong confirmation of the distinctiveness of Christian school education. There is a strong positive demand for the uniqueness of Christian school education.

Examination of Area Two

The attitudes of the parents regarding the success the Christian schools are having in the achievement of a Christ-centered education is the second area of investigation to explore.

"Do you feel that the Christian school teachers are explaining the school subjects from a Christian viewpoint?" is the first question in area three. The parents' responses to this question are depicted in Table 14.

TABLE 14

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: DO YOU FEEL THAT THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL TEACHERS ARE EXPLAINING THE SCHOOL SUBJECTS FROM A CHRISTIAN VIEWPOINT?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	608	39%
Probably	684	43%
Uncertain	250	16%
Probably not	18	1%
Definitely not	11	1%
No response	8	0%
Totals	1579	100%

Table 14 shows there is positive agreement (82%) among the parents that the Christian school teachers are explaining the school subjects from a Christian viewpoint. There is only a 2 percent negative response. However, many parents are uncertain (16%).

The second area of investigation dealing with the attitudes of the parents regarding the success the Christian schools are having in the achievement of a Christ-centered education is difficult for the parents to give an answer because so many variables enter in.

Some parents have more contact with the classroom and with the teachers than other parents do. Many parents receive information second handed because they do not visit the school or classroom frequently.

Some teachers are able to explain the subjects from a Christian viewpoint better than others. How did the parents answer when one teacher does explain well and another does not? In this situation it seems the parents would most likely answer "probably"; thereby still giving a positive response. Respondents wrote comments on their questionnaires to this effect.

Many parents responded "uncertain" (16%). This reveals that many parents may have far too little contact with the school in order to form an opinion. The parents that have the most contact with the school are the teachers and the school board members. Their responses are shown in Table 15.

TABLE 15

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: DO YOU FEEL THAT THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL TEACHERS ARE EXPLAINING THE SCHOOL SUBJECTS FROM A CHRISTIAN VIEWPOINT?

Response	VESTED INTEREST GROUP							
	Chr. School Teacher or Administrator		Present or Past School Board Member		Chr. Ref. Minister		Not Applicable	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Definitely	54	37%	113	38%	10	24%	431	40%
Probably	64	44%	140	47%	22	54%	458	42%
Uncertain	20	14%	44	15%	8	20%	178	16%
Probably not	3	2%	1	0%	1	2%	13	1%
Definitely not	4	3%	2	0%	. .	. .	5	0%
No response	1	0%	1	0%	. .	. .	6	1%
Totals	146	100%	301	100%	41	100%	1091	100%

$X^2 = 19.83$ N.S.

The chi-square for Table 15 is 19.83 and is non-significant. The parents who are teachers responded the most negatively (5%) to the question: "Do you feel that the Christian school teachers are explaining the school subjects from a Christian viewpoint?" The ministers responded with a 2 percent negative reply and the rest of the parents were only 1 percent negative. This means the teachers are receiving the most negative responses from the parents who have the most contact with the Christian schools. However,

statistically speaking there is no significant difference in the responses of the four categories in the vested interest group (Table 15).

The parents that have been members of the school boards or are presently on the school board are the most positive (85%) in their responses. The parents that are Christian school teachers or administrators are 81 percent positive in their responses and the ministers are 78 percent positive in their responses.

Many of the parents are uncertain about the teachers explaining the school subjects from a Christian viewpoint. Fourteen percent of the teachers, 15 percent of the school board members and 20 percent of the ministers are uncertain.

It is beyond the scope of this study but it would be valuable to survey the older students in this area. There should be research done to see if the students feel the teachers are explaining the school subjects from a Christian viewpoint and how important this area is to the students.

On the positive side there are many good compliments from the parents regarding the Christian teachers explaining the school subjects from a Christian viewpoint. Many parents wrote that they feel it is important that their children have contact with Christian teachers. They want their children to imitate "the exemplary life of Christian teachers."

Still other parents stated how important it is to them that their children have "daily exposure to a dedicated Christian teacher," and that the teachers "teach the complete child in a Christian way."

One parent expressed his feelings in this way:

> More emphasis should be placed on the children's personal relationship to their God. When the teachers tell the students that they themselves are happy born-again Christians, and encourage the students to commit their lives to Christ, we can start to say we have Christian schools. Up to that point we have a good private school system, better than the public school system, but not a Christian school.

Another parent states her thoughts:

> We often times wonder how long we will be able to afford to have our children stay in the Christian schools. We are willing to sacrifice as long as we feel they are learning all subjects from a Christian viewpoint.

The dominant concern, put in the words of one parent, is this:

> I believe that most parents would be willing to make almost any sacrifice necessary financially for Christian education, if they were really convinced and confident that the education was distinctively, positively, and aggressively Christian in all subjects.

The second question in the area of the attitudes of the parents regarding the success the Christian schools are having in the achievement of a Christ-centered education is: "Do you feel that the Christian school teachers are teaching values that are compatible with your values as a parent?" This question elicited the following responses as reported in Table 16.

TABLE 16

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: DO YOU FEEL THAT THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL TEACHERS ARE TEACHING VALUES THAT ARE COMPATIBLE WITH YOUR VALUES AS A PARENT?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	633	40%
Probably	665	42%
Uncertain	218	14%
Probably not	35	2%
Definitely not	18	1%
No response	10	1%
Totals	1579	100%

Table 16 reveals the parents do feel that the Christian school teachers are teaching values that are compatible with their own values. Eighty-two percent of the parents responded positively to the question in comparison to only 3 percent who gave a negative response. Fourteen percent gave an uncertain response.

There is no statistical difference in the response of the spread variables. This means there is no significant difference between any special groups of parents.

The written responses of the parents show that they consider the values of the Christian teachers to be very important. The majority of the parents have a value system demanding that their children are educated in a Christian atmosphere that is compatible with their home environment. They write:

Christian schools represent the best in education pursuant to my Christian values.

Children are taught Christian philosophy and discipline-morals, ethics, etc., in non-academic situations by examples as well as admonitions.

Teachers are Christian teachers and have Christian life values.

Dedicated Christian teachers and training for living the Christian life.

My child is taught Christ and Christian principles.

Teachers help the child to establish meaningful relationship with Christ.

I have full confidence in the teachers and school administrators that my children are getting what they need to mature into Christian adulthood.

Teachers have values compatible to my own.

The third question in the area of the attitudes of the parents regarding the success the Christian schools are having in the achievement of a Christ-centered education is: "Do you feel that the discipline in the Christian schools is compatible with your views on discipline?" This question elicited the following responses as represented in Table 17.

TABLE 17

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: DO YOU FEEL THAT THE DISCIPLINE IN THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS IS COMPATIBLE WITH YOUR VIEWS ON DISCIPLINE?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	611	39%
Probably	619	39%
Uncertain	197	13%
Probably not	85	5%
Definitely not	62	4%
No response	5	0%
Totals	1579	100%

There is overall agreement among the parents that the discipline in the Christian schools is compatible with their views on discipline. Seventy-eight percent of the parents responded positively as compared with a 9 percent negative response. Thirteen percent of the parents are uncertain.

Parents wrote comments to explain why they responded negatively. The written comments of the parents show that most of these parents feel the schools are not strict enough but a few parents think the schools are too strict. Over twenty-five parents wrote that the "discipline is becoming too lax." Other comments that were written are, "We encourage stricter discipline," and, "We want strong discipline." In contrast a few said the "Christian school is too strict." Two other comments are as follows:

Students are being punished repeatedly for petty infractions.

In our Christian schools some disciplinary methods are too punitive, strict and old fashioned inhibiting some spontaneity.

A few parents commented about discipline being of the home. A mother wrote the following comment:

> I am very disappointed in the "ho-hum" attitude of many parents of Christian school children. Discipline in the home seems to be on the decrease; is it because parents are leaving it entirely up to the school and church? In my opinion, discipline should begin in the home and remain the primary source of it; yes, even through high school.

The last question in the area of the attitudes of the parents regarding the success the Christian schools are having in the achievement of a Christ-centered education is: "As compared with the public schools, do you feel the Christian schools are more desirable morally for your child?" This question elicited the following responses as shown in Table 18.

TABLE 18

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: AS COMPARED WITH THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, DO YOU FEEL THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS ARE MORE DESIRABLE MORALLY FOR YOUR CHILD?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	1115	71%
Probably	284	18%
Uncertain	115	7%
Probably not	40	3%
Definitely not	22	1%
No response	3	0%
Totals	1579	100%

There is overwhelming agreement among the parents that the Christian schools are more desirable morally for their children as compared with the public schools. Eighty-nine percent of the parents gave a positive response to this question. Only 4 percent gave a negative response and 7 percent are uncertain.

Table 19 presents a comparison of responses from parents who have children attending Christian schools only with responses from parents who have children attending both Christian and public schools regarding the question: "As compared with the public schools, do you feel the Christian schools are more desirable morally for your child?"

TABLE 19

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: AS COMPARED WITH THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, DO YOU FEEL THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS ARE MORE DESIRABLE MORALLY FOR YOUR CHILD?

Response	USE OF SCHOOLS					
	Children Attend Christian Schools ONLY		Children Attend Christian and Public Schools		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Definitely	1050	72%	49	56%	16	64%
Probably	261	18%	19	22%	4	16%
Uncertain	103	7%	9	10%	3	12%
Probably not	33	2%	6	7%	1	4%
Definitely not	17	1%	4	5%	1	4%
No response	3	0%	. .	. .	. .	. .
Totals	1467	100%	87	100%	25	100%

$X^2 = 22.38$ S.

The chi-square is 22.38 for Table 19. There is a significant difference at the .05 level between the responses of the parents who have children attending the Christian schools only and the responses of the parents who have children attending both Christian and public schools.

Table 19 reveals 90 percent of the parents who have children attending the Christian schools only as compared with 78 percent of the parents who have children attending both Christian and public

schools responded that the Christian schools are more desirable morally for their children. A 3 percent negative response came from the parents who have children in the Christian schools only as compared with a 12 percent (only 10 families) negative response from parents who have children in both the Christian and public schools. Parents who use only the Christian schools responded with a 7 percent uncertain response and the parents who use both public and Christian schools responded with a 10 percent uncertain response.

It should be pointed out that most parents do not send their children to the Christian schools simply because they consider the Christian schools to be more desirable morally. The Christian schools are by no means perfect but they naturally would be more desirable morally for these parents because the basic philosophy of the home and school are in agreement.

The following are a few interesting comments written by the parents regarding this question:

> We have never regretted our decision to send our children to the Christian schools. While no school is perfect, the Christian schools are essential for the students, the church, and for the nation.
>
> We sent our children for four years to the public schools. They attended Christian first. I can only describe the public school as a jungle. I do not refer to the race problem. It was teachers, children, black and white. Our children asked to go back to the Christian school. They work together like a family. They care about their students. They take pride in what other Christians know of their ability to teach.
>
> Our children attended the public school at one time. There is no comparison.
>
> Public schools in my area are bad.
>
> Unbelievable conditions in public schools today.

> A point to ponder--Are we justified in setting ourselves completely apart from the world in the field of education? A thought occurred to me, perhaps the reason for the poor conditions of the public schools is that they have no one to lead, advise, reprimand, etc., them. In Grand Rapids, a good percentage of true Christians in the public school systems would act as a good influence, and maybe save them from total disaster. They have no one to lead them or to set good examples for them. The Christian boys and girls would be a "salt to savour" so to speak.

A parent feels there is a lot of room for improvement in two mentioned Christian schools. He writes:

> The dress code and morals at [two Christian schools are mentioned] are getting worse all the time. Parents can't control hair length on boys, smoking and necking right on the grounds of school. General morals are at an all time low. I often hear myself saying lately, if standards are continually being lowered to public school standards, why pay all that tuition. There are a lot of good teachers at [same two Christian schools mentioned] but they must have more help from parents.

There is strong positive agreement between the parents who have children in the Christian schools only and the parents who have children in the Christian schools and public schools that the Christian schools are more desirable morally for their children.

This completes the second area of investigation in this study. In conclusion, the overwhelming positive responses to the questions in the second area of investigation by all parents give strong confirmation that the Christian schools are successful in achieving a Christ-centered education. There is a strong positive demand for the distinctiveness of Christian school education.

Examination of Area Three

The third area of investigation to explore is the attitudes of the parents regarding the social (church) pressures that influence their decisions to send their children to the Christian schools.

The first question in the third area of investigation is: "Do you feel that your church pressures you into sending your child to the Christian school?" The responses to this question are presented in Table 20.

TABLE 20

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CHURCH PRESSURES YOU INTO SENDING YOUR CHILD TO THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL?

Responses	Number	Percent
Definitely	314	20%
Probably	267	17%
Uncertain	104	7%
Probably not	211	13%
Definitely not	677	43%
No response	6	0%
Totals	1579	100%

An examination of Table 20 reveals that the majority of the parents feel that their church does not pressure them into sending their children to the Christian school. Fifty-six percent of the parents do not feel church pressure as compared to 37 percent of the parents that do feel church pressure. Seven percent of the parents are uncertain.

A comparison between the responses of parents who are members of the Christian Reformed Church with the responses of parents who are not members of the Christian Reformed Church will

give more insight into the issue of church pressure. These responses are presented in Table 21.

TABLE 21

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CHURCH PRESSURES YOU INTO SENDING YOUR CHILD TO THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL?

Response	CHURCH MEMBERSHIP			
	Christian Reformed Church		Non-Christian Reformed Church	
	N	%	N	%
Definitely	302	22%	8	5%
Probably	259	19%	2	1%
Uncertain	100	7%	4	3%
Probably not	205	15%	3	2%
Definitely not	520	37%	144	88%
No response	3	0%	2	1%
Totals	1389	100%	163	100%
$X^2 = 187.29$ S.				

The chi-square is 187.29 for Table 21. There is a significant difference at the .05 level between the responses of the parents who are members of the Christian Reformed Church and the responses of the parents who are not members of the Christian Reformed Church. Fifty-two percent of the Christian Reformed Church parents do not feel church pressure and 90 percent of non-Christian Reformed Church parents do not. Only 6 percent of non-Christian Reformed Church parents feel church pressure as compared

with 41 percent of Christian Reformed Church parents.

The Christian Reformed Church parents feel more church pressure than the non-Christian Reformed Church parents. One parent wrote on the questionnaire a comment about church pressure regarding the Christian Reformed Church:

> Our church puts too much pressure on members for Christian schools. Every week collections are taken, it is in the budget and drives are constantly for Christian schools. Mission programs are almost non-existant because of this. We know several families who have left the Christian Reformed Church because of this pressure for the Christian schools.

A Christian Reformed minister had this comment about church pressure:

> I am very much opposed to Classical and Synodical pressure upon churches to establish Christian schools and I am also opposed to consistorial pressure upon member parents to send their children to Christian schools. I am also opposed to making Christian school support (especially when the test is enrollment) a criterion for serving in the church council.
>
> I know our schools presently are getting nervous about their survival and they keep ringing their charges about the Lordship of Christ and the covenant obligation and they try to manipulate ministers with luncheons to intensify the public relations work for them. The campaign is carried on in such a way that one is made to feel that his freedom of choice has been taken away. I am very tired of this and am becoming increasingly resistive to it.

An examination according to the age groups is necessary to determine if the younger and older parents answer alike regarding church pressure. The responses according to age are presented in Table 22.

TABLE 22

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CHURCH PRESSURES YOU INTO SENDING YOUR CHILD TO THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL?

Response	PARENTS' AGE									
	Age 21-35		Age 36-45		Age 46-55		Age 56 and over		No response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Definitely	71	22%	123	19%	105	20%	14	19%	1	7%
Probably	50	15%	122	19%	83	16%	8	11%	4	29%
Uncertain	30	9%	42	6%	29	6%	3	4%	. .	. .
Probably not	52	16%	88	14%	62	12%	8	11%	1	7%
Definitely not	118	37%	276	42%	235	46%	39	54%	8	57%
No response	2	1%	1	0%	2	0%	1	1%	. .	. .
Totals	323	100%	652	100%	516	100%	73	100%	14	100%

$X^2 = 27.08$ N.S.

The chi-square for Table 22 is 27.08 and non-significant.

An examination of Table 22 reveals that all age groups feel approximately an equal amount of church pressure. Thirty-seven percent of the twenty-one to thirty-five age group, 38 percent of the thirty-six to forty-five age group, 36 percent of the forty-six to fifty-five age group and 30 percent of the fifty-six and over age group feel church pressure.

The majority of each age group do not feel that their church pressures them into sending their children to the Christian schools.

Fifty-three percent of the twenty-one through thirty-five age group, 56 percent of the thirty-six through forty-five age group, 58 percent of the forty-six through fifty-five age group and 65 percent of the fifty-six and over age group do not feel church pressure.

The last question in the area of the attitudes of parents regarding the social (church) pressure that influences their decisions to send their children to the Christian schools is: "Do you feel that your pastor is committed to Christian schools?" This question elicited the following responses as shown in Table 23.

TABLE 23

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR PASTOR IS COMMITTED TO CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	1166	74%
Probably	188	12%
Uncertain	103	7%
Probably not	30	2%
Definitely not	29	2%
No response	63	3%
Totals	1579	100%

Table 23 shows that 86 percent of the respondents are positive in their feeling that their pastor is committed to Christian schools. Only 4 percent are negative and 7 percent are

uncertain. Three percent did not respond.

There is a difference in the responses of the parents depending on what church they attend. Table 24 presents the responses from parents according to their church membership.

TABLE 24

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR PASTOR IS COMMITTED TO CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS?

Response	CHURCH MEMBERSHIP			
	Christian Reformed Church		Non-Christian Reformed Church	
	N	%	N	%
Definitely	1093	79%	51	31%
Probably	167	12%	19	12%
Uncertain	59	4%	44	27%
Probably not	8	1%	22	13%
Definitely not	5	0%	24	15%
No response	57	4%	3	2%
Totals	1389	100%	163	100%
$X^2 = 472.12$ S.				

The chi-square for Table 24 is 472.12 and is significant at the .05 level.

An examination of Table 24 reveals 91 percent of the Christian Reformed Church members and 43 percent of the non-Christian Reformed Church members feel that their pastor is committed to Christian schools. Only 1 percent of the Christian Reformed Church

members responded negatively as compared with 28 percent of the non-Christian Reformed Church members. Only 4 percent of the Christian Reformed Church members are uncertain as compared with 27 percent of the non-Christian Reformed Church members. There is a major difference in the responses of the parents depending on their church membership.

Table 25 presents the responses of the vested interest group to the question: "Do you feel that your pastor is committed to Christian schools?" The readers attention is directed to the Christian Reformed ministers responses only.

TABLE 25

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR PASTOR IS COMMITTED TO CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS?

Response	VESTED INTEREST GROUP							
	Chr. School Teacher or Administrator		Present or Past School Board Member		Chr. Ref. Minister		Not Applicable	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Definitely	116	79%	220	73%	25	61%	805	74%
Probably	18	12%	39	13%	12	30%	119	11%
Uncertain	4	3%	17	6%	1	2%	81	8%
Probably not	1	1%	4	1%	. .	. .	25	2%
Definitely not	. .	. .	6	2%	. .	. .	23	2%
No response	7	5%	15	5%	3	7%	38	3%
Totals	146	100%	301	100%	41	100%	1091	100%

$X^2 = 29.17$ S.

The chi-square for Table 25 is 29.17 and is significant at the .05 level. This table shows the Christian Reformed ministers registering a 91 percent positive response regarding their own feelings toward a commitment to the Christian schools. None of the ministers registered a negative feeling, however, 9 percent are uncertain or did not respond. The responses of the ministers might be taken as a measure of actual support to the Christian schools.

The members of the Christian Reformed Church were very

accurate in their perceived pastoral support for the Christian schools. As presented in Table 24, the Christian Reformed Church members gave a 91 percent positive response to their pastoral commitment to Christian schools.

The Christian Reformed minister is very influential regarding the support of Christian schools. One parent wrote this comment:

> Our church has been vacant [without minister] for one year, which situation seems to have an adverse effect on the loyalty of its constituency.

A minister wrote his views about Christian nurture and Christian schools:

> I view Christian nurture as an absolute necessity. I do not view a Christian school as such. Although helpful in Christian nurture, the Christian school often insulates the child from "the world" to a harmful degree, especially from other races. Christian schools too often prompt our people to spend too much on "self" to the neglect of others and of other Kingdom causes.

This completes the third area of investigation. In conclusion, there is some social (church) pressure on the parents to send their children to the Christian schools, but the majority do not feel pressured.

Examination of Area Four

The fourth area of investigation to explore is the attitudes of the parents regarding the motivations in sending their children to the Christian schools.

"Is it important to you that your child can associate with other Christian children in school?" is the first question in area four. The parents responses to this question are depicted in Table 26.

TABLE 26

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU THAT YOUR CHILD CAN ASSOCIATE WITH OTHER CHRISTIAN CHILDREN IN SCHOOL?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	1314	83%
Probably	189	12%
Uncertain	43	3%
Probably not	25	2%
Definitely not	6	0%
No response	2	0%
Totals	1579	100%

An examination of Table 26 reveals that 95 percent of the parents responded positively as compared to a 2 percent negative reply. Three percent are uncertain whether or not it is important to them that their children can associate with other Christian children in school.

The overwhelming positive response demonstrates a positive demand for Christian schools.

The respondents were presented with the question: "Based on academic quality alone, do you prefer the Christian schools to the public schools for your child?" Their answers are presented in Table 27.

TABLE 27

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: BASED ON ACADEMIC QUALITY ALONE, DO YOU PREFER THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR YOUR CHILD?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	1136	72%
Probably	192	12%
Uncertain	113	7%
Probably not	68	4%
Definitely not	61	4%
No response	9	1%
Totals	1579	100%

An examination of Table 27 reveals that based on academic quality alone, 84 percent of the parents prefer the Christian schools to the public schools. Eight percent of the parents responded negatively and 7 percent are uncertain.

Some parents wrote comments about the academic quality of Christian schools:

> Sometimes, I feel the Christian school system is so "hepped up" on quality education for the "smarties" that the average kid or under average gets discouraged at the high standards. He quits trying to make it. My two boys were in that category and were glad to go to a public high school where they were not under pressure for scholastic excellence quite so much.

Another parent who took their son out of the Christian school had this comment:

> I feel if a child isn't doing well in our schools it is wise to send him or her to a school that has subjects fit for him or her. Our son is doing well in the public school taking

machine shop and mechanical drawing; more in his line.

Another parent wrote her comments about the quality of education in the Christian schools:

> Three of my children spent the first important three to four years in the public schools and they were all lacking in reading ability which is what is stressed in the Christian schools. From this it has caused my children to have a hard time in other subjects because of this reading problem. I am grateful for all the help and encourgement the teachers have given them since they have been in Christian. I only wish they had started in a Christian school.

The overwhelming positive responses of the parents regarding the academic quality in the Christian schools demonstrate a positive demand for the Christian school system in the Grand Rapids area.

The parents were asked to rate the academic quality of the Christian schools in their area of the city. Their responses are depicted in Table 28.

TABLE 28

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: IN YOUR OPINION, HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE ACADEMIC QUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS IN YOUR AREA OF THE CITY?

Response	Number	Percent
Excellent	971	61%
Good	548	35%
Fair	37	2%
Poor	. .	. .
Uncertain	12	1%
No response	11	1%
Totals	1579	100%

An examination of Table 28 reveals that 61 percent of the parents rate the academic quality of the Christian schools in their area as excellent. A rating of good was given by 35 percent and 2 percent rate the schools as fair. No parents rate the Christian schools as poor. Two percent of the parents are uncertain or did not respond.

The parents were asked to rate the academic quality of the public schools in their area of the city. Their responses are depicted in Table 29.

TABLE 29

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: IN YOUR OPINION, HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE ACADEMIC QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR AREA OF THE CITY?

Response	Number	Percent
Excellent	118	8%
Good	611	39%
Fair	524	33%
Poor	141	9%
Uncertain	165	10%
No response	20	1%
Totals	1579	100%

An examination of Table 29 reveals that 8 percent of the parents rate the academic quality of the public schools in their area of the city as excellent. A rating of good is given by 39 percent and a rating of fair is given by 33 percent of the parents.

Nine percent rate the public schools as poor. Ten percent of the parents are uncertain and 1 percent did not respond.

A comparison between the responses of the parents according to level of income regarding the rating of the academic quality of the public schools in their area of the city is presented in Table 30.

TABLE 30

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: IN YOUR OPINION, HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE ACADEMIC QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR AREA OF THE CITY?

Response	PARENTS' LEVEL OF INCOME											
	Below $8,000		$8,000 - 9,999		$10,000 - 11,999		$12,000 - 15,999		Over $16,000		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Excellent	. .	. .	14	8%	24	8%	29	6%	48	11%	3	6%
Good	34	28%	64	34%	109	35%	196	42%	192	42%	16	33%
Fair	43	36%	57	31%	108	35%	156	34%	146	32%	14	29%
Poor	19	16%	21	11%	35	11%	35	7%	27	6%	4	8%
Uncertain	23	19%	29	16%	28	9%	46	10%	34	8%	5	10%
No response	1	1%	1	0%	5	2%	3	1%	3	1%	7	14%
Totals	120	100%	186	100%	309	100%	465	100%	450	100%	49	100%

$X^2 = 128.62$ S.

The chi-square is 128.62 for Table 30. There is a significant difference at the .05 level between the responses of the parents according to level of income.

The attention of the readers is directed to a comparison of the responses of parents with the lowest level of income (below $8,000) and the highest level of income (over $16,000). Not one parent of the lowest income level rates the academic quality of the public schools in their area of the city as excellent, however, 11 percent of the parents in the highest income level rate the public schools as excellent. Twenty-eight percent of the parents in the lowest income level rate the public schools as good and 42 percent of the parents in the highest level gave a rating of good. Thirty-six percent of the lowest income parents gave a rating of fair and 32 percent of the highest income parents rate the public schools as fair. Sixteen percent of the lowest income parents gave a rating of poor and 6 percent of the highest income parents rate them as poor. The lowest and highest income level parents are uncertain with 19 percent and 8 percent respectively.

It is evident from Table 30 that the parents with highest levels of income live in areas of the city where the academic level of the public schools is perceived as being higher than in the areas where the parents with lowest incomes live.

The parents were asked the question: "Have you seriously considered sending your child to the public school recently?" Their responses are depicted in Table 31.

TABLE 31

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: HAVE YOU SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED SENDING YOUR CHILD TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOL RECENTLY?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	219	14%
Probably	116	7%
Uncertain	64	4%
Probably not	117	8%
Definitely not	1047	66%
No response	16	1%
Totals	1579	100%

An examination of Table 31 reveals that 21 percent of the parents have seriously considered sending their children to the public schools recently. However, 74 percent of the parents have not considered using the public schools for their childrens' education. Four percent of the parents replied uncertain in their responses.

Table 32 is presented to depict the responses of the parents according to level of income regarding the question: "Have you seriously considered sending your child to the public school recently?"

TABLE 32

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: HAVE YOU SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED SENDING YOUR CHILD TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOL RECENTLY?

Response	PARENTS' LEVEL OF INCOME											
	Below $8,000		$8,000 - 9,999		$10,000 - 11,999		$12,000 - 15,999		Over $16,000		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Definitely	14	12%	34	18%	53	17%	55	12%	59	13%	4	8%
Probably	11	9%	10	5%	20	6%	40	9%	30	7%	5	10%
Uncertain	5	4%	14	8%	17	6%	14	3%	10	2%	4	8%
Probably not	8	7%	11	6%	28	9%	44	9%	23	5%	3	6%
Definitely not	81	67%	114	61%	187	61%	308	66%	324	72%	33	68%
No response	1	1%	3	2%	4	1%	4	1%	4	1%	. .	. .
Totals	120	100%	186	100%	309	100%	465	100%	450	100%	49	100%

$X^2 = 39.85$ S.

The chi-square is 39.85 for Table 32 and is significant at the .05 level.

The attention of the readers is directed to a comparison of the responses from parents with the lowest level of income (below $8,000) and the highest level of income (over $16,000). Twenty-one percent of the parents with the lowest income responded that they have seriously considered sending their children to the public school recently. Twenty percent of the parents with the highest level of income have considered doing the same. Seventy-four percent of the parents in the lowest level of income have not considered sending their children to the public school as compared to 77 percent of the parents with the highest level of income. Four percent of the parents in the lowest income level and 2 percent of the parents in the highest income level are uncertain.

Table 32 demonstrates that the responses of the parents with the lowest level of income are approximately the same as the responses of the parents with the highest level of income in regards to the question: "Have you seriously considered sending your child to the public school recently?"

The parents of children in the Christian schools in Grand Rapids were asked: "Do you feel that non-Christian parents should be allowed to enroll their children in the Christian schools?" Their responses are presented in Table 33.

TABLE 33

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: DO YOU FEEL THAT NON-CHRISTIAN PARENTS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO ENROLL THEIR CHILDREN IN THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	650	41%
Probably	238	15%
Uncertain	242	15%
Probably not	149	10%
Definitely not	290	18%
No response	10	1%
Totals	1579	100%

An examination of Table 33 reveals that the majority (56%) of the parents with children in the schools of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association feel that non-Christian parents should be allowed to enroll their children in the Christian schools. Twenty-eight percent of the parents are negative in their response and 16 percent are uncertain or did not respond.

Many parents gave a positive response, adding the comment, "If they pay the cost."

Other parents gave a negative response and wrote comments indicating that they feel these new parents would not pay their fair amount and this would only raise the tuition.

Another parent explained why she gave a negative response:

> I feel quite strongly against having children of non-Christians attend our schools. The influence works the wrong way. I went to high school with many non-Christians in

attendance. It seemed very unfair to always have to be on the defensive in our own type of school. Many Christian students went along with the ideas of the non-Christian students.

Other parents explained why they gave a positive response:

With some proper safeguards, I believe it would be for the good of both Christian children and those whose parents are not committed to Christ if they associate with each other in a Christian school setting. In that way non-Christian children get exposed to a Christian atmosphere and the children of Christian parents get educated in a more real life-like situation.

I would like to see that as many non-Christian children as possible could attend the Christian school system. Our children, and teachers also, can have a very positive influence on non-Christians. It is very bad when we become so separated from the rest of our society to the extent that it becomes an exclusive club or a rich man's school.

In Table 34 the responses are presented regarding the question: "Should we encourage the parents of minority group children, who believe in Christ, to enroll their children in Christian schools?"

TABLE 34

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: SHOULD WE ENCOURAGE THE PARENTS OF MINORITY GROUP CHILDREN, WHO BELIEVE IN CHRIST, TO ENROLL THEIR CHILDREN IN CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	1178	75%
Probably	225	14%
Uncertain	122	8%
Probably not	16	1%
Definitely not	30	2%
No response	8	0%
Totals	1579	100%

Table 34 shows an overwhelming (89%) positive response indicating their desire to encourage the parents of minority group children, who believe in Christ, to enroll their children in Christian schools, while 3 percent replied negatively. Eight percent are uncertain.

Many parents who responded positively added the comment: "If they pay the cost."

Some parents wrote comments indicating why they responded in the negative:

> You would run into a problem with them, not paying their amount in tuition and that would only raise our tuition again.
>
> I do not agree with the way they put minority children into our schools at a reduced rate, or in some cases free.
>
> Allow, yes. Encourage, no---especially after all the questions about cutting expenses.

No more or less than any other, and at the same expense.

> I answered in this way [negatively] because I feel that parents must be wholly committed to the cause of Christian education, and be willing to make the financial sacrifices that it takes to send them to a Christian school. They should not be talked into sending their children to a Christian school. Tuition based on "ability to pay" is kind of a vague thing. "Committed" parents may be willing to pay much more than parents who are sending their children to the Christian schools because they are encouraged to do so. This question, to me, has nothing to do with minority groups—we should, in my opinion, not encourage any parents to send their children to the Christian schools, but let them make the choice entirely on their own—minority group parents as well as other parents.

The following quote is from a parent who wrote why she responded positively indicating her desire to encourage the parents of minority group children to enroll their children in Christian schools:

> Our schools are in desperate need of minority race children, non-Dutch children, and other denomination children to achieve a more balanced view of life.

The last segment of area four is the ranking of statements in the order of their importance to explain the parents' decisions to enroll their children in the Christian schools. The results are presented in Table 35.

TABLE 35

RANKING REASONS IN THE ORDER OF THEIR IMPORTANCE TO EXPLAIN THE PARENTS' DECISIONS TO ENROLL THEIR CHILDREN IN THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

	1	2	3	4	5	
a.	2%	10%	28%	39%	14%	a. Christian schools have good discipline.
b.	81%	11%	5%	2%	0%	b. School subjects are explained from a Christian viewpoint.
c.	2%	4%	8%	14%	60%	c. My church encourages me to send my children to the Christian school.
d.	8%	34%	26%	18%	8%	d. Christian schools have superior academic standards.
e.	7%	39%	26%	18%	5%	e. My child can associate with other Christian children in school.

An examination of Table 35 reveals the most important reason why parents enroll their children in the Christian schools is that the school subjects are explained from a Christian viewpoint. This reason is ranked number one by 81 percent of the parents and the next most important reasons received only 8 percent and 7 percent respectively.

The second most important reason why parents enroll their children in the Christian schools is that their children can associate with other Christian children in school.

The third most important reason why parents enroll their children in the Christian schools is because the Christian schools have superior academic standards.

The fourth most important reason according to the parents' ranking is that Christian schools have good discipline.

The least important reason according to the rank order of why parents enroll their children in the Christian schools is because their church encourages them to send their children to the Christian schools.

Parents wrote comments to explain why they enrolled their children in the Christian schools. The comments are religiously orientated. For example, over forty parents wrote comments explaining that at the time of the baptism of their children they promised to give them a Christian training.

Another frequently written comment is that the Bible demands parents to give their children a Christian education.

Examples of their comments are as follows:

The Bible demands this kind of education.

To study under dedicated Christian teachers.

A total Christian perspective on life is taught.

The total environment, Christian goals and philosophy makes it natural to send my child to Christian schools.

Atmosphere of Christ first in our lives.

Christian schools teach my child to live a Christian life.

Christian school represents the best in education pursuant to my Christian value commitment to my children.

My Christian conscience demands it if available.

Home, school and church provide a concerted approach to life—not fragmented.

Both my wife and myself experienced the blessings of Christian education. We know how our parents suffered and sacrificed in order to send us to Christian schools. We are sure that church, home and school are the three basic institutions to save our children for Christ.

This completes the fourth area of investigation. In

conclusion, the basic motivation of the parents for sending their children to the Christian schools is a religious one. The most important reason expressed by the parents is that the school subjects are explained from a Christian viewpoint. This overwhelming response for a Christ-centered education creates a strong positive demand for the distinctiveness of Christian school education.

Examination of Area Five

The fifth area of investigation to explore is the attitudes of the parents regarding the financial support of the Christian schools.

The first question in the fifth area of investigation is: "Would you consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating physical education classes, in order to maintain a Christian school?" The responses to this question are presented in Table 36.

TABLE 36

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: WOULD YOU CONSENT TO CUTTING THE COST OF EDUCATION BY ELIMINATING PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	393	25%
Probably	333	21%
Uncertain	157	10%
Probably not	236	15%
Definitely not	455	29%
No response	5	0%
Totals	1579	100%

An examination of Table 36 reveals that the parents are almost equally divided regarding their consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating physical education classes, in order to maintain a Christian school. The affirmative responses total 46 percent, while 44 percent are negative. Ten percent are uncertain.

The next question asked of the parents was: "Would you consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating competitive sports, in order to maintain a Christian school?" Their responses are depicted in Table 37.

TABLE 37

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: WOULD YOU CONSENT TO CUTTING THE COST OF EDUCATION BY ELIMINATING COMPETITIVE SPORTS, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	421	27%
Probably	331	21%
Uncertain	192	12%
Probably not	233	15%
Definitely not	398	25%
No response	4	0%
Totals	1579	100%

Table 37 shows that 48 percent of the respondents would consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating competitive sports, in order to maintain a Christian school, while 40 percent would not consent. Twelve percent are uncertain.

Respondents were asked to reply to the following: "Would you consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating art, in order to maintain a Christian school?" Their responses are presented in Table 38.

TABLE 38

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: WOULD YOU CONSENT TO CUTTING THE COST OF EDUCATION BY ELIMINATING ART, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	335	21%
Probably	339	21%
Uncertain	177	11%
Probably not	301	19%
Definitely not	419	27%
No response	8	1%
Totals	1579	100%

An examination of Table 38 reveals that 42 percent of the parents would consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating art, in order to maintain a Christian school, while 46 percent would not consent. Eleven percent are uncertain.

The respondents were presented with the question: "Would you consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating music, in order to maintain a Christian school?" Their responses are presented in Table 39.

TABLE 39

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: WOULD YOU CONSENT TO CUTTING THE COST OF EDUCATION BY ELIMINATING MUSIC, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	201	12%
Probably	232	15%
Uncertain	157	10%
Probably not	357	23%
Definitely not	627	40%
No response	5	0%
Totals	1579	100%

An examination of Table 39 reveals that the majority (63%) of the parents would not consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating music, in order to maintain a Christian school, while 27 percent would consent. Ten percent are uncertain.

Many parents wrote that they consider physical education classes, competitive sports, art and music as "frills."

Two examples of comments about why parents would consent to eliminating these classes are:

> Responses to questions nine through twelve are not quite clearly answering what I feel. By all means we would like to keep music, sports, physical education, etc. If it should ever become a total necessity to either eliminate them or close our schools, then only would we wish them eliminated. I do know some schools where physical education and also art are very successfully taught by classroom teachers.

> Even though we do not want to minimize the cultural and social importance of these classes, yet they do little to increase the academic output of a school.

Another parent explained her unwillingness to eliminate these classes:

> You just can't cut out music, gym, or sports. A person is spirit, soul and body. All have to be emphasized to make a strong well-balanced person, both physically and mentally.

A final comment from a parent:

> I understand the questions as a means of soliciting relative priorities among so-called "frills." Viewed that way, I would readily sacrifice competitive sports, probably sacrifice physical education, and only reluctantly sacrifice art or music. My judgment here is not based solely on the intrinsic value of these various things. It is partly pragmatic. I judge that if the Christian schools did not have physical education or competitive sports, students could and would find suitable outlets elsewhere—parks, neighborhood games, YMCA, etc. I judge that alternative channels for musical and artistic training and expression would not be so readily available or, if available, would not be used.

The parents were asked another set of questions regarding their willingness to consent to cutting the cost of Christian education. The questions and responses are presented in Table 40.

TABLE 40

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: WOULD YOU CONSENT TO CUTTING THE COST OF EDUCATION BY:

Intervals	Yes		No		No response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. Shared time (child has some classes in public school).	909	58%	583	37%	87	5%
b. Any government aid (free textbooks, busing, etc.).	1247	79%	267	17%	65	4%
c. Eliminate Christian elementary schools.	70	4%	1371	87%	138	9%
d. Eliminate Christian junior high schools.	39	3%	1395	88%	145	9%
e. Eliminate Christian senior high schools.	198	13%	1229	78%	152	9%

An examination of Table 40 reveals 58 percent of the parents would consent to cutting the cost of Christian education by shared time, while 37 percent would not consent. Five percent did not respond.

Some of the parents that voted for shared time also wrote comments that the shared time should be in such subjects as art, music, home economics, shop, physical education, etc.

A large majority (79%) of the parents favor government aid, while 17 percent would not consent to cutting the cost of education by any government aid. Four percent did not respond.

The parents were asked if they would consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating the Christian elementary

schools. Four percent of the parents responded in the affirmative and 87 percent registered in the negative. Nine percent did not respond.

Some comments from the parents regarding the Christian elementary school are as follows:

> The churches and home ought to have better Christian education programs and training making Christian elementary schools less necessary.
>
> Mate selection begins in junior high and high school and hence we would be reluctant to eliminate these grades. The answer it seems to us is to begin phasing out the lower elementary grades.

Another parent stated:

> I would want to hang on to the elementary system as long as possible. It is in the early years where Christian example and teaching has its greatest value.

The next question asked of the parents was: "Would you consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating the Christian junior high schools?" Three percent of the parents would consent, while 88 percent would not consent. Nine percent did not respond.

The parents of children in the Christian schools in Grand Rapids were asked if they are willing to eliminate the Christian senior high schools. Thirteen percent responded that they are willing, while 78 percent are not willing. Nine percent did not respond.

Some comments by the parents on this subject are:

> I feel the Christian high schools should be eliminated. If a child has not been taught properly by the time they reach the ninth grade, the high school will not help. Kids are pretty well molded by the time they leave junior high.

One parent wrote that he wants to keep the senior high schools because students find their mate in the high school.

The parents were asked: "To lower the cost of education

in order to maintain a Christian school, what is the maximum sized class you would allow your child to be in?" Their responses are presented in Table 41.

TABLE 41

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: TO LOWER THE COST OF EDUCATION IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM SIZED CLASS YOU WOULD ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO BE IN?

Interval	Number	Percent
Over 36	74	5%
33 - 36	296	19%
29 - 32	688	43%
25 - 28	413	26%
Under 25	68	4%
No response	40	3%
Totals	1579	100%

An examination of Table 41 reveals that 5 percent of the parents would allow their children to be in classes with over thirty-six students. Nineteen percent of the parents would allow a class size of thirty-three to thirty-six students. Most of the parents (43%) would allow a class to have twenty-nine to thirty-two students. Twenty-six percent of the parents would allow their children to be in a maximum sized class of twenty-five to twenty-eight students and 4 percent of the parents do not want the class size to be above twenty-four students. Three percent of the parents did not respond.

Table 42 is presented to demonstrate that the parents who are teachers are very much in agreement with the other parents regarding maximum sized classes.

TABLE 42

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: TO LOWER THE COST OF EDUCATION IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM SIZED CLASS YOU WOULD ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO BE IN?

Interval	VESTED INTEREST GROUP							
	Chr. School Teacher or Administrator		Present or Past School Board Member		Chr. Ref. Minister		Not Applicable	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Over 36	4	3%	18	6%	3	7%	49	4%
33 - 36	24	16%	72	24%	5	12%	195	18%
29 - 32	66	45%	146	49%	21	51%	455	42%
25 - 28	46	32%	55	18%	11	27%	301	27%
Under 25	3	2%	3	1%	1	3%	61	6%
No response	3	2%	7	2%	. .	. .	30	3%
Totals	146	100%	301	100%	41	100%	1091	100%
$X^2 = 37.17$ S.								

The chi-square for Table 42 is 37.17 and is significant at the .05 level.

The reader's attention is directed to the teachers' responses in Table 42. Three percent of the parents who are teachers would allow their child to be in a class of over thirty-six students, while 5 percent of the total group of parents would

allow this. Sixteen percent of the teachers would allow a class size of thirty-three to thirty-six students, while 19 percent of the total parents would allow this. Most of the teachers (45%) would allow the class size to be twenty-nine to thirty-two students, while 43 percent of the total parents would allow this size. Thirty-two percent of the teachers would allow their children to be in a maximum sized class of twenty-five to twenty-eight students, while 26 percent of the total parents would allow this. Two percent of the teachers do not want the class size to be above twenty-four students, while 3 percent of the total parents want this. Two percent of the teachers did not respond.

In summary, the majority of the parents (67%) would allow their children to be in a classroom with over twenty-eight students.

The parents were asked: "Should payment for Christian education be based on (a) cost of education, or (b) ability to pay (either less or more than the cost of education). Their responses are presented in Table 43.

TABLE 43

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: HOW SHOULD PAYMENT FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BE BASED?

Response	Number	Percent
Cost of education	436	28%
Ability to pay	1064	67%
Both of above	38	2%
No response	41	3%
Totals	1579	100%

Table 43 reveals that the majority (67%) of the parents responded that payment for Christian education should be based on ability to pay, while 28 percent prefer the cost of education basis. Two percent of the parents, instead of circling one of the two choices—"cost of education," or "ability to pay," wrote in their own choice as a combination of both. Three percent did not respond.

Respondents were asked to reply to the following: "Do you feel that the Christian school teachers should receive approximately the same salary as the public school teachers?" Their responses are depicted in Table 44.

TABLE 44

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: DO YOU FEEL THAT THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL TEACHERS SHOULD RECEIVE APPROXIMATELY THE SAME SALARY AS THE PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	820	52%
Probably	441	28%
Uncertain	147	9%
Probably not	109	7%
Definitely not	54	3%
No response	8	1%
Totals	1579	100%

An examination of Table 44 reveals that 80 percent of the parents feel that the Christian school teachers should receive approximately the same salary as the public school teachers, while 10 percent do not feel this way. Nine percent are uncertain and 1 percent did not respond.

A few of the comments from the parents regarding this question are:

> Teachers' salaries should not be more than the average of the parents' salaries.

> As far as teachers' salaries are concerned, I feel that those of us who truly sacrifice to send our children to the Christian school are richly blessed in return. I also feel that a dedicated Christian school teacher will sacrifice in the wage, compared with that of the public school, because he knows the Lord will bless him or her, and that their reward is in heaven.
>
> I think the Christian school teachers' task can be compared to that of a missionary's. They are both living a life of true witness as representatives of Christ.

> While I do not think anyone of us is here to get rich, the teachers ought to be treated fairly and from an honest Christian perspective. Those who say that the Christian school teachers ought to sacrifice for the Kingdom while those who pay their salaries don't know what the word "sacrifice" means are not speaking as Christians. As someone once said to me, "It takes more than dedication to put Corn Flakes on the table."

The last question in our investigation to explore the attitudes of the parents regarding the financial support of the Christian schools is: "Are you willing to keep increasing your contribution to Christian schools each year, in order to maintain Christian schools?" The responses to this question are presented in Table 45.

TABLE 45

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: ARE YOU WILLING TO KEEP INCREASING YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS EACH YEAR, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS?

Response	Number	Percent
Definitely	452	29%
Probably	538	34%
Uncertain	346	21%
Probably not	120	8%
Definitely not	105	7%
No response	18	1%
Totals	1579	100%

An examination of Table 45 reveals that the majority (63%) of the parents are willing to keep increasing their contribution to Christian schools each year, in order to maintain Christian

schools, while 15 percent are not willing. Twenty-one percent are uncertain and 1 percent did not respond.

Table 46 is presented to demonstrate that the parents with the highest level of income are the most willing to contribute to the Christian schools.

TABLE 46

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: ARE YOU WILLING TO KEEP INCREASING YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS EACH YEAR, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS?

Response	PARENTS' LEVEL OF INCOME											
	Below $8,000		$8,000 - 9,999		$10,000 - 11,999		$12,000 - 15,999		Over $16,000		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Definitely	30	25%	36	19%	78	25%	134	29%	158	35%	16	33%
Probably	40	33%	62	33%	102	33%	160	34%	163	36%	11	22%
Uncertain	30	25%	43	23%	80	26%	105	23%	78	17%	10	21%
Probably not	15	13%	22	12%	24	8%	30	6%	25	6%	4	8%
Definitely not	5	4%	21	12%	20	6%	27	6%	25	6%	7	14%
No response	• •	• •	2	1%	5	2%	9	2%	1	0%	1	2%
Totals	120	100%	186	100%	309	100%	465	100%	450	100%	49	100%

$X^2 = 56.80$ S.

The chi-square for Table 46 is 56.80 and is significant at the .05 level.

The reader's attention is directed to the responses of the parents with the highest level of income. They are the most willing of all the parents to keep increasing their contribution to the Christian schools each year. Seventy-one percent of the parents with the highest income replied affirmatively, while 63 percent of all the parents replied affirmatively. Twelve percent of the parents with the highest incomes replied negatively, while 15 percent of all the parents replied negatively. Seventeen percent of the parents with the highest income are uncertain and 21 percent of all the parents are uncertain.

Some of the comments about contributing to the Christian schools are as follows:

> Our income is less than $6,000, so we are asked to pay approximately $750.00. I know it's quite a bit less than the cost of education, but when you have three children, and have a church budget to meet, plus living expenses, I just don't see how it can be done.
>
> We believe sufficient finances are available if Christian stewardship is exercised--our parents proved it!
>
> We believe that in our present economical circumstances, there is enough money to support our schools. It's a matter of motivating everybody to maintain a proper sense of values. God help us if we can't do it with today's prosperity.
>
> We don't mind contributing more than the cost of our children, but we have reason to believe that some who can afford their full share are not paying their full share while enjoying many luxuries.
>
> We feel as Christian parents we should do everything we can to further Christian education. My husband is disabled but God has been good to us. I work full time and so far we have been able to pay the cost of education for our children. It is too easy to say, "I can't afford to send my children to a Christian school." We feel it is worth sacrificing for.

This completes the fifth area of investigation. In conclusion, there is a strong positive attitude regarding the financial support of the Christian schools. There is willingness to share the burden of educational cost. However, there is a necessity to communicate the financial needs of the Christian school in a significantly personal way and it is extremely difficult to design a plan of sharing the educational costs.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this investigation was to explore the expressed attitudes of the Christian parents with children in the schools of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association regarding the nature and extent of the parents' demands for Christian schools in the Grand Rapids area. It is a descriptive study of the opinions that describes a structure of values and attitudes towards the support of the Christian schools.

This study explored five areas of attitudes. They are:

1. The attitudes of the parents regarding the importance of a Christ-centered education.
2. The attitudes of the parents regarding the success the Christian schools are having in the achievement of a Christ-centered education.
3. The attitudes of the parents regarding the social (church) pressures that influence their decisions to send their children to the Christian schools.
4. The attitudes of the parents regarding the motivations for sending their children to the Christian schools, i.e., type of children attending, teachers with views that are compatible with the parents' views, discipline, and quality of academic

education.

5. The attitudes of the parents regarding the financial support of the Christian schools.

All 2204 families who have children in the schools of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association constitute the sample. The questionnaires were mailed to them on November 18, 1971. Approximately 71 percent (1579 questionnaires) was returned by December 20, 1971, for the analysis by the computer. A final total of 1647 questionnaires or approximately 75 percent was returned. Over 800 parents wrote comments on their questionnaires. Some parents wrote why they answered the questions the way they did and others wrote recommendations. The comments ranged in length from one sentence to several typewritten pages.

The author designed an instrument for the purpose of obtaining a profile of opinions to determine the attitudes of these parents toward the Christian schools.

The PSCF BLITZ - Bivariate Frequency and Percentage Tables, and Statistics program was used for computer analysis. The chi-square test was used to compute the statistical significance ($P<.05$ level) of difference in responses between groups of parents. The analysis was presented mainly in the terms of percentages because this type of discussion was most meaningful for the purposes of this study.

Conclusions

The findings in the first area of investigation dealing with attitudes of the parents regarding the importance of a Christ-

centered education are:

1. The parents agree that it is extremely important to have Bible classes taught in the Christian schools. The 96 percent positive response in this area shows a strong positive demand for Christian schools.

2. There is overwhelming agreement among the parents that it is important to have the school subjects explained and interpreted from a Christian viewpoint. The 99 percent positive response shows a strong positive demand for the uniqueness of Christian school education.

The findings in the second area of investigation dealing with the attitudes of the parents regarding the success the Christian schools are having in the achievement of a Christ-centered education are:

1. The parents do feel that the Christian school teachers are explaining the school subjects from a Christian viewpoint according to their 82 percent positive response as compared with the 2 percent negative response. However, 16 percent are uncertain.

2. The 82 percent positive response reveals that the parents do feel that the Christian school teachers are teaching values that are compatible with their own values. Only 3 percent responded negatively but 14 percent are uncertain.

3. There is overall agreement among the parents that the discipline in the Christian schools is compatible with their views on discipline. Seventy-eight percent of the parents responded positively as compared with a 9 percent negative response. Thirteen percent of the parents are uncertain.

4. There is overwhelming agreement among the parents that the Christian schools are more desirable morally for their children as compared with the public schools. Eighty-nine percent of the parents gave a positive response to this question. Only four percent gave a negative response and seven percent are uncertain.

5. The overwhelming positive response to the questions in the second area of investigation by all the parents gives strong confirmation that the Christian schools are successful in achieving a Christ-centered education. There is a strong positive demand for the distinctiveness of Christian school education.

The findings in the third area of investigation dealing with the attitudes of the parents regarding the social (church) pressures that influence their decisions to send their children to the Christian schools are:

1. The majority (52%) of the Christian Reformed parents do not feel church pressure, while 41 percent do feel church pressure.

2. The overwhelming majority (90%) of the non-Christian Reformed parents do not feel church pressure, while 6 percent do.

3. Ninety-one percent of the Christian Reformed Church members and 43 percent of the non-Christian Reformed Church members feel that their pastor is committed to Christian schools. One percent of the Christian Reformed Church members and 28 percent of the non-Christian Reformed Church members perceived that their ministers are not supportive of the Christian schools.

4. The Christian Reformed ministers as a group registered a 91 percent positive response and no negative response regarding

their own feelings toward a commitment to the Christian schools.

The findings in the fourth area of investigation dealing with the attitudes of the parents regarding their motivations in sending their children to the Christian schools are:

1. The 95 percent positive response from the parents reveals that it is important to them that their children can associate with other Christian children in school.

2. The overwhelming positive response (84%) of the parents regarding the academic quality in the Christian schools demonstrates a positive demand for the Christian school system in the Grand Rapids area. Based on academic quality alone, 8 percent of the parents do not prefer the Christian schools to the public schools while 7 percent are uncertain.

3. Sixty-one percent of the parents rate the academic quality of the Christian schools in their area as excellent. A rating of good is given by 35 percent and 2 percent rate the schools as fair. No parents rate the Christian schools as poor. Two percent of the parents are uncertain or did not respond.

4. Eight percent of the parents rate the academic quality of the public school in their area as excellent. A rating of good is given by 39 percent and a rating of fair is given by 33 percent of the parents. Nine percent rate the public schools as poor. Ten percent of the parents are uncertain and 1 percent did not respond.

5. The academic level of the public schools is perceived as being higher in the areas where the parents with the highest level of income live than in the areas where the parents with the lowest level of income live.

6. Twenty-one percent of the parents have seriously considered sending their children to the public schools recently. However, 74 percent of the parents have not considered using the public schools for their children's education. Four percent of the parents are uncertain in their responses.

7. The majority (56%) of the parents with children in the schools of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association feel that non-Christian parents should be allowed to enroll their children in the Christian schools. Twenty-eight percent of the parents are negative in their response and 16 percent are uncertain or did not respond.

8. The parents responded with an overwhelming (89%) positive response indicating their desire to encourage the parents of minority group children, who believe in Christ, to enroll their children in Christian schools, while 3 percent oppose. Eight percent are uncertain.

9. According to a ranking of reasons in the order of their importance to explain the parents' decisions to enroll their children in the Christian schools are:

a) The most important reason why parents enroll their children in the Christian schools is that the school subjects are explained from a Christian viewpoint.

b) The second most important reason why parents enroll their children in the Christian schools is that their children can associate with other Christian children in school.

c) The third most important reason why parents enroll

their children in the Christian schools is because the Christian schools have superior academic standards.

d) The fourth most important reason according to the parents' ranking is that the Christian schools have good discipline.

e) The least important reason according to the rank order why parents enroll their children in the Christian schools is because their church encourages them to send their children to the Christian schools.

10. The basic motivation of the parents for sending their children to the Christian schools is a religious one. The overwhelming response for a Christ-centered education creates a strong positive demand for the distinctiveness of Christian school education.

The findings in the fifth area of investigation dealing with the attitudes of the parents regarding the financial support of the Christian schools are:

1. The parents are almost equally divided regarding their consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating physical education classes, in order to maintain a Christian school. The affirmative responses total 46 percent, while 44 percent are negative. Ten percent are uncertain.

2. Forty-eight percent of the respondents would consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating competitive sports, in order to maintain a Christian school, while 40 percent would not consent. Twelve percent are uncertain.

3. Forty-two percent of the parents would consent to

cutting the cost of education by eliminating art, in order to maintain a Christian school, while 46 percent would not consent. Eleven percent are uncertain.

4. The majority (63%) of the parents would not consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating music, in order to maintain a Christian school, while 27 percent would consent. Ten percent are uncertain.

5. A large majority (79%) of the parents favor government aid, while 17 percent would not consent to cutting the cost of education by any government aid. Four percent did not respond.

6. Fifty-eight percent of the parents would consent to cutting the cost of Christian education by shared time, while 37 percent would not consent. Five percent did not respond.

7. Four percent of the parents would consent to eliminate the Christian elementary schools, while 87 percent would not consent. Nine percent did not respond.

8. Three percent of the parents would consent to eliminate the Christian junior high schools, while 88 percent would not consent. Nine percent did not respond.

9. Thirteen percent of the parents would consent to eliminate the Christian senior high schools, while 78 percent would not consent. Nine percent did not respond.

10. In order to lower the cost of education, 5 percent of the parents would allow their children to be in classes with over thirty-six students. Nineteen percent of the parents would allow a class size of thirty-three to thirty-six students. Most of the parents (43%) would allow a class to have twenty-nine to thirty-two

students. Twenty-six percent of the parents would allow their children to be in a maximum sized class of twenty-five to twenty-eight students and 4 percent of the parents do not want the class size to be above twenty-four students. Three percent of the parents did not respond.

11. The majority (67%) of the parents responded that payment for Christian education should be based on ability to pay, while 28 percent prefer the cost of education basis. Two percent of the parents wrote in that both should be considered. Three percent did not respond.

12. Eighty percent of the parents feel that the Christian school teachers should receive approximately the same salary as the public school teachers, while 10 percent do not feel this way. Nine percent are uncertain and 1 percent did not respond.

13. The majority (63%) of the parents are willing to keep increasing their contribution to Christian schools each year, in order to maintain Christian schools, while 15 percent are not willing. Twenty-two percent are uncertain and 1 percent did not respond.

14. The parents with the highest level of income are the most willing to contribute to the Christian schools. Seventy-one percent of the parents in the highest income group are willing to keep increasing their contribution to Christian schools each year, while 63 percent of the total group of parents share this opinion.

15. There is a strong positive attitude regarding the financial support of the Christian schools. There is willingness to share the burden of educational costs.

In summary, the basic motivation of the parents for enrolling their children in the Christian schools is a religious conviction. The parents are willing to share the financial burden for a Christian education because they value an education that is Bible-based and Christ-centered. The overwhelming positive response by the parents indicating their desire for a Christ-centered education creates a strong demand for the distinctiveness of Christian school education.

Recommendations from the Study

The recommendations in this section are based upon the analysis of the data obtained.

1. There is need for more interaction between the parents and the teachers. The lack of communication between them is evident in the "uncertain" responses by parents regarding the success the Christian schools are having in the achievement of a Christ-centered education.

2. The Christian school teachers must try to improve their teaching of the school subjects from a Christian viewpoint as is evident by the negative and uncertain responses from the parents who are Christian school teachers.

3. There is a greater need to communicate that the Christian schools are not and never have been for the exclusive use of Christian Reformed Church members. The parents have overwhelmingly responded that they want to encourage the parents of minority groups of evangelical persuasion to enroll their children in the Christian schools. Also, the majority of the parents feel that non-Christian parents should be allowed to enroll their children under circumstances compatible with the purposes of the school. Therefore, the

Christian School Board should study this possibility.

4. The Christian School Board should investigate into the reasons why 21 percent of the parents have seriously considered sending their children to the public schools recently.

5. The Christian School Board should study the desirability and the possibility of shared time as the majority of the parents responded that they would consent to shared time.

6. The majority (79%) of the parents would consent to cutting the cost of Christian education by receiving government aid, therefore, the Christian School Board should study this possibility.

7. The majority (80%) of the parents feel that the Christian school teachers should receive approximately the same salary as the public school teachers, therefore, the Christian School Board should try to accomplish a comparable salary schedule.

8. The majority of the parents (67%) expressed that the payment for Christian education should be based on the ability to pay, therefore, the Christian School Board should continue to study and attempt to further implement a plan of sharing the educational costs.

It is the opinion of this researcher that the payment for Christian education should be based on ability to pay. All parents of school aged children are forced by law to send their children to school. Parents who by conviction choose to send their children to the Christian school should not have their children denied admission because of a lack of finances.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. An area for additional study would be a comparative study of financing the Christian school in the various parts of the United States.

2. A study related to this study could be an examination of the attitudes of students in the Grand Rapids Christian High Schools regarding the success the Christian schools are having in the achievement of a Christ-centered education.

3. An area for additional study would be a comparison of attitudes of parents with children attending Christian schools located in a small rural community and in a large city toward the support of their respective Christian schools.

4. There should be an examination of the reasons why parents have withdrawn their children from nonpublic schools in the last few years.

5. Research has been done on attitudes toward Catholic schools, however, there is a need for quality research on attitudes of parents toward non-Catholic nonpublic schools, i.e., Seventh Day Adventist schools, Protestant Reformed schools, and other non-public schools.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONS GROUPED INTO THE FIVE AREAS OF INVESTIGATION

I. The attitudes of the parents regarding the importance of Christ-centered education.

1. Is it important to you to have Bible classes taught in the Christian schools?

2. Is it important to you to have the school subjects explained and interpreted from a Christian viewpoint?

24. Please rank the following statements in the order of their importance to explain your decision to enroll your child in the Christian school. (Put number 1 by your most important reason, number 2 by your next most important reason, etc.)

____a. Christian schools have good discipline.
____b. School subjects are explained from a Christian viewpoint.
____c. My church encourages me to send my children to the Christian school.
____d. Christian schools have superior academic standards.
____e. My child can associate with other Christian children in school.
____f. Other reason_____.

II. The attitudes of the parents regarding the success the Christian schools are having in the achievement of a Christ-centered education.

3. Do you feel that the Christian school teachers are explaining the school subjects from a Christian viewpoint?

4. Do you feel that the Christian school teachers are teaching values that are compatible with your values as a parent?

5. Do you feel that the discipline in the Christian schools is compatible with your views on discipline?

7. As compared with the public schools, do you feel the Christian schools are more desirable morally for your child?

III. The attitudes of the parents regarding the social (church) pressures that influence their decisions to send their children to the Christian schools.

8. Do you feel that your church pressures you into sending your child to the Christian school?

17. Do you feel that your pastor is committed to Christian schools?

IV. The attitudes of the parents regarding the motivations in sending their children to the Christian schools, i.e., type of children attending, teachers with views that are compatible

with the parents' views, discipline, and quality of academic education.

4. Do you feel that the Christian school teachers are teaching values that are compatible with your values as a parent?

5. Do you feel that the discipline in the Christian schools is compatible with your views on discipline?

6. Is it important to you that your child can associate with other Christian children in school?

7. As compared with the public schools, do you feel the Christian schools are more desirable morally for your child?

14. Based on academic quality alone, do you prefer the Christian schools to the public schools for your child?

15. Have you seriously considered sending your child to the public school recently?

18. Do you feel that non-Christian parents should be allowed to enroll their children in the Christian schools?

19. Should we encourage the parents of minority group children, who believe in Christ, to enroll their children in Christian schools?

21. In your opinion, how would you rate the academic quality of the Christian schools in your area of the city?

22. In your opinion, how would you rate the academic quality of the public schools in your area of the city?

24. Please rank the following statements in the order of their importance to explain your decision to enroll your child in the Christian school. (Put number 1 by your most important reason, number 2 by your next most important reason, etc.)

____a. Christian schools have good discipline.
____b. School subjects are explained from a Christian viewpoint.
____c. My church encourages me to send my children to the Christian school.
____d. Christian schools have superior academic standards.
____e. My child can associate with other Christian children in school.
____f. Other reason_____.

V. The attitudes of the parents regarding the financial support of the Christian schools.

9. Would you consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating physical education classes, in order to maintain a Christian school?

10. Would you consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating competitive sports, in order to maintain a Christian school?

11. Would you consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating art, in order to maintain a Christian school?

12. Would you consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating music, in order to maintain a Christian school?

13. Are you willing to keep increasing your contribution to Christian schools each year, in order to maintain Christian schools?

15. Have you seriously considered sending your child to the public school recently?

16. Do you feel that the Christian school teachers should receive approximately the same salary as the public school teachers?

20. To lower the cost of education in order to maintain a Christian school, what is the maximum sized class you would allow your child to be in?

23. Should payment for Christian education be based on (Circle one.) a. Cost of education b. Ability to pay (either less or more than the cost of education.)

25. Would you consent to cutting the cost of Christian education by:
    a. Shared time (child has some classes in public school).
    b. Any government aid (free textbooks, busing, etc.).
    c. Eliminate Christian elementary schools.
    d. Eliminate Christian junior high schools.
    e. Eliminate Christian senior high schools.
    f. Your suggestion_____.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please do NOT put your name on this questionnaire.

DIRECTIONS: Please circle your answer according to the following key.

(a)Definitely (b)Probably (c)Uncertain (d)Probably not (e)Definitely not

1. Is it important to you to have Bible classes taught in the Christian schools?	a	b	c	d	e
2. Is it important to you to have the school subjects explained and interpreted from a Christian viewpoint?	a	b	c	d	e
3. Do you feel that the Christian school teachers are explaining the school subjects from a Christian viewpoint?	a	b	c	d	e
4. Do you feel that the Christian school teachers are teaching values that are compatible with your values as a parent?	a	b	c	d	e
5. Do you feel that the discipline in the Christian schools is compatible with your views on discipline?	a	b	c	d	e
6. Is it important to you that your child can associate with other Christian children in school?	a	b	c	d	e
7. As compared with the public schools, do you feel the Christian schools are more desirable morally for your child?	a	b	c	d	e
8. Do you feel that your church pressures you into sending your child to the Christian school?	a	b	c	d	e
9. Would you consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating physical education classes, in order to maintain a Christian school?	a	b	c	d	e
10. Would you consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating competitive sports, in order to maintain a Christian school?	a	b	c	d	e
11. Would you consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating art, in order to maintain a Christian school?	a	b	c	d	e
12. Would you consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating music, in order to maintain a Christian school?	a	b	c	d	e
13. Are you willing to keep increasing your contribution to Christian schools each year, in order to maintain Christian schools?	a	b	c	d	e
14. Based on academic quality alone, do you prefer the Christian schools to the public schools for your child?	a	b	c	d	e
15. Have you seriously considered sending your child to the public school recently?	a	b	c	d	e
16. Do you feel that the Christian school teachers should receive approximately the same salary as the public school teachers?	a	b	c	d	e
17. Do you feel that your pastor is committed to Christian schools?	a	b	c	d	e
18. Do you feel that non-Christian parents should be allowed to enroll their children in the Christian schools?	a	b	c	d	e
19. Should we encourage the parents of minority group children, who believe in Christ, to enroll their children in Christian schools?	a	b	c	d	e

20. To lower the cost of education in order to maintain a Christian school, what is the maximum sized class you would allow your child to be in? (Circle one.)
a. over 36 b. 33-36 c. 29-32 d. 25-28 e. under 25

21. In your opinion, how would you rate the academic quality of the Christian schools in your area of the city? (Circle one.)
a. excellent b. good c. fair d. poor e. uncertain

22. In your opinion, how would you rate the academic quality of the public schools in your area of the city? (Circle one.)
a. excellent b. good c. fair d. poor e. uncertain

23. Should payment for Christian education be based on (Circle one.)
a. Cost of education b. Ability to pay (either less or more than the cost of education.)

24. Please rank the following statements in the order of their importance to explain your decision to enroll your child in the Christian school. (Put number 1 by your most important reason, number 2 by your next most important reason, etc.)
____a. Christian schools have good discipline.
____b. School subjects are explained from a Christian viewpoint.
____c. My church encourages me to send my children to the Christian school.
____d. Christian schools have superior academic standards.
____e. My child can associate with other Christian children in school.
____f. Other reason_____.

25. Would you consent to cutting the cost of Christian education by:
a. Shared time (child has some classes in public school). Yes___ No___
b. Any government aid (free textbooks, busing, etc.). Yes___ No___
c. Eliminate Christian elementary schools. Yes___ No___
d. Eliminate Christian Junior High schools. Yes___ No___
e. Eliminate Christian Senior High schools. Yes___ No___
f. Your suggestion_____.

PERSONAL DATA - Please check the appropriate answer in each category.

A. Who filled out this questionnaire? Husband ___ Wife___ Both___

B. What is the age of the husband (or respondent)?
21-35____ 36-45____ 46-55____ 56 and over____

C. What is the highest level of education completed by you and your spouse?

	Self	Spouse
Elementary school graduate	____	____
High school graduate	____	____
Some college	____	____
4 year college graduate	____	____
Other (_____)	____	____

D. If applicable, check the appropriate answer.
Christian school teacher or administrator. ____
Present or past member of a Christian school board. ____
Christian Reformed minister. ____

E. Please check the appropriate answer.
Our school age children are in Christian schools only (K-12). ____
We have children in both Christian and public schools (K-12). ____

F. Did you attend primarily the Christian elementary and secondary schools?
Self Yes____ No____ Spouse Yes____ No____

G. Are you a member of the Christian Reformed Church? Yes____ No____

H. For statistical purposes only, it is very important to have the total family income (yours and spouse's, if applicable) for 1971 before taxes. We have no way of checking who filled out this questionnaire so anonymity is guaranteed.

Below $8,000 ____	16,000 - 17,999____
8,000 - 9,999 ____	18,000 - 19,999____
10,000 - 11,999____	20,000 - 24,999____
12,000 - 13,999____	25,000 - 30,000____
14,000 - 15,999____	Over 30,000 ____

On the back of this page or in a separate letter, please express your opinions concerning any matter related to Christian schools which may not have been covered or on which you wish to elaborate or comment.

Please return this questionnaire today or as soon as possible. Thank you.

APPENDIX C

COVER LETTER TO QUESTIONNAIRE

GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

3350 EAST PARIS AVE., S.E.
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49508

November 19, 1971

Dear Parents,

Your opinions and ideas are important to us. So important are your ideas about Christian education that we want you to fill out this questionnaire.

We need reliable data for policy decisions affecting future development of our Christian schools. We urge 100 percent participation in filling out this questionnaire so a valid conclusion can be drawn. If possible, the parents should confer together.

This study is being conducted by David Kass, who is pursuing the doctoral degree at the University of Michigan. There is no cost to the Christian School Association for this study.

Please help us to know what you think about Christian schools so that all who are interested in Christian schools can benefit. The response of all individuals will remain completely anonymous.

Your questionnaire should be returned in the enclosed envelope. Please return it today or as soon as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mr. Phil Elve
Superintendent

Mr. Peter Kladder, Jr.
Board President

APPENDIX D

SUMMARY RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

AS PUBLISHED IN

THE GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

DAVID KASS STUDY

OUR PARENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

"I believe a Christian education is the most important thing a child can receive during these times."

"We feel as Christian parents we should do everything we can to further Christian education. My husband is disabled but God has been good to us. I work full time and so far we have been able to pay the cost of education for our children. It is too easy to say I can't afford to send my children to a Christian school. We feel it is worth sacrificing for. To God we give thanks."

The above are two written comments which point up the tremendous demand for Christian schools in the Grand Rapids area. They were received on the returned questionnaires designed to study the parents' attitudes toward our Christian schools. The questionnaires were sent out on November 18, 1971, to the 2204 parents with children in the Grand Rapids Christian School Association.

On December 21, 1971, the information from 1579 questionnaires was fed into the computer at the University of Michigan. The following is a summary in percentages of how the parents responded to the questions. It is especially important not to jump to any conclusions regarding these summary results. You must remember that these results show the opinions of approximately 71% of the parents, and not all parents returned the questionnaire. Some parents did not answer all the questions.

Summary facts alone are not sufficient to draw conclusions. The computer printed out over 300 pages for detailed analysis. Also, over 800 people wrote additional comments on their questionnaire. This was helpful for gaining insight into why a person responded the way he did.

This summary is given because of interest shown. Much study and analysis is necessary before conclusions can be drawn and decisions made.

Column heading codes: (a) Definitely (b) Probably (c) Uncertain (d) Probably not (e) Definitely not

	a	b	c	d	e
1. Is it important to you to have Bible classes taught in the Christian schools?	89%	7%	2%	2%	
2. Is it important to you to have the school subjects explained and interpreted from a Christian viewpoint?	95%	3%	1%		
3. Do you feel that the Christian school teachers are explaining the school subjects from a Christian viewpoint?	39%	43%	16%	1%	1%
4. Do you feel that the Christian school teachers are teaching values that are compatible with your values as a parent?	40%	42%	14%	2%	1%
5. Do you feel that the discipline in the Christian schools is compatible with your views on discipline?	39%	39%	13%	5%	4%
6. Is it important to you that your child can associate with other Christian children in school?	83%	12%	3%	2%	
7. As compared with the public schools, do you feel the Christian schools are more desirable morally for your child?	71%	18%	7%	3%	1%
8. Do you feel that your church pressures you into sending your child to the Christian school?	20%	17%	7%	13%	43%
9. Would you consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating physical education classes, in order to maintain a Christian school?	25%	21%	10%	15%	29%
10. Would you consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating competitive sports, in order to maintain a Christian school?	27%	21%	12%	15%	25%
11. Would you consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating art, in order to maintain a Christian school?	21%	22%	11%	19%	27%
12. Would you consent to cutting the cost of education by eliminating music, in order to maintain a Christian school?	12%	15%	10%	23%	40%
13. Are you willing to keep increasing your contribution to Christian schools each year, in order to maintain Christian schools?	29%	34%	22%	8%	7%
14. Based on academic quality alone, do you prefer the Christian schools to the public schools for your child?	72%	12%	7%	4%	4%
15. Have you seriously considered sending your child to the public school recently?	14%	7%	4%	7%	66%
16. Do you feel that the Christian school teachers should receive approximately the same salary as the public school teachers?	52%	28%	9%	7%	3%
17. Do you feel that your pastor is committed to Christian schools?	74%	12%	7%	2%	2%

18. Do you feel that non-Christian parents should be allowed to enroll their children in the Christian schools? 41% 15% 15% 9% 18%

19. Should we encourage the parents of minority group children, who believe in Christ, to enroll their children in Christian schools? 75% 14% 8% 1% 2%

20. To lower the cost of education in order to maintain a Christian school, what is the maximum sized class you would allow your child to be in? (Circle one.)

a. over 36	b. 33-36	c. 29-32	d. 25-28	e. under 25
5%	19%	43%	26%	4%

21. In your opinion, how would you rate the academic quality of the Christian schools in your area of the city? (Circle one.)

a. excellent	b. good	c. fair	d. poor	e. uncertain
62%	35%	2%		1%

22. In your opinion, how would you rate the academic quality of the public schools in your area of the city? (Circle one.)

a. excellent	b. good	c. fair	d. poor	e. uncertain
8%	38%	33%	9%	10%

23. Should payment for Christian education be based on (Circle one.)

a. Cost of education	b. Ability to pay (either less or more than the cost of education.)
28%	67%

24. Please rank the following statements in the order of their importance to explain your decision to enroll your child in the Christian school. (Put number 1 by your most important reason, number 2 by your next most important reason, etc.) Column one of the results shows the percentage of those who chose that answer for their most important reason. Column two shows their second most important, etc.

Column one of the results shows the percentage of those who chose that answer for their most important reason. Column two shows their second most important, etc.

	1	2	3	4	5	
a.	2%	10%	28%	39%	14%	a. Christian schools have good discipline.
b.	81%	11%	5%	2%	0	b. School subjects are explained from a Christian viewpoint.
c.	2%	4%	8%	14%	60%	c. My church encourages me to send my children to the Christian school.
d.	8%	34%	26%	18%	8%	d. Christian schools have superior academic standards.
e.	7%	39%	26%	18%	5%	e. My child can associate with other Christian children in school.

25. Would you consent to cutting the cost of Christian education by:

a. Shared time (child has some classes in public school).	Yes 57%	No 37%
b. Any government aid (free textbooks, busing, etc.).	Yes 79%	No 17%
c. Eliminate Christian elementary schools.	Yes 4%	No 87%
d. Eliminate Christian Junior High schools.	Yes 3%	No 88%
e. Eliminate Christian Senior High schools.	Yes 13%	No 78%

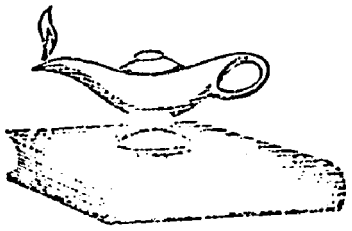
PERSONAL DATA – Please check the appropriate answer in each category.

A. Who filled out this questionnaire? Husband 30% Wife 17% Both 52%

B. What is the age of the husband (or respondent)? 21-35 21% 36-45 41% 46-55 33% 56 and over 5%

C. What is the highest level of education completed by you and your spouse?

	Self	Spouse
Elementary school graduate	10%	10%
High school graduate	28%	41%
Some college	24%	28%
4 year college graduate	15%	13%
Other	20%	5%



D. If applicable, check the appropriate answer.

Christian school teacher or administrator.	9%
Present or past member of a Christian school board.	19%
Christian Reformed minister.	2%

E. Please check the appropriate answer.

Our school age children are in Christian schools only (K-12).	93%
We have children in both Christian and public schools (K-12).	6%

F. Did you attend primarily the Christian elementary and secondary schools?
Self Yes 66% No 32% Spouse Yes 63% No 33%

G. Are you a member of the Christian Reformed Church? Yes 88% No 10%

H. For statistical purposes only, it is very important to have the total family income (yours and spouse's, if applicable) for 1971 before taxes. We have no way of checking who filled out this questionnaire so anonymity is guaranteed.

Below $8,000 8% 8,000 - 9,999 12% 10,000 - 11,999 20% 12,000 - 15,999 29% Over 16,000 29%

We are pleased with the response of our parents. At present 1643 questionnaires have been returned. You may still return yours if you have not done so.

A dissertation will be written by David Kass regarding the attitudes of our parents toward Christian education for the partial fulfillment of the doctoral degree. You are encouraged to discuss any questions or ideas about the study with him.

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