Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/towns_books
The Bright Future of Sunday School

ELMER L. TOWNS
The Bright Future of Sunday School
The Bright Future of Sunday School

by Elmer L. Towns

F.C. PUBLICATIONS
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55423

To my mother, who made my future bright

Elmer L. Towns
The future of Sunday School is bright and I believe God will continue to use the Sunday School as the evangelistic and educational arm of the church. We live in a day when many journalists criticize the Sunday School. You will find this an optimistic book.

Our world is rapidly changing and dead institutions are being swept under the tide of social revolutions. Many dead Sunday Schools are coming apart at the seams. The decline in attendance of the main line denominational Sunday School reflects the change. These churches to the left with liberal theological leanings will continue to decline in attendance. Yet, I see a strong and vibrant growth in the Sunday School arising from the conservative or fundamental churches of the right, (see chapter 19). These churches have dynamic Sunday Schools and they believe in winning souls to Christ. Separation from the world is a virtue and the Bible is accepted as the literal Word of God. These Sunday Schools encourage me.

This book is a collection of articles and messages that have been created in the past few months. Each chapter was written to encourage the average Sunday School worker. Although the book was not written as a unit, the message of faith in the ability of God to work through the Sunday School is apparent. The Bible still changes lives. The Holy Spirit continues to convict of sin and sinners are finding forgiveness in these modern times.

I not only am optimistic about Sunday School, I am a local church enthusiast. I appreciate coffee house ministries, beach evangelism and interdenominational causes, yet I believe the key to reaching the mass is through the local church. I'm not ready to give up on the only institution founded by Christ. As you read this book, the message is clear that Christian education should be church centered.
The Sunday School of the seventies will be bright and imaginaive. Yes, the Sunday School will continue, but some of its shapes may change. Its program will be more complex and the curriculum will be up-graded. The teachers will have more helps and the pupils who attend will bring a better education received in public schools. Let us not be prophets of gloom, God will continue to work where His Word is taught, where faith is exercised and where prayer is offered. Let us each work to realize The Bright Future of Sunday School.

Elmer L. Towns
Deerfield, Illinois
April, 1969
CONTENTS

SUNDAY SCHOOL
I. The Future is Brighter Than You Think .................. 13
II. Sunday School of the Seventies ........................... 18
III. Where Are They Going? .................................. 26

PRESESSION
IV. Sunday School Begins —
    When The First Pupil Arrives ............................ 31

NURSERY
V. Nursery A Necessity ........................................ 36

CHILDREN
VI. Team Teaching ............................................. 43
VII. Children’s Church Versus the Family Pew ............. 53

YOUTH
VIII. Caught In The Middle ................................... 57
IX. Don’t Put a Cap on Their Bottle of
    Theology at Age 13 ......................................... 65

YOUNG ADULTS
X. Are Single Adults Moral Dropouts? ....................... 74
XI. The Young Single Adult and The Church ................. 83
ADULTS

XII. Adults Study? ................................................................. 88

XIII. Group Dynamics: Key to Revival .................................. 93

HOME

XIV. The Home and Sunday School Work Together ............. 98

XV. Ten Commandments For Teens - Parents .................... 103

RUNNING THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

XVI. The Sunday School Superintendent .......................... 112

XVII. The Workers' Conference .......................................... 118

XVIII. The Laws of Sunday School Growth ......................... 130

XIX. The Birth and Death of Churches ............................... 136

TRENDS AND PROBLEMS

XX. Sex Education: The Cure Can Be Worse
    Than The Disease ............................................................. 151

XXI. The Fastest Growing Sunday Schools in U.S. ............... 156

XXII. New Faces of Evangelism Versus the Old .................... 161

XXIII. Is Sunday School Busing Effective? ......................... 167
Critics forced the Bible out of public school education. Then they ruled out prayer. Now they are trying to force the Sunday School out of the education role.

The critics against the Sunday School are vocal and potent. Now their criticism is taking the form of action. The National Council of Churches has set aside 13 million dollars for research in the new curriculum material to reach and teach the family. Some critics have suggested a Tuesday School in the afternoon or evening to teach "Christianity, ethics and meaningful living." Others have suggested Church on Thursday, especially in view of expanding weekend leisure. Granted, reaching the family is important and leisure time is a factor. Yet, I'm encouraged with the Sunday School.

I'm not trying to desperately hang on to an outdated Sunday School and pump new life into a dying corpse. The Sunday School has life . . . is growing . . . and should encourage us.

"We're not going bankrupt nor falling apart," related Jay Beaumont, Minister of Christian Education in the Hinsdale Baptist Church of Portland, Oregon. In reply to the prospects of Tuesday School, Beaumont said, "We aren't going to get people to attend on Tuesday afternoon or evening if we can't get them to attend Sunday morning."

He went on to argue, "The American people and our society are geared to Sunday morning attendance. The busy week as well as the public school schedule of activities and homework won't make time for Tuesday or Thursday church school."

A group of ministers in an interdenominational California meeting was recently asked, "Does criticism shake your confidence in the Sunday School?"

"Criticism encourages me," remarked Bernie O'Brien, Director of Christian Education, First Baptist Church, Kingsberg, California. "I want to do something to show the critics the church is a powerful force in the community, not a dying program."

Dr. Ed Hayes, professor of Christian Education at the Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary, pointed out, "They (the critics) are not just throwing bricks to destroy a glass house. The popular press is concerned. The New York Times wouldn't sacrifice valuable newspaper space on the Sunday School if it weren't vitally concerned with pointing out occurring weakness and helping the Sunday School make the contribution in the future that was made in the past."

Rev. Ed. Plowman, a San Francisco minister from an American Baptist Church, responded, "Teachers serve vol-
untarily in the Sunday School. I find some degree of lay enthusiasm. Criticism can't kill involvement and enthusiasm overnight." An Assembly of God minister agreed by stating, "The genius of Christianity is that it must be shared."

Several trends make the future bright. Report cards, teacher standards, adult elective courses, team teaching, improved classrooms, age graded equipment and quarterlies, all encourage those working in Sunday School.

"Academic challenge will increase attendance in our Sunday Schools," indicated Rev. Rodney Toews of Gospel Light Publications. "Our students are willing to take Sunday School seriously if we as leaders will take it seriously."

In response to the question, "Why do you believe in the Sunday School?" J. Edgar Hoover states, "The Sunday School can help (prevent crime) as no other institution can, for the Sunday School offers a moral, ethical and spiritual way of life that is of unsurpassed value in our time." He goes further to state, "There is no substitute . . . for the Sunday School."

The average person lives in either one of two societies. In the "aspirin age" he is pressured into a frustrated busy life. In the "I.B.M. Society" he is treated as a digit and lost in the anonymity of non-involvement. Sunday School stands as a "dew line" deterrent, for it is not yet computerized or commercialized to any degree. Hayes reinforces this strength, "the Sunday School is one of the last places of the small groups where people are treated as individuals. We need the Sunday School where people can be loved as persons."

The Sunday morning sermon doesn't equip the saint—it's too spotty. The Sunday School, even though weak, offers a balanced diet to those studying the Word of God. "It's the only organization to systematically teach the Word of God," states Rev. Chester Larson of Scripture Press. Sunday School
curriculum has its critics, but each evangelical publishing house has endeavored to cover all of the Bible.

Also, listening to a sermon doesn’t necessarily produce learning. Learning equals involvement. The average teacher enters the class to face students armed with nothing but the Bible. Face-to-face interaction in the Word of God is the hope of the church.

Even though the Sunday School is encouraging, there are problems. Leadership is a time bomb. Unless we lick the problem of quality teaching, we’ve had it. Some teachers haven’t taken a training course in fifteen years, and “the lecture” is the only method of teaching. Other Sunday Schools have uninhabited libraries, poorly attended workers conferences, routine regimented schedules and cliche filled lessons. Our society is in a spiraling knowledge explosion, triggered by computers and “education’s pathway to affluence.” Public school and college education make incisive demands on pupils. If the Sunday School will prepare Christians to live in the 1980’s it must train leaders in the 1960’s. Leadership is the life-giving formula. The leaders must be trained, dedicated and spiritually equipped to continue Sunday School influence in North America.

Tied to leadership is continual spiritual revival. Our Sunday School can have all the up-to-date methods and materials, but unless the Holy Spirit is allowed to present Christ, our methods accomplish unimportant results. Peter Marshall said, “The twentieth century Christian is dressed up in deep sea diving suits and marches forth victoriously to pull plugs from bath tubs.”

I’m encouraged with the Sunday School. When the Southern Baptists report 85% of church members come from the Sunday School, I realize the Sunday School is the potential church of tomorrow.

Rev. Carroll Stegall of the Southern Presbyterian Church spent his life in Africa as a missionary and in the southern
United States building Sunday Schools. He cautioned a young seminary student about destructive criticism:

"Where would the church be today if the Sunday School hadn't done what it did?"

Then Stegall added another thought:

"Where could the church be today if the Sunday School did what it is supposed to do?"
What is on the horizon for the 1970’s? And what lies ahead for the church educational program—especially the Sunday School?

The future will be fantastic, incredible, fabulous, creative and imaginative. It will be a high-energy civilization with life centered on the technological, chemical, physical and revolutionary. That is the opinion of Herman Kahn, president of Hudson Institute, the "think-tank" of American industry and government, expressed in his book, *Toward the Year 2000: A Framework for Speculation*.

Perhaps the greatest factor of the 1970’s will be the incomprehensible change in population. By the year 2000, there will be twice as many people in the United States as now. This means within 30 years a "second America" must be wedged into the land space we now own. Many new cities

*©Christian Life Magazine, April, 1969
Reprinted by permission*
must be built while old ones are torn down. New educational systems, new recreational opportunities and new cultural interests will have to be created. Production of electricity will have to expand seven times the present rate.

Computers are spewing out titanic amounts of data, giving birth to a knowledge explosion and learning revolution. This knowledge demands a place in the Sunday School curriculum.

Heart transplants are common; brain transplants in humans may someday be performed frequently. The church will have to deal with problems which may be caused by such advances in medical technology. Brain transplants in rats have transferred fear not previously recognized. When a brain is transferred between humans, will the personality and intelligence of the donor go to the recipient? Should a Christian accept a brain transplant and perhaps the habits of alcoholism from the donor? If a secular-oriented housewife accepts the brain of a Christian Bible college student, will the operation transplant a new nature into the recipient? The Sunday School of the future may have to prepare people to deal with test tube babies and other medical milestones.

Memory pills are available and, according to some researchers, are safe to use. Should Sunday Schools give such pills to help students grasp more of the Bible in less time?

Massive changes in society may require similar changes in churches. Society may be divided with each half pursuing a three-and-a-half day work week. The three-and-a-half day weekend will be expanded for new forms of recreation. If Sunday School remains on the first day of the week, it will exclude 50 per cent of the population. Day camps, Wednesday schools, weekday club activities and released time education are attempts to solve the drift from Sunday morning training. However, these innovations are only marginal attempts when measured with the unprecedented challenge. Electronics will have a mighty effect on churches and Sun-
day Schools of the future. Already, electronics is making an impact.

The church has many new teaching aids, and most of them plug into the wall. Educational TV is at the church door. The next generation will see the 21-inch or larger instructor in the classroom. Cassettes will project teachers onto screens. A teacher may select lessons from a Christian prospectus on foreign policy, subconscious motivations of mass media or urban problems.

Some major church denominations have spent millions of dollars on Television production, but most of their programs have missed the mass media audience for which they were produced. Low ratings and poor schedules have turned denominational executives to the use of TV in church school classrooms as a more effective investment.

The church library will be an electronic listening post. The student will dial for curriculum materials which are, in turn, piped to him on audio tape from a control center.

At two Christian colleges (Oral Roberts University and Oklahoma Christian College) such learning centers already have been housed in their libraries with listening posts throughout the building. The system permits instant recall of audio and video elements by the students.

Books will be stored on microfilms which can be fed via TV screens to the student. Forward-thinking educators dream of computers helping Sunday School teachers prepare lessons. A mechanical brain will print out an interpretation of the biblical text, its historical background, and illustrations. The teacher will feed the socio-economic background of the pupil into the computer and, in return, receive a practical application of the assigned text for urban, suburban or rural life.

Dr. John Godland of U.C.L.A. stated last summer, "I would say that computer-assistant instruction in our school (pub-
lic) will become a functioning reality in a good many communities . . . sometime after 1980." He thinks computer terminals for classrooms which now cost more than $2,000 will be available at 1/500 of the present cost.

But if we can plug into "brain banks" and bring their benefits to pupils, why wait until the pupils are assembled in the church building itself. Perhaps Christian education of the future can function in the home on individualized schedules. The TV selection will be so vast the children can study the journeys of Paul as easily as dialing a 1985 version of the Beverly Hillbillies.

Teaching machines will be more sophisticated. At present, inexpensive sets for $4.50 are available to teach fourth grade spelling, eighth grade civics, or college freshman psychology. The term machine has created resistance by the stereotyping parent. Therefore, programmed education is being used as a more acceptable title. However, called by the traditional name, teaching machines can never eliminate the classroom teacher, but are designed to build motivation, insure attention and individualize the pupil's instruction. Children are stimulated into activity by buttons and levers that permit pushing and pulling. Machines will not scold, punish or provide adverse examples. The Quakers have been experimenting with the machines.

Computers will transform meaningless statistics and stacks of records into efficient useful data. The traditional six-point record plan of Sunday Schools will be expanded, and attendance, punctuality, study and achievement will be digested by computers in a matter of seconds. Teachers will receive an objective diagnosis of the pupil's problem along with suggested remedies to be followed by the teacher: visitation, phoning, counseling, etc. Church Data Systems of Eugene, Ore., offers the beginnings of such a system to both small and large churches.

Christians shouldn't rebel at using inanimate computers. Humans create the computer program which can give out
only that which a human has put into it. God can guide a human instrument to write a tract, a book, or program a computer.

Church architecture—or lack of it—will also reflect coming changes. Persons in the present underground church predict a movement to a non-building church in the future. Can Christian education programs operate without Sunday School rooms and permanent chalkboards? Can a church centered on people rather than physical buildings produce a continuous ministry?

A multi-learning hexaplex was featured at the National Sunday School Convention in Anaheim, Calif., last fall. Such a six-sided module can be added inexpensively to existing Sunday School facilities and features flexibility. Moveable walls make a multi-purpose room out of this innovation in church architecture designed by Joseph Colombo of Santa Ana, Calif.

Education is a fluid commodity, and Sunday School leaders are planning their classrooms to enhance education. This new concept is called environmental learning.

The trend is to open space classrooms like those in public schools. Children are given space to be active, to play more. Most churches are not constructing the small dark 10 ft. by 10 ft. cubicles that were popular in the 1930’s and 40’s.

Wall-to-wall carpeting, windows waist-high to children and brightly colored furniture designed for the little ones are seen in many churches. Improved shadowless lighting and air conditioning are considered necessary, and many small children’s classrooms have their own bathroom.

New open space rooms make team teaching possible. Excellent results are seen when two or more persons plan the lesson, guide the learning activities and evaluate the results. Bernice Lea of Oakville, Ontario, would not take charge of a high school class on a self-contained basis, but was happy to become part of of a four-teacher team to 25 pupils.
The Pentecostal Publishing House calls team teaching, "interest center" teaching because it is built on the activity and interest of children. The Lutherans published an article calling it, "Mr. and Mrs. Teaching," and recommended a married couple teach together.

The secret of team teaching is not the teacher who "performs" in front of the room. Team teaching involves a radical interdisciplinary approach toward content and methods of learning.

A module is a new scheduling of time, activities and curriculum. Twenty minutes of opening exercise and 30 minutes of sit-in-a-circle-with-Bible-on-knees will disappear. Emphasis will be on activities and expression. Facts will be "experience representations" forming stepping stones to the future. Facts will be experienced rather than memorized.

A class for children may be divided into 15 modules, each with a different activity to accomplish a specific purpose. The young will be busy in various activities learning several lessons, yet not memorizing facts.

Dialogue groups will be the order of the day. The Sunday School is steadily moving away from a "talk" approach to one of immersion of the person into a group society through group-oriented methods. Circular response, buzz groups, dyads, forums and psychodrama are getting more attention than in the past. Martha Leypoldt, professor of Christian Education at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, has written Forty Ways To Teach in Groups which reflects more group awareness in teaching than the former emphasis on the teacher's ability to lecture.

Both Sunday School and public school curricula have been tradition-bound. Values of middle class whites are not necessarily Christian, and textbooks will picture white and black persons.

Attractive paperback books are expected to replace quarterlies. Gospel Light Publications already is producing such
materials. The books “have far exceeded our sales expectations,” according to Bill Greig, vice president. Scripture Press, Inc., has produced two other substitutes for traditional educational aids. They are *Youth Illustrated* and *Living Today*.

There are other trends to make the Sunday School future bright. Some students are writing tests on their material and are being issued report cards. Sunday School teacher standards are being raised, and elective courses are being offered involving students in the learning process.

Sixteen denominations studied curricula for five years (1960-65) in the cooperative curriculum project and produced an 848-page manifesto. The main contribution of it is to guide Sunday Schools from an information-centered approach to a child-centered approach.

In the next three years, the American Baptist Convention will unfurl its new curriculum, “Christian Faith and Work.” It will follow a semester program, with the school year beginning in September rather than October, the traditional beginning. The Baptists are dropping the term, Sunday School, in favor of the title, Church Schools. This will enable churches who are shifting away from Sunday morning as their main instruction period to use the curriculum throughout the week.

The United Presbyterian Church, USA, is calling its new curricula, “New Venture,” rather than curriculum. Dr. C. Ellis Nelson, professor of practical theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York, describes the curriculum as a venture to teach parents. He believes the traditional strategy of attempting to indoctrinate children in the faith, assuming these children will grow up to be mature Christians, has failed.

“Children grew up to be like their parents,” he stated. “The day is gone when we may expect education aimed at children to be powerful enough to make them something their parents are not.”
In a revolutionary move, adults and junior high school pupils will be grouped together, although the "younger laity," as teen-agers are called, will have some electives and at times meet by themselves.

There has been, however, some agitation against moving too fast with innovations in the evangelical market. A conservative denomination felt one publisher was out of line in the teacher's manual for an 11th grade series on sex education. The following limerick was deemed unacceptable:

"There was a young lady named Wilde who kept herself quite undefiled by thinking of Jesus and social diseases and the fear of having a child."

"But I struggle with this problem every day," stated Joan Winters of Rockford, Ill. To her, innovations in Sunday School are encouraging.

In viewing the future of the Sunday School, it is tempting to assume the role of an ecclesiastical Marshall McLuhan, predicting whirling computers, flashing lights and clattering electronic gadgets, spitting out punch cards. Such a world is closer than we think.

Some are afraid of the coming electronic age. They shouldn't be. The printing press, radio and motion picture didn't sap the church's strength. Creative thinking pioneers took those inventions and expanded the gospel influence. God has His man for the 1970's who will create new media for that decade to keep the future of Christian education bright.
CHAPTER III
WHERE ARE THEY GOING?*

American Sunday Schools are fighting for survival, *The New York Times* charged two years ago in an article claiming Sunday Schools are irrelevant. They fail to relate religion to modern life, it said.

Ten years earlier, Wesley Schrader's statement that Sunday School is the "most wasted hour of the week" triggered a continuing debate.

Turbulent Sunday School skies raise questions as to its future—if it has one. A few churches have moved religious instructions to Wednesday schools. (See *Christian Life*, January 1969.)

Attendance in mainline denominational Sunday Schools is markedly going down hill. During the last three years, Sunday Schools in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. lost 80,000

*©*Christian Life* magazine, April, 1969
Reprinted by permission.
pupils, the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S. lost 173,000, The Methodist Church, 88,000, American Baptist Convention, 135,000, and the United Church of Christ, 140,000.

Accompanying this decline is a rise in attendance at Sunday Schools of the radical right.

Many reasons are given for the decline. It is only a paper loss, according to William Beggs, a Methodist minister, who reports the Methodists are cleaning their rolls. Others feel America is over the post-World War II Bible boom. The Rev. Jack Hyles, First Baptist Church, Hammond, Ind., charges the losses are due to theological modernism.

“Liberalism has always been sterile and can’t produce life,” he maintains. “As long as they deny the fundamentals of the faith, they will drive people from the church for people will go where they can get bread, not a stone.” Some report institutionalization is the cause.

Most denominations were born in the fires of revival evangelism. The Sunday School for them was the main evangelistic arm of the church. However, succeeding generations of leaders have organized and over-organized Sunday Schools until they have become businesses, the charge is made. Now, thy say, the larger the organization, the harder it is to keep breathing life into a listless giant.

Evangelical Christians represent a growing body of churches. Conservative in doctrine, they are represented by the National Association of Evangelicals and its educational arm, the National Sunday School Association. The NSSA reported a 3.5 per cent increase in Sunday School attendance two years ago with 24 denominations reporting.

The Evangelical Free Church rolls went up by 13,000 pupils from 1965 to 1968, a 20 per cent increase. The Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.) added 53,000 and the Assembly of God added 14,000 to their rolls during the same period.
These denominations are smaller, hence can easily reflect a growth rate. Also, they are younger and have more vitality. The evangelicals are losing their sectarian image and are becoming respectable in church circles. Most of them try hard to forget that a decade ago they were against cosmetics for women, movies and dancing.

The middle-of-the-road churches built their Sunday Schools on evangelism and weekly visitation. Classes were crammed into the basement or partitioned by curtains in the sanctuary as the educational environment was not regarded as important as saving souls. The trend now is balanced towards education-evangelism with emphasis on education.

The fastest growing denomination in the U.S. is the Baptist Bible Fellowship which began in 1950 with 13 churches and now lists almost 2,000 in their yearbook. (See Fastest Growing Sunday Schools, *Christian Life*, October 1968.) Some estimate their membership at one million, added in less than two decades. Evangelism is their main emphasis and their ministers invite the lost to "walk the aisle" every Sunday to receive Christ. (Hyles added 1,200 in one year to his Sunday School and baptized more than 2,000 converts.)

These conservative churches often prefer to be called "fundamentalists" because of their allegiance to the fundamentals of the faith. They count evangelicals as their brothers in Christ, but do not practice cooperative evangelism.

Twelve of the 20 largest Sunday Schools in America are conservative and several more are working hard to push moderate churches from the listing. Needless to say, numbers are significant to them. "Sure numbers are important," stated Dr. G. Beacham Vick, minister of Temple Baptist Church in Detroit, listed third largest.

"The book of Acts gives numbers: 3,000 were added to the church." Dr. Vick believes every person not converted will go to hell and this motivates him to reach larger numbers.
Many Bible-believing Christians (middle-leaning evangelicals and fundamentalists) have an inferiority complex, thinking the National Council of Churches is the predominant church force in America. This is a misconception. Christianity Today reported in an article, “The Over-looked Majority Tries Harder,” Jan. 5, 1968. There are 40-45 million evangelicals in the U.S. These people who are true to the faith are in the “Bible belt” which is ideological rather than geographical. Encouraging is the resurgence of Bible teaching in Catholic churches as well as in many liberal denominations.

Field Marshall Montgomery in World War II illustrated the importance of a clearly defined objective. Montgomery's planning philosophy for war was to work back from his objective to insure that he started the advance best suited to the need of the master plan. If this admonition applies to Sunday School, we should ask the question, What is the purpose of Sunday School?

Can we really be fair in evaluating the Sunday School when we’re not sure what it is supposed to be doing? William J. Peterson writes in Eternity magazine in an article (“What’s the Future of the Sunday School?”), “The Sunday School as it exists today lacks a clear objective, a meaningful, unifying purpose for its existence. Is it primarily educational? Is it primarily character building? Is it primarily evangelistic? Is it primarily a feeder to the church? What is it anyway?” These questions need to be answered, and the answers will give direction to further attempts to improve the Sunday School.

Plainly, we are stuck with Sunday School. Our society is still geared to Sunday morning attendance. Yet in spite of being stuck with it, the future is bright; 40 million people can’t be written off easily.

Sunday School is becoming lay-centered, and the “sleeping bear” of the “comfortable pew” is stirring. People no longer view the clergy as the final word. The laity will con-
tinue to operate the Sunday School. Criticism of it won't hurt the enthusiasm of volunteer teachers.

Involvement of the laity is essential to the growth of the Sunday School in a society in which people are insulated from each other. This insulating de-personalization of people is seen in assigning numbers to people and in the lack of contact between people who are neighbors.

Sunday School, with all its limitations, offers a balanced diet for studying the Bible. The sermon can't equip Christians; sermons are too spotty. Sunday Schools are people and as long as the people are involved, the future is bright.
CHAPTER IV

SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS WHEN
THE FIRST PUPIL ARRIVES*

10 MINUTES BEFORE SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS

Mary Jane, a slim eleven year old girl, walked into the church chapel—where the junior department meets for Sunday School. She “plopped” into the rear pew, her coat still on.

The chapel’s lights haven’t been turned on yet. Up front two ladies are talking. Mrs. Freissen, the departmental superintendent is sitting in the first row chatting with a friend. She could be the pianist as she is sitting on the piano bench.

Two girls enter the room, giggling and scuffing their heels on the floor.

“Junnie, I’ve got his picture in my wallet” sighs one of the new girls to Mary Jane.

* The Evangelical Christian, February 1967
Printed by permission
“Where?” she squeals, “Let me see!”

After a brief huddle in the back of the chapel, the three girls head for the restroom. They don’t return till the junior department is singing its first song.

5 MINUTES BEFORE SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS

The junior boy digs his hands into his pockets and glances at the clock. Several other juniors enter the room and find a seat—silently.

Three boys in the back whisper silently and drape their arms around one another. They aren’t misbehaving, they are simply being boys.

2 MINUTES BEFORE SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS

An elderly lady walks down the hall and glances into the junior department. Seeing the “subdued” boys and girls she remarks, “The chapel creates a worshipful atmosphere for the little ones.”

A father of a junior boy looked in. “Sure is dead in there.” He knows the rollicking nature of his ten year old son.

Obviously, the juniors weren’t worshipping or being prepared to worship. The junior departmental room is not ideal, for the chapel wasn’t even preparing the boys and girls to learn.

The time and the room were working against the teachers. Profitable presession activities are needed.

Presession is the time between the arrival of the first pupil, and the beginning of opening worship. Remember, Sunday school begins when the first pupil walks in the door, not when the leader announces, “Let’s begin,” or says, “Good morning!”

Presession activity is a valuable instrument in the hand of the teacher. During this time the pupil is able to: (1) further his love for God by planned and purposeful activities, (2) prepare for the Sunday school hour. (By the term “pre-
pare,” is meant: (a) the pupils are met at the door, this lessens disciplinary problems both before and during class time; (b) provides the children a chance for fellowship; this lessens extraneous chatter during the Sunday school hour; and, (c) puts the pupil in an attitude for worship, and seeking God.) Since it is such, time before Sunday School should be used carefully and to its fullest advantage. There are other purposes naturally derived if the presession activity is planned well. (3) It prevents “late comers.” (4) Interest and enjoyment is aroused in the Sunday School experience. (5) Presession is a time to get acquainted. Teacher, do YOU know YOUR pupils—and do THEY know YOU? (6) Presession is a time when wrong motives and misunderstandings can be corrected. (7) Presession is a time when interests are shared between pupil and teacher concerning salvation, ball games, parties, school and other mutual interests. (8) Finally, presession activities actually teach. Even though the teacher is not talking, learning can take place.

Use presession programs that will encourage the pupils to come early. If you do, presession will naturally lend itself to extra opportunities to teach the Word of God.

Presession activities should be planned to be profitable. Therefore, it will require the complete cooperation of every teacher. Each teacher should be present for the presession each Sunday before the arrival of the first pupil. The teacher should greet his pupil. It is very important for each teacher to be with his pupil during this time. Note, Mrs. Friessen and the pianist didn’t greet the boy nor many juniors upon arrival.

Various activity centers may be utilized on department levels during presession time. Some activities which departments may have are: a book center, a missionary center (Primary and older), an art center, a sand table, memory work may be reviewed, and an interest center with maps, books, and curios.
In addition to these common interests, various activities may be scheduled according to departments.

**Nursery.** (1) Wraps will have to be taken and hung. (2) Toys can be provided for fun and learning to share. (3) A nature center is a sure attention getter and interest holder. (4) A picture Bible should be displayed and used.

**Primary.** (1) A music center with records, record player, piano. (2) Group projects.

**Junior.** (1) A junior choir may be practical, also records may be listened to and singing around the piano may be enjoyed. (2) Work center where help is given to students for their manuals. (3) Planning time and Juniors are full of ideas. (4) Contests may be planned and carried out. (5) Ushers for opening worship may be chosen and duties explained and practiced.

**Junior High.** (1) Missions can be presented forcibly through a missionary biographical library and mission information. Also, curios and letters from missionaries may be displayed. (2) True worship may be emphasized through discussions. (3) Problems may be discussed and solved.

**Senior High and Adults.** (1) Prayer groups may be organized. (2) A friendship committee may be employed to greet new students and to make introductions. (3) Talents and discussions. (4) Various aspects of the church may be explained to those who are not well informed concerning the local church and its operation.

This is not an exhaustive list but is simply a brief outline of programs which may be employed to more effectively use valuable presession time on Sunday mornings. Additions may be made and variations may be adopted to this program to properly adapt it to your own local church situation.

The purposes of presession activity should produce a desired result. The result is the changed life of the pupil because of presession activity.
The pupil should learn the Word of God in presession, therefore becoming a stronger Christian. This may help the pupil to take full advantage of the time devoted to the Sunday school hour. He is then an example to those new pupils who may visit from Sunday to Sunday.

This activity instills within the mind of the pupil the fact that punctuality is necessary and he is not only responsible for himself but he is also to be an example to others.

Co-operation, participation and association is learned at a young age if there is a stable presession activity from the youngest pupil to the oldest pupil within YOUR Church.
“A nursery is a good place to get children ready for Sunday School,” a minister once said. This seems wrong to me. House breaking is not the duty or purpose of the nursery Sunday School class.

Another said, “The nursery is good if it gets children ready for learning.” Again, this seems off base. Many children never go to the nursery department of the Sunday school and yet when they reach the beginner or primary department, they learn. Getting children ready to learn isn’t the business of the nursery class. These children are three years old—not a little pre-four year old or pre-beginner.

Still others say, “Nursery class teaches children to sing a few songs, play a few games, color some pictures, and be an enticement for adults to come to Sunday School.” Nonsense. A child can pick these up at home, kindergarten, or secular

* E. L. Towns, The Evangelical Christian, July, 1966
Printed by Permission
nursery school. Nursery is not a means to an end—getting parents to come. Nursery is an end in itself. The nursery class of the Sunday School should be an experience like a visit to the art museum or flying in a plane or hearing a symphony.

As the overture is a part of the symphony; as the appetizer is part of a meal; and as the introduction is part of a sermon: so the nursery is part of the Sunday School.

Some might say, "The nursery class is a necessity if you are going to reach young couples." Those who raise this observation view children as objects to be taken care of either in a crib or by "sanctified babysitting."

We must get away from the "nurse-maid" concept of the nursery. The nursery class is perhaps the most vital area of instruction and learning in the entire Sunday School experience. The nursery is to the Sunday School what the Foundation is to the house.

CAN CHILDREN PICK UP IDEAS?

A Sunday School must be an intellectual center, nursery class included! "Keeping the children busy," isn't enough. Today's pressure is often in the opposite direction children must learn. However, most people think learning is sitting and listening. Two and three year old children are not good sitters nor are they good listeners. But they are excellent learners.

Some people think you learn only from books. Two and three year olds can't read. Also, these people think learning doesn't go unless the teacher is talking, preferably up front and talking at the whole group! Nursery children don't listen. They get their ideas in a first-hand way, like scientists. They learn by going on trips and seeing things for themselves. When they play Moses walking through the Red Sea, their imagination builds a tremendous wall of water. The child takes a trip with Paul to Antioch in his imagination, when the Sunday School teacher presents a flannelgraph lesson.
They learn by having live people visit their classrooms. The Pastor teaches the children something of love and care by his appearance.

The nursery children also learn by experimenting and doing, such as coloring of pictures, pasting, growing a plant, or putting flannel figures on the board.

Not all learning needs to be first hand in the Nursery class. Books have a significant place. Story books are great if they open up spiritual avenues to the heart and formulate Scriptural concepts of life. Children listen and learn. Nursery children love pictures, too. Not “cute” pictures or cartoons, or overly simple ones. Real drawings, and photographs from everyday life fascinate them.

Most nursery classes are organized into subject matter. Time is set aside for music, a story, movement of chairs, handwork, looking at pictures, working at the sand table, playing Bible games, listening to music, etc. Even though these activities are compartmentalized, a child learns “beef stew” style. Most learning comes all mixed up, as in a stew. The nursery child is learning to count while he builds a block tower for his church (arithmetic and coordination). The next moment his blocks topple because the base was too narrow (science). But at the same time he says, “My steeple fell” (language). Another child comes to watch and help (social learnings). The teacher guides the children singing “The wise man built his house upon the rock” (singing and application). This kind of learning makes some adults uncomfortable. They try to organize the nursery class. — Opening exercises (3 minutes), singing (2 minutes), Bible Story (7 minutes), show and tell (10 minutes), handwork (8 minutes), and so on.

The average teacher leaves this organized departmentalized class feeling satisfied, yet may have failed. Nursery children may or may not show enthusiasm for this kind of “learning.” These children are naturally eager. However, they may not have learned as much as they could if other procedures were used.
Give yourself a simple test. Walk into your nursery class. Do you find something fresh? Something new? Do you hear a story? See a picture? Look at a display? Do teachers have bird nests, shells, rocks, or a sand table to illustrate Scriptural truths? Are you pleased? Maybe if you pick up ideas, nursery children will, too.

WHAT CAN NURSERY CHILDREN LEARN?

Just because the nursery teacher doesn’t lecture or have the children write in their workbooks, doesn’t mean learning is not present. Nursery children learn facts—perhaps more than in any age in Sunday School. Educators tell us a child has learned one half of the accumulative knowledge of life by the time he is four years old.

Nursery children can learn much about God. God has made all things, and He loves them; not them only, but everyone in the world. The nursery child learns that God cares for him and that He will hear when the nursery child prays. Also the nursery child learns that God knows best for him and for all people. God is in heaven.

Who is Jesus to the nursery child? Jesus is God’s son who came to earth. Jesus was once a child who grew as other children grow. Jesus is now with God in heaven and Jesus loves me like God does. Jesus is my friend.

What do nursery children know about the Bible? The Bible is God’s book, it tells them about God and Jesus. The Bible is full of true stories and it tells us how they can be good children.

Nursery children can learn much about the church. This is “my” church. It is God’s house and we have many happy times in church. The nursery child can learn to love the church and want to come to the church.

The nursery child also can learn about his home, God gave him his home. God also gave him a mother, father, sisters, and brothers. Also, he is to help at home and this pleases God.
Spiritual life and personal development should not be postponed till the teen-age years. The nursery child learns that God wants him to be kind and to share his toys. Also, God wants him to love everybody and to obey his parents.

The above concepts should stage our theological framework. Yet, nursery children can learn these basic truths.

Foreign missions can be taught in the nursery class. The child can learn that God loves all the children of the world. Some children do not know about God and the nursery child prays for them. Also, the nursery child learns to pray for missionaries and to give money to help other children learn about God.

CAN NURSERY CHILDREN BE CREATIVE?

Ideas enter our head and flow out again. We call the “in” process learning, and the “out” process expression. With the nursery child the “out” process is called make believe. Some may watch and say, “All they do is play.” Call it play, but don’t minimize it. Imaginative activity is the nursery child’s way of organizing his ideas, making them a part of himself, then expressing them to others. We adults think things out, put them on paper in neat outline forms. Nursery children “play out” what they have seen, observed, and felt. If you stop-up their imagination and creativity, spiritual concepts travel in one ear and out the other, leaving few foot-prints in the mind.

The world of make believe belongs to the nursery child. Their imaginations run free six days a week all over the play room at home. Imaginations explore dressup clothes, tricycles, doll cribs, and the overturned box, (really makes a garage for a truck). A good nursery class gives children all the “props” and freedom they need “to try on for size” the different roles of the Bible. How does it feel to be Joseph in Egypt?

Nursery children need the same freedom to express themselves in finger painting, music, and bodily movement. The
average nursery teacher says to the child, "Sit still, be quiet." God, who built wiggles into children says, "Move, develop and be active." Use many means of expression for the nursery children—easel paints, finger paints, clay, dough, wood, blocks, sand, play clothes, dolls, trucks, boats, trains, (some Sunday school teachers seem married to the crayon and only to the crayon!) I prefer a teacher who has the decency to stand back and let children use crayons in their own sweet way. The average nursery school class is a great big coloring book and children have to stay within the lines.

THINGS I DON'T LIKE IN THE NURSERY CLASS

When I walk into a nursery class I like to feel life in everything I see. The nursery class is more than a room in which activities go on. The nursery class is the world to the two and three year olds. If their world is conforming, dreary, militant, and threatening, the children learn a false concept of Christianity. Christianity is being lost in a crowd.

I don't like to see children in a perfect line, standing without moving. Adults are not that way.

I don't like to see them sitting in a perfect circle unable to speak or move. God didn't make children that way.

I don't like to see the nursery child on tiptoes, looking over the edge of a table or cabinet. Our concern for the children is reflected when we supply furniture their size.

I don't like to see nursery children all doing the same thing. God made each child from a different mold with different needs, ambitions and desires. Hank has red hair, Judy has freckles and Jim is fat.

I don't like to hear threats, "If you don't do this I'll . . ." If we lived by the laws and threats, our Christian life would be nothing—we live by God's grace.

I don't like to see nursery children pitted against another, "Let's see who can be the quietest, quickest . . ." For you
see, somebody is always last. In pitting children one against another, we may help the quickest, but hurt the slowest.

I like to see the nursery class be the church—for it is. The nursery class is not the future church, it is the church now. Regardless what theological position you hold, a child before the age of accountability is God’s child in God’s care. The life, freedom and liberty of the church should be displayed in the nursery department. Give attention to your nursery department, for it is the church now.
"It's the most ridiculous thing I ever heard of", snapped Mable Elizey, superintendent of the primary department. "These college teachers live in a glass tower. I imagine he hasn't taught a primary class in ten years." Mable has been in the primary department for the past eighteen years.

"We're supposed to form a team . . ." continued the older woman.

Hazel Maryan, a young mother and teacher of grade two boys replied, "If he had the problem of my juveniles, he'd never suggest a team. Can you imagine our thirty-two primaries in one class."

"They'd climb the walls," replied Mable, "And we'd never
get them to learn anything. We have difficulty now, getting them to sit still and listen.”

“Team teaching is a nice trinket to include in a book on teaching, but it’d never go over in our church.”

“I like our department the way it is now,” replied the superintendent. “We have three classes of boys and two classes of girls. Opening exercises last 25 minutes and the teachers have 45 minutes to teach the Bible. Team teaching would get the children playing and away from the Bible study.”

Hazel replied, “I don’t think we ought to change. Our children won’t learn the Bible.”

Picture a typical conversation between teachers in a conventional Sunday school when asked to consider Team Teaching. Hazel and Mable are wrong on two accounts. First, they are closed minded to new ways of improving their teaching; and second, team teaching will produce all their aims of Sunday school teaching and more.

WHAT IS TEAM TEACHING?

The team approach to teaching involves two or more persons in the role of guiding the learning, growth, cooperation and evaluation of classroom experience. Sharing of responsibility is vital to the team approach.

No one person can and should be responsible for the spiritual life of a child. In the one-teacher-to-a-classroom-approach, the teacher has responsibility for all the praying, teaching, guiding, encouraging and counseling. But, every child is different, every class is unique, every church varies. Needs change from child to child and from age to age. Several teachers should pray, teach, visit, guide and direct the pupil. The several teachers form a team that can be used in the Sunday School.

Team teaching is not entirely new or untried in the Sunday School. For many years the Church nursery and kinder-
garten classes have had one or more teachers. Also, the Vacation Bible School has used the team teaching approach in the beginner and primary classes. Some of the older denominations have been using the team approach in these classes also.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF TEAM TEACHING?

Sunday school conventions and Christian education literature suggest a team approach to teaching. More and more the advantages of team teaching are being emphasized. What are these advantages?

1. The emphasis is on the group. The church has come a long way in understanding how learning takes place. Once, knowledge was considered to reside in the adult-teacher, parent, or camp counsellor. Knowledge was passed from the adult to the child as apples are passed from one basket to another.

   Now, there is general recognition that the child does his own learning. Even though the teacher guides the learning experience, there is more. We know that boys and girls teach one another in the classrooms through sharing of mutual experiences. The interaction of pupil upon pupil, has as great an impact on the total learning as the adult teacher. Thus, team teaching places an emphasis on the group and recognizes the way children learn.

2. Team teaching makes richer learning possibilities. In a team teaching approach, a larger class is possible because two or more teachers share in the leadership. Larger classes mean more children and more children in a group mean more possibilities for rich learning experiences.

3. Team teaching makes teacher recruitment easier. A new teacher is more likely to respond if he knows that he will have support for his responsibility. In a team teaching approach the new teacher is not, "on his own". The beginning teacher enters into group planning, sharing, and evaluation.
He learns from the older and more experienced teachers in the classroom. Still, teaching must be "caught" and not "taught". New teachers will learn to teach by actually teaching with other teachers in the classroom situation.

4. **Team teaching offers more possibilities for teachers to grow.** In a team teaching approach several teachers work together in a group and they help one another to grow and learn. They share insights from the Scriptures, also, they encourage one another to try out new ideas.

In a team situation when one teacher feels support in new adventures, new methods and materials are easier to attempt.

When one teacher is isolated in a classroom, outside evaluation is limited. Usually the pupils are the only judge of teaching. When there is no experienced person to give significant evaluation mistakes are perpetuated. Poor teachers do not usually improve their method except by trial and error. However, the errors have eternal implications. Team teaching helps to minimize mistakes and enrich teaching.

5. **More specialized skills can be utilized.** If more teachers are present in a group, more skills are likely to be available for class enrichment. A Sunday school teacher with a specialized skill may join a class for a short duration of time. For instance, the team may feel the need for help in audio-visual aids or a children's choir. A teacher with special skills in audio-visual aids or music may be brought in to work with the team. The new teacher would participate in the planning, help work in the sessions, and share in the evaluation. Thus the new teacher's special skill contributes not only to the children's experience but helps the other teachers who observe her work. They may learn something from her skills. Thus, every Sunday school classroom can become a laboratory training experience for teachers. Teachers continue to grow through a team teaching approach.
WHO IS ON THE TEAM?

Everyone associated with the class is on the team. This includes the pianist, class secretary, and others with specialized responsibility. While the teacher is not to be overlooked, all on the team, whether teacher, pianist, or superintendent are thought of as teachers.

The adults are responsible for initial planning and preparation for the learning situation. However, the boys and girls can join in and help in a classroom situation. They can suggest things they want to learn. Especially in the older grades the pupil can share responsibility for what is happening in the classroom. Team teaching means that everyone in a group is teaching!

HOW TEAM TEACHING OPERATES

One person on the team should be designated lead teacher. He carries whatever administrative responsibility is necessary for the function of the group; scheduling of the planning meeting, administering the planning, ordering of supplies, carrying out some of the details. The lead teacher may serve as chairman of the planning sessions. However, other teachers may serve in this capacity. Some teams rotate the chairmanship of planning, with each teacher in the group taking turns as chairman for one or more units in the year.

HOW A TEAM PLANS A LESSON

There are certain steps to be followed in the planning of a unit and in carrying out the plans for the class.

1. All teachers must be fully acquainted with the area of study. All teachers should read the entire unit—the teachers’ manual, the pages in the pupils’ quarterly, and other suggested related materials. Each member of the team should make a list of songs, Scripture verses to be used, topics for conversation, experiences the boys and girls may wish to do, handwork to be used, and other suggestions appropriate for the units.
2. **The team must meet for planning.** The planning session should meet at least two weeks before the lesson is taught. The lead teacher schedules the meeting. The person serving as chairman for the planning presides at the session. Each teacher should bring and share his own list of learning materials and activities. Together they may:

a. Think through questions which you surmise the pupil may raise from the study. Determine how they can help the pupils find answers.

b. Consider the aims and purposes of the lesson. Using these means, make a list of the needs of the pupils. Your specific aims should meet immediate needs. However, remember your pupils may have additional purposes to add.

c. Make a list of as many likely activities in which your pupils are or could be engaged for learning and growth.

d. Determine the specific responsibilities for each teacher on the team.

e. Practice the teaching skills each will need during the lesson.

f. Write out a specific lesson plan. Include the sequence of events and persons responsible for each leadership task.

The teachers' team effort produces broad plans. The plans should be sufficiently definite so that each teacher can proceed with his individual preparation, yet be flexible enough so that the pupils' ideas can be incorporated into the lesson.

The success of team teaching is in team planning. Where all teachers share the planning, all share an equal responsibility for the results. The team should consider the suggestion of each member of the team. No one dominates. No one just listens. All participate.

3. **All members of the team work together during the class.** A teacher may play a more obvious role as he assumes
direct leadership in the class, however, each teacher feels responsible for the entire session. The lead teacher is responsible to coordinate the entire lesson, the pupils working together with the teachers. Even though a teacher is not in the obvious role of leadership, he should not sit back and take a mental vacation. The silent teacher may be observing the pupils' responses, evaluating an activity, or giving support to the guiding teacher.

At times the class will be divided into small groups with each teacher responsible for teaching activities. Therefore, the team member, whether teaching or observing is a part of the team.

4. Each member of the team gives support to the others on the team. All teachers should help one another to grow and improve. The timid teacher should be encouraged to assume leadership when he is ready. Members of the team can offer praise and commendation for a job well done by others. Constructive suggestions may be given and sought, so that each may help improve the teaching, and learning task of the other.

5. The pupils share responsibility. Pupils of all ages can share responsibility to some extent. All pupils need some experience in problem solving, decision making, and expressing their own ideas at their own level. Each pupil should be able to help choose what they want to learn. Of course, the choice is under the teacher's guidance.

Younger children can suggest activities or experiences they enjoy. The teacher should listen carefully for the child's questions and comments. Flags of interest and disinterest will tell a teacher whether he is meeting needs.

Older students are able to assume more direct responsibility for helping to determine what needs to be learned, how to carry out work and evaluate their progress in terms of "how are we doing?"
Teachers who want to help others, must know the other. This takes time. Knowing one another means many experiences must be shared.

Teachers must know one another well. Informal fellowship among the team is as basic to team teaching as serious planning. This is one reason for regular sessions. One hour on Sunday morning does not provide sufficient time to know one another. Through-the-week activities make possible a variety of experiences that could not be included on Sunday morning. Not only must teachers know one another, they must know their pupils. Teachers should phone their pupils, write cards, and make personal visits. Every pupil needs to feel about his class at church, “This is my group, I really belong here; my teacher really cares about me. The other pupils care about me, too. I like my class.”

PROBLEMS IN TEAM TEACHING

There are many difficulties associated with bringing members of a team together. The shy, timid teacher may withdraw and not make her contribution to the group. The aggressive teacher may manipulate the other members of the team. With the timid teacher or the aggressive teacher, the end product is not a team effort.

Problems in personal relationships are likely to arise. Any time two people are required to work together, there is a possibility of conflict.

Lack of time may be a problem. Time is needed for all members of the team to make their suggestions. One or two talkative members may dominate the conversation, then under the mandate of “business” the group moves on. Time is needed to draw out points from all members of the group. Progress may be slow. However, the team that is willing to move slowly at first in order to be a “team”, may later move more rapidly.
Another difficulty in team teaching is personal reticence. "I wouldn't want to tell the story with Miss Proctor in the room!" As members of the team support one another they may find this fear overcome.

Another problem of team teaching usually voiced, is the loss of personal contact with the pupil. "If you have 37 children in the room, won't you lose the personal contact?" Past experience with team teaching has proven the contrary. Teachers who view their class from the framework of the team, usually are more conscious and have deeper insight into individual students because of shared observations. When the sole-teacher operates in the classroom he may overlook Sally because of personal reasons. However, when the team evaluates Sally, three other teachers can share their observations on her progress. "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety." Proverbs 11:14. Also, when more than one teacher is in the room, they can observe Sally in a variety of activities and relationships, thus getting a better overall understanding of her.

Another apparent problem to the team approach is teacher recruitment. The usual excuse is heard, "Team teaching is so difficult, how could we get anyone to serve?" Once again, experience proves the ease of recruiting teachers when the candidate will receive inservice training and help in the classroom. The one-teacher-in-a-class places all the responsibility on a single teacher. Many teachers are not willing to assume this burden. However, the learn-as-you-work approach takes away the threatening aspect of teaching. When a teacher is able to learn skills by way of watching other teachers at work, he is given reassurance in his teaching role and is more willing to teach. This new teacher feels that he "belongs" to the team and will not feel the embarrassment of taking over a new class.

The team teacher is like the members of an orchestra. Each instrument must follow the conductor, be in pitch and
on key, able to carry its assignment, and have a knowledge of the responsibilities of others. So in team teaching. Each teacher must come to class prepared, able to carry his assignment, have a knowledge of what other teachers are doing and work in harmony with others. As the orchestra produces the full and complete symphony, so the team of teachers produce well rounded, mature students—to the glory of God.
The West Overland (Missouri) Community Church had a problem. A swelling morning worship service packed the sanctuary and no finances were in sight for a new building.

The congregation came up with a simple solution—children's church. When the small children were moved out of the sanctuary, space became available for 75 more adults.

Children's Church provides children with the opportunity to worship God at their own level. Worship is responding to God with appreciation for His revelation.

They can make up stories of their life role, play difficult situations in which they need understanding and appreciation, compose their own songs and poems, and practice for their own worship. They can pray, sing in choirs, read Scripture, and take up offerings. Choral readings, litanies and visual representations of doctrinal themes can have a vital part in a child's worship. Also, they can play Bible games to review Bible verses.
Children can make their own visual lessons, hymn books, and cut and mount pictures. They may arrange bulletin boards, make murals, or puppets. Hand-work reflects the lesson. It helps the child understand and obey God.

Children’s church is an extension of the Sunday School. Children who have been to Sunday School for an hour can’t be expected to sit quietly for another session. But, the Sunday School hour is short, Junior Church can provide a balanced program of Bible story, worship, and expression, reinforcing the aims of Sunday School.

Children’s church prepares the young for adult worship. Often poor listening habits of adults were learned as a child when they had to sit in the family pew and listen to an unintelligible sermon.

“Training in Children’s Church will still be paying dividends when your junior churchmen become adult churchmen,” states Julie Gorman, Director of Christian Education, Bellevue Baptist Church, Chicago, Ill. “This investment starts bringing in returns immediately, as the juniors grow and as the adults re-evaluate their beliefs and responsibilities.” Both parents and children reap from the investment of a solid spiritual children’s church.

FAMILY WORSHIP SERVICE

The Reverend Dahlquist picked up the wooden cross from the communion table. It reached from the minister’s waist to his head and captivated the eyes of every worshipper—adult and child alike.

He explained the significance of the cross in a short, pointed 15 minute sermon. The cross was a visual aid that kept the attention of the children. This family worship service, a popular early Sunday morning gathering, had solved a problem in his church.

First Congregational Church of Deerlake, Illinois, faced a friction point. Morning church service and Sunday School
met simultaneously. The minister and many adults wanted the children in a "family pew." A few young families argued a family pew was nostalgic. "Our children will draw on church bulletins, page through hymnals and create a disturbance to other worshippers," they said. The strongest rebuttal against the family pew came from one mother who said, "My children can't understand the sermon . . . will be bored . . . and get a bad attitude toward church."

Another mother added, "If my kids cut up in church, I'd be embarrassed."

The Family Church service meets once a month, before the morning church service. Families sit together. The minister leads the service from behind the pulpit. The liturgist stands behind a lectern on the congregational level.

Dahlquist gives the call to worship. "We are assembled as families of God in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen."

The liturgist explains to the children the need to worship the triune God. The word trinity is reduced to bite size word pictures for children.

Once again the minister leads out in the service. But after each act of worship the liturgist interprets for the children:

Prayer of Confession (by the minister)

Words of Pardon (Scripture concerning God's forgiveness read in unison by congregation)

Gloria Patri

The Apostles Creed (in unison)


Word of Witness. Different families share with the congregation their insights of family study, opportunities of service or answers to prayer. This section of service can be spontaneous or planned.
Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession for Families (by the minister).

The Lord’s Prayer

The Ministry of the Word of God (a short explanation of Scripture centered around one point with a direct application to life.)

Response by worshippers. A statement of response by the families of renewed dedication to God’s plan for their life, printed in the bulletin.

Doxology

Benediction (by minister)

The liturgist especially interprets the Gloria Patri, the Apostles Creed, the prayer of thanksgiving and the Doxology. Not only is the content explained, but why the order of service.

The family worship service has maximum involvement, children tend to “tune out” the minister during long sermons. But young minds respond to mental activity.

“Frankly,” states one father, “I get more help from the family service than the regular worship service.” Another agreed, “I’ve learned more about my faith from the liturgist’s explanation of worship acts, than from repeating empty words each Sunday.”

Christian worship is both an offering and receiving. It is an offering of praise and exaltation to God. Dr. Howard Hendricks of Dallas Theological Seminary indicates, “Worship is giving the worthship back to God.” Notice the word service in “worship service.” We serve God by worshipping Him.

The family worship service is not a handful of children in the front pews listening to a children’s address. It is a dynamic act of worship by each member of the family giving exaltation to God the Father.

The family worship service is growing in acceptance. However, some churches have yet to recognize its potential.

The 1968 teen-ager lives in the stress and strain period of life called adolescence. It’s a no man’s land—a buffer zone between childhood and adulthood.

The teen wants to be treated as a mature person, whether he is one or not. Freedom from parents is sought. A fifteen-year old boy went out on a date.

*©Inside Today’s Teen-agers, January 15, 1968
"Have a good time!" exclaimed his mother.

"Don't tell me what to do," he yelled back.

The teen doesn't want to be told, but he does want to find out. He has the physical maturity and the perceptive mind of an adult, yet lacks the judgement and insight of adulthood. He is far from understanding his own behavior and far from being able to predict his own conduct.

"Who am I?" is the inner question of the teen-ager. In the past few years, there has been a rising influence of self-identification psychology, with Eric Erikson of Harvard University as one of the main contributors. Psychologists are finding that a youth goes through an "identity crisis" as he passes through puberty. At approximately age thirteen, he begins a search for identity. As teens experience puberty, their world changes. They enter the mystical land of adolescent experience.

The word "puberty" comes from the Latin word *pubertas* (to grow hair)—one sign of physical maturity. The physical change of puberty takes approximately thirteen months, but American society has prolonged the social change as an invention of a technically advanced culture. This protected period of the half-child/half-adult is extended into high school.

During puberty, the skeletal frame grows, and a boy's span from finger tip to finger tip increases from four to eight inches. A girl's breasts develop, and her hips get larger. Hair appears on the body. An adolescent's interest in sex becomes active.

The 1968 teen-agers are growing up sooner. The average age for onset of menstruation has dropped from 14 in 1947 to 12.3 years in 1966. This means that our teens go through puberty about twenty months earlier than did their parents. What has caused this phenomenon? Our post-World War II society has "pushed" children to grow up sooner. We put
men's clothes on little boys, foundation garments on pre-teen girls, and suggest that they date before they are ready. Years ago, camping was reserved for those age twelve and over. Now kids are shoved off at age seven or eight. Perhaps the title of an article in a popular women's magazine is a fitting commentary on our changing times: "Mascara on My Lollipop." Social pushing has resulted in physical changes.

During puberty there is a new interest in one's physical appearance. Girls spend time at the mirror brushing their hair, and a boy goes into the men's room and picks a blackhead off his face. Prior to puberty, they had little thought of their appearance. But self-awareness comes suddenly. Mary has always had long feet, but until now they have not bothered her. "Am I normal?" she may ask. "What's happening to me?" Sometimes physical changes trigger psychological problems. How the teen thinks he looks and how he feels about his looks are important.

We must teach them that their physical make-up comes from God—even the changes. Scriptural attitudes concerning their bodies must be assumed. God wants their bodies to be used for worship and service.

"Why are teens so critical?" puzzles a frustrated mother. "Why do they doubt?" asks the unsuccessful youth Sunday school teacher.

They have just come through puberty, and their self-awareness is focalizing for the first time in life. As teens are searching for self-identity, they use thought processes not previously experienced. Without a variety of experiences to temper them, they tend to be idealistic. Dick will be a pro with the Detroit Lions; Mary can only think of herself as a TV personality. American teens expect the best, the ultimate, and the perfect. Then they criticize anyone who doesn't live up to their standards—mother, father, pastor, or teacher! They criticize Dad for not producing, but they themselves cannot produce by their own standards.
Critical thinking can lead to creative thinking. Today’s youth are accomplishing more than previous generations. The youth of the Winnetka, Illinois, Bible Church travel down to the Chicago ghetto, where they teach and administer a Sunday school. One hundred youth from the Tulsa, Oklahoma, Baptist Temple spent ten days in Monterrey, Mexico, where they distributed 16,078 portions of gospel literature and reported 445 professions of faith. We have seen a change in camp administration in recent years. Ten or fifteen years ago the Christian camp counselor was a college or seminary student. Today college students must work because of rising tuition costs. Their places are filled by high school students, who are generally doing a mature job.

We as youth workers must recognize teen-age doubts and build our ministry on an intelligent interpretation of the Bible. We must never laugh at their problems, but we need to teach them the difference between criticism and evaluation. We must be willing to say, “I don’t know,” for teens won’t listen to a know-it-all.

Teens will spend fourteen billion dollars this year, and producers know this. Madison Avenue goes after teen-age impetuous spending. Teens can be coaxed to buy things without thought. Even more important is their influence on the family purchasing power. Teens will purchase two and one-half billion gallons of gas and 44 per cent of all cameras sold this year. They will exert a decisive influence on the purchase of family cars, reveals a Ford Motor Company survey. As a result, styles feature more sporty hardtops, fastbacks, and youthful designs.

The purchasing power of teens, reveals their independence and self-identity. When the teen puts down $1.98 for brand X, he frees himself and makes his own decision. That freedom to decide builds self-esteem. Who am I? A person who has self-determination—I can purchase what I please.
"Teen-agers are thirsty," reported an official of the Tea Council. So its advertising pitch is the "think drink."

The major air lines offer teen-agers a trip anywhere in America at half fare on a stand-by basis. American teens are flying at the rate of five thousand per day, and they are seeing places that older generations have never viewed. Once grandparents were thrilled with a trip to the State Capitol; now teens fly the friendly skies of America and see more in a summer than their grannies saw in a lifetime.

Girls, who represent 12 per cent of the female population, purchase 20 per cent of women's clothes, 27 percent of cosmetics—twenty million dollars' worth!—and 25 per cent of all greeting cards.

Boys, who represent only 10 per cent of the male population, purchase 30 per cent of all male clothing sold.

Twenty-nine per cent of all high school drivers own their own cars. Fifty-one per cent of all soft drinks are consumed by teens. Thirty-two per cent of the teen-agers in a New York suburb have charge accounts in local stores. Ninety per cent of single-record sales and 50 per cent of album sales are made to teen-agers. They own one million TV sets, twenty million radios, and ten million phonographs. They spend two hundred million dollars on jewelry every year. Fifty per cent of teen-age daughters play an active role in the furniture purchase decisions. Youth influences on car buying total over fifteen billion dollars a year!

We must give teens more authority in the budget of their youth groups. Also, we should expect more financial support from them for their program in the church. God expects tithe, talent, and time. Also, buying power should be equal to perceptive insight, so we should expect more maturity from them.

Teen styles and fads change. By definition, they intend to create a world all their own. Most kids fall into line with
teen-age fads to symbolize their identity with the teen sub-culture. To others, fads are a way to rebel against adult authority.

*Newsweek* magazine reported in a survey that nothing would solidify a teen-age fad faster than adult criticism. The magazine contended that adult criticism of boys’ long hair had entrenched it as a style. The National Institute of Mental Health explains, “Teen-age fads are carefully calculated to scandalize adults.”

Granny dresses were the rage among the teen-age world. *Women’s Wear Daily* ran an ad and began to popularize granny dresses for adults, and the teens dropped them like the proverbial hot potato!

Recently, young girls idolized Jackie Kennedy and repeatedly mentioned her as the one they would most like to imitate. According to *Encounter* news sheet, a male hero was seventy-one-year-old Republican Senate majority leader, Everett Dirksen—not so much for his political prowess as for his best selling LP record.

The guitar sound turns the teen-age world on. While the current “In” group is the Establishment, many nonprofessional teen groups are being formed. The American Music Conference reports that there are 300,000 teen-age bands in America, and most have their own instruments, costing from $2,500 to $5,000. While beginning bands play for nothing, most of them get from fifty to two hundred dollars for an evening.

Don’t fight teen fads, unless they are immoral. The widening gulf between teen and adult worlds may not have been created by you, but you must bridge it if you’re to reach young people. Provide leadership that is indirect and tactful, yet firm. Always be ready to give information, interpretation, and example to help develop Christian attitudes.

The pressure for sex is great on the teen-ager. The high
YOUTH

school gives the impression that everyone is indulging in immorality, but they're not.

Robert McAfee Brown recently named the biggest cause for student rebellion—depersonalization. "I am a human being—do not fold, spindle, or mutilate," is their cry. Just when they have the greatest desire for self-identification, society gives them numbers (for the draft, social security, or a private phone). Teens simply want to be accepted as persons before they are assigned to the ubiquitous nonentity world of adulthood.

The teen faces great pressures during his search for self-identity. The latest fads, questions concerning morality, advertising campaigns, doubts about God, and physical acceptance all crowd upon center stage and obscure the blueprint of life's development.

"Who am I?" Whether subjectively felt or not, the youth is a sinner. This preconditioning of the nature must be viewed and interpreted for what it is—rebellion against God.

"Who am I?" Every teen is a sovereign individual who is uniquely and eternally loved by God. No single additional factor can contribute so much to one's sense of self-esteem as to be loved unconditionally. God has a master plan for each life, and He will provide the power to fulfill that plan.

"Who am I?" The teen is a self-directing person. During childhood, most major decisions were made for him. As he approaches the end of adolescence, he must choose a mate, a career, and a role in life which will bring personal satisfaction. But he and he alone must make these choices. To choose too early is to run the risk of a detoured life. To choose too late is to run the danger of permanent attachment to Mom's apron strings. Teens are self-determining individuals. They demand the right to choose their own clothes, their own friends, and their own means of happiness. Their greatest choice concerns heaven and hell. They must make that choice for themselves.
“Who am I?” One who is accepted—both by friends and parents. Friendship that is bartered over the bargain counter of convenience will dilute self-esteem.

Each teen-ager must make meaningful relationships, for the depth of life’s meaning is found in friends. We trust that they will make their friends in the body of Christ—the church. For Christianity is, after all, a relationship. First, they must form a relationship with God. Then they can branch out into in-depth relationships with other members of God’s family.
CHAPTER IX

DON'T PUT A CAP ON THEIR BOTTLE
OF THEOLOGY AT AGE 13*

Who am I? I'm one horse out of a whole herd on the merry-go-round. Just a passenger in the many chairs on the high ferris wheel, a number out of the millions, all different from each other, yet so much alike.

As the horses that go up and down on the carousel and the chairs go round and round on the ferris wheel, I'm always moving but never going anywhere.

In the years to come I will be going on a journey . . . a one way trip that leaves society and never returns. When I take this journey of no return, neither the horses on the carousel nor those people in the chairs on the ferris wheel will give my departure a second thought. They'll be too busy going round and round, and up and down.

Is this all that life is going to be for me? Am I just to sit back, be passive? Or do I break away from the herd and as a few others, do something constructive, important, become

*Delivered to the General Conference of the Evangelical Free Church of America, Long Beach Auditorium, June 24, 1967.
somebody? If I make the break, maybe others will follow, for society can’t keep going in circles.

When I finally embark on my journey of no return, I can look back and be proud that I wasn’t just a number out of millions, but an individual who decided to do something. (Michael Sink, “Who Am I; Where Am I Going?” The Chicago Tribune, February 1, 1967.)

This poem written by a teenager, reflects profound thoughts about the future and a present meaningful existence. Where do young people get such questions? When do such desires enter life?

At about age 13 you enter a beautiful world of new experiences called adolescence. You enter through the door called puberty. Life takes on new meaning for you. Standards change. Fashions shift from little girls’ Mary Janes to sling backs. Tensions accelerate. Educational standards stiffen. Childhood idealism explodes and you may find yourself in revolution to the establishment. A new world of self awareness opens.

Physically you mature about two years before your parents did. The change that takes place in your body is reflective of our changing world. Psychologists report teenagers are entering adolescence sooner than in the past. Actually, the typical teenager enters adolescence about twenty months sooner than in 1947.

Puberty is that phase of transition likened to a buffer zone—between childhood and adolescence. Puberty lasts around thirteen months and during puberty many physical transformations are experienced. You put on about 25% in total weight. Your arm span from finger tip to tip increases by four to eight inches. Probably your feet grew by two inches.

“Why did you knock over the milk?” asked mom at the dinner table. If her arm suddenly had a two inch longer reach, she would knock over the milk, too.
During puberty your blood stream gets richer because your heart quickly enlarges. This richness pumps sugar into your blood and pimples break out on your face. Mortality rate is lowest and you have a less likely chance of dying from a disease during puberty and early adolescence than at any other time in your life.

YOUR MIND EXPLODES—A VACUUM IS CREATED

Physical changes are not the greatest factor. Puberty causes you to think differently. During childhood you thought by simple “first reference” concrete thoughts. The child thinks of God as an old man sitting on a throne. Love is his mother giving him a glass of Kool-aid.

After puberty your mind follows different thought patterns. Your ability to generalize or think in abstractions grows. You think rationally or in logical cause and effect relationships. Whereas the small child thinks only of sin as an act (such as stealing or lying), now you can think of sin as an influence or understand the sinful nature in your heart.

“Who am I?” is a natural result. Stop thinking of yourself as only a physical body with arms, hands and legs. Think of yourself as a person on the inside of the body.

So you respond, “Who is this person inside of me?”

As a boy about thirteen, I looked in the bathroom mirror. Then, as if a hand reached out from the mirror and smashed me between the eyes, the thought struck, “I'm not just a physical body with hair to comb. I'm a person who lives inside this body, who desires to look nice and attractive.” The Bible calls this distinction body and soul. Puberty causes teenagers to become aware of their soul or personality. Puberty causes you to ask “Who am I?”

“I want to become somebody” says the teenager. He looks inside and finds a vacuum... I am nobody. The great drive of the teenager is to become a person or a self.
Identification becomes the great drive in the early teenage life. You identify with someone who is great because you feel your worthlessness. You may identify with Mickey Mantle, Bart Starr or Bobby Richardson, because they have achieved and become what you want to be. Or you identify with Vonda Kay VanDyke—if you're not a boy—because you would like to be Miss America.

The average high school student goes to the corner drug store magazine rack, reads the slick back “True Love” or “Screen Stars.” Then a girl wants to be necked in the back seat of a car because of the person with whom she identifies.

Christian teenager, don’t let pressures mold you. Be the person you are—but first find out who you are.

... You are a person with the right to make decisions—make sure your decisions are guided by God.

... You are a person seeking and needing satisfaction in life—the beginning of satisfaction is found in God.

... You are a person searching for a meaningful existence—find this existence in God who is being.

In facing the question, “Who am I?” don’t forget that God’s Word has certain “clues” to help you answer this self-identification problem.

... You are a sinner—condemned by God.

... You are a creation of God—uniquely loved by Him.

... You are one for whom your Creator has died.

... You are a person with a wonderful plan for your life—God has made this plan.

You are a person who has the right to make a decision to work out God’s plan in your life—or to scatter your life as crushed ice on the hot summer lawn.

DON’T QUIT GROWING AT AGE 13

Don’t put a cap on your bottle of theology at age 13 simply means, age thirteen (Puberty) is a crisis period in life.
Your physical, mental, and social life are being shaken to the core. Don’t walk into high school with your spiritual feet in the junior department. Also, don’t blow your rods over the term *theology*. It simply means an understanding of the person of God and his relationship to the world.

**FOUR THINGS THAT WILL PUT A CAP ON YOUR BOTTLE**

1. The “*don’t blame me—I have a wooden leg*” attitude in life. Some teenagers make excuses. “How do you expect me to be a good Christian, I’ve got a wooden leg.” They mean, “Man, if you saw that tragic classroom that we use for a Sunday School class, you’d never be a Christian.” Excuses . . .

“How about our Sunday School teacher—treats us like children. Her talk is ticky tacky.” Excuses . . .

“My parents won’t let me do a thing, we can’t dance, be out after twelve, go to picture shows, smoke, or listen to rock music.” Excuses . . .

The Christian life was never promised as an easy one. Don’t blame your Sunday School teacher, classroom or parents for your spiritual condition. If you do, you’ll stunt your spiritual growth.

A famous minister tells the story of a rich, spoiled college student. He wanted to get the best out of college so he had a private room. His parents gave him a smoking jacket for study, a large mahogany desk, a padded chair. He went to the college book store, bought a book rack, lamp for his desk and three reams of paper. Every evening he would go to his room, put on his smoking jacket, adjust his chair, put a book on the rack, turn on the lamp and go sound to sleep. Having all the advantages doesn’t insure success. Easy times may work against you. You are in the most affluent age ever. What about your Christianity? Criticizing others is using the excuse of a wooden leg.

2. The “*Ha Ha, you’ve got egg on your face*” attitude. Many
kids sneer at childhood faith without progressing to adult Christian maturity. You may go to church every Sunday and under your breath say, “I don’t like church but what else can I do, my parents make me go.” Don’t sneer at the other kid’s faith, thinking they have childhood Christianity just because you do.

The guy with the know it all attitude may sneer at Christianity saying: “there’s nothing wrong with beer,” or “Biological evolution is right, the Bible is filled with myths.” Remember, he hasn’t examined all the facts in the world, he hasn’t been everywhere, nor interviewed all the experts. There are two sides to every issue, don’t let a mis-informed buddy smear egg on your face. Don’t make up your mind before you examine all the facts. The know-it-all attitude smears egg on his own face.

3. The “cool it man, and no one will know” attitude. Some kids fake Christianity in the adult world. They give testimonies, speak in young people’s meetings, and even pray in adult prayer meetings. However, they are still childish in their understanding. Be careful about talking up to the edge of your knowledge—you may drop off. Don’t be a fake. It will hold back your spiritual development. The “cool it” approach may leave you with a cold heart.

4. The “I’ll take my toys and go home” attitude. Many kids rebel and drop out of Sunday School. Some denominations have experienced a 76 per cent drop out rate of teenagers by age 16. A survey done in Dallas, Texas, in 1953 indicated five reasons why teens dropped out of Sunday School.

(1) They said their social needs were not provided for.

(2) They said there was too much inconsistency on the part of adults.

(3) They said they weren’t given opportunities to become involved and to serve.

(4) They said the message taught in Sunday School was not relevant to their adolescent life.
(5) They accused the church of not being interested in their problems.

A recent survey examining the drop-out problem indicated the above five reasons were still a factor. But, a new reason was given why kids dropped out of Sunday School. Agnosticism!! High school kids are becoming skeptics and saying, "I can't believe." Philosophy is being taught in high school whereas twenty years ago it was reserved as a college course. In our world of exploding knowledge, teenagers are being taught many adult concepts before they have the maturity to comprehend them. There is nothing wrong with knowledge. But increase your knowledge of God while you learn more of His world.

HOW TO UNCORK THE BOTTLE!!

1. **Doubt is a growing pain.** Our grandmothers said some of the aches we had during puberty were "growing pains." Doubt battles for your mind. You have come from childhood with the protection of a warm home, a community and a church life. The more you become exposed to the world, the more you will doubt. Puberty is a natural age of doubt. Some church leaders are concerned about the doubts of teenagers. Personally, I'm "worried" when teenagers don't have doubts. For you see, doubt is at the very heart of belief.

Life is called a broad road (Matt. 7:13, 14). We are born on this broad road which leads to destruction. But as we travel down this broad road (super highway) there is a fork, a narrow road that leads to eternal life. When we come to the fork we must make a decision and the very heart of the decision is the examination of both alternatives—the broad and the narrow road. To honestly examine one road is to doubt the other. So doubt is basic to our choice of eternal life.

If a teenager grows up in a church and claims to be a Christian, but has never examined the claims at the fork in the road, he is not on the straight and narrow path, but still on the broad road. When you, as a Christian young per-
son, accepted Christ, you experienced a decision that meant some doubt. Therefore, you will have doubt.

When doubts come, be able to respond, "Sure, I don't know, but there is an answer." You will face problems in high school that your parents can't answer and perhaps your pastor can't. But there is an answer. Learn to trust the leaders in the Christian church. Just because you can't see the answer now, doesn't mean that there is no answer. God has given scholars in every area of study who can help you. But don't leave it all to them. Be a researcher. Read much.

A characteristic of the teenage world, especially young teenagers, is to embrace the first thought that comes to the mind and then stubbornly close your mind to all other truth. Learn to "withhold judgment," until you see the whole picture.

Don't be overwhelmed by biological evolution. Remember, there have been five distinct schools of thought on evolution since 1859 when Darwin wrote his original Origin of the Species.

2. **Spiritual age and chronological age are not synonymous.** You may think older folks in the church are more spiritual, because they are larger physically and older chronologically. Not necessarily so. Physical growth and old age do not make us spiritual. The Holy Spirit makes us spiritual. The measure the Holy Spirit controls our life is the level of our spirituality. Many older folks in the church may have grown cold to Christianity and therefore, do not have spiritual age. In your zest for living, you can be controlled by the Holy Spirit and be spiritual.

3. **Systematically blast compartmentalized Christianity.** A seminary professor announced, "We live in pie shaped segments of life. Part of our life is social—we go on dates. Part of our life is recreational—we play touch football. Part of our life is vocational—we work at the A & P. Part of our life is spiritual and we go to Sunday School." Then we mistaken-
ly think, "Christ is concerned with our Sunday School but not our dates or our job at the A & P. We should blast from our thinking these compartments of Christianity. If Christ controls all our life, we take the cap off the bottle and grow.

4. Don't sit on the lid. A parent may be reading this article. Mom, don't let your kids enter adolescence with childhood mentality. Sometimes you parents are guilty of corking up the bottle.

Remember parents, "the harder you sit on the cork, the higher it blows." Your teenager has to learn self-determination. Give him the right to make decisions. They need satisfaction and they want meaning in life. Don't try to reproduce yourself in their life or have them live by your fears. Psychological studies have shown that Christian teenagers pretty much reflect the values of their parents. If you don't like what your teenagers have become—change your life.

5. As long as you put your feet under your parents' table—obey the Rules of the house. You may consider the Bible old fashioned but it says, "Children, obey your parents." As long as you live at home and let your parents provide food, a roof over your head and clothes on your back, you owe them something. I don't mean for you to run up the white flag and surrender, "OK, Mom, anything!" Respect, integrity and love are needed for our parents.

MAYONNAISE: KEEP COOL—BUT DON'T FREEZE

The first instruction on the mayonnaise jar is "Keep Cool." "Cool it," means to have everything under control. The "don't freeze" label means you turn icy to others. Nobody gets in and nothing gets out. You become an isolated island or a "no man's land."

If you are in the stress and strain period of life, the easy thing is to quit and retreat to the world, or enjoy convenient Christianity. But don't go either way. Keep growing in Christ. "Don't put a cap on your bottle of theology at age thirteen."
The apartment elevator glided to the second floor. Noiselessly the door slid open and Sue stepped out onto the thickly carpeted hall. Thirty steps (she had counted them many times) and her key would let her into Todd’s apartment.

Those 30 steps were torture. Somehow it had seemed all right at first. Todd’s bachelor apartment was only three blocks from the public school where she taught. It was a relief to get away from her sixth grade animals at 4 p.m. Todd would arrive around 5:30. They would either go to a cozy little restaurant on Wilshire Boulevard or have a hilarious time putting together a snack from what they found in his refrigerator.

Her key opened the door quietly and she flicked on a table light. Todd’s apartment was cozy—almost too cozy. Often at the end of an evening she found it difficult to leave for her own apartment across town.

*©Christian Life, November 1967
Printed by permission.
"Time for a working girl to hit the sack," she had said the last time.

"Room here," Todd replied easily.

"For another man," she laughed lightly.

But the implication of Todd's remark had come back to her several times since. True, both of them were members of the young unmarried class at First Baptist Church. She had gone there the first Sunday after arriving in Los Angeles. Her pastor back in the little home town Baptist church in Northern California had recommended it. She found a warm and friendly Christian atmosphere there—but few young people her age.

She let her coat slide off her shoulders and dropped it on a chair in front of the mirror. What she saw was not unattractive, she reflected. After all she had been named Homecoming Queen at State University where the competition had been keen. But now she was 25.

The days had gone quickly after graduation and the first months of her new experience in teaching. Now, four years later, she still liked teaching, but the weekends had become a drag. At church she had tried to get involved in Sunday School and other youth activities. But she discovered that school teachers, particularly unmarried ones, were not considered stable enough to handle regular assignments. And there was no other activity—that is, outside of the so-called young adults class. The class was a dismal affair. The few who attended were 10 years older than she—that is, until the Sunday Todd walked in.

He was different. Two years her senior he was already an executive in an advertising agency. He drove a sports car and was a lively conversationalist. It almost seemed to Sue as though Todd were the answer to her prayer. She was impressed with his knowledge of the Bible, but the shock came when she discovered that he had been divorced. That had
been nearly a year ago. Since then they had seen one another increasingly—first almost all day Sunday, later weekday evenings as well. It was six months ago that he had given her the key to his apartment.

“You might as well stop in and rest,” he had said. Somehow it seemed too easy. Like the time Todd first pulled her to him on the davenport and kissed her. She hadn’t resisted. She knew many of the couples in the Sunday School class had gone further than that. It was the accepted way of life.

How long would it be before she spent the night with Todd? Sue wondered as she turned away from the mirror.

As unlikely as this situation might have appeared a decade ago, today it is altogether too common among church young people. The single adult can easily become a moral or physical dropout unless something is done. Loneliness, with its treacherous hold on young people, particularly those in metropolitan centers, is having its effect. Regrettably, too few churches are aware of what is happening. Because of the constant flux of the young unmarried adult, churches are not quick to absorb them into their activities. The charge that they are unreliable is not untrue. At the same time, what happens to the single unmarried young person at this stage could well separate him from the church forever. Too often the church is thought only as a place for families.

“Church . . . ugh!” says Sue and others like her. “Church is geared to the family. Most guys who attend are rejects from the dating society or else so conceited they think no girl is good enough for them. Every time I go to church, it reminds me of my loneliness. I come home more depressed than ever.”

The church must become aware of the existence of single adults like Sue and give them the help and close fellowship they need. Christ Himself was a single adult and spent much time in the company of other single adults. The contemporary church needs to recognize that not only can it give, but
it can receive much from the single adult.

What specifically are their problems? One is that the new morality focuses sharply on the young single adult.

A junior coed recently wrote a letter to the editors of an evangelical college newspaper:

"The playboy philosophy is not just a worldly rationalization for lust. It is rather the source of intense meaning for thousands of U.S. careerists today . . . and if people don't understand the intensity of the problem of loneliness, they have no business moralizing away one of the most meaningful solutions to this problem young Americans have found . . . frankly there isn't much rational basis for condemning pre-marital sex on Christian grounds if Christianity has nothing better to offer for the single person to answer his basic innate need."

The young careerist vacillates from idealism to realism. He is eager to assume responsibility. Young politicians are firebrands and young executives want to throw around ideas—change the routine. Things must and can get better. When he is not given the opportunity, he becomes frustrated. And he usually has no one with whom to share that frustration.

The young single adult is often a "floating generation in a floating world." Mobility ranks as a cause for some of their problems. Roommates change frequently, meaning adjustments to living with someone new. With no mortgages to tie them down and little furniture, restless single adults often give 30 days notice and move "to where the action is," hoping to find meaningful relationships with those of like interests not available in their present situation.

Others turn to the security of conservatism and embrace yesterday. They are known as being "quiet, flabby and old before their time." Their potential contributions to society shrinks as they retreat into an ever narrowing world.

The process of becoming an adult has become more diffi-
cult. In the past the step from adolescence to adulthood was taken over a long period of time. Single people used to stay on the farm or with parents in the family homestead until marriage. The church gave guidance. Frustration was reduced by warm family relationships and the security of community traditions. The bachelor apartment was unknown. Today the single adult leaves home and goes to the city to find a career and friends.

Sociologists indicate that young single adults represent 8 per cent of the U.S. population and readily agree that they are the loneliest group in our society. Many live in the big city—alone. Others share a dormitory-life with four or five others in a crowded apartment. Our society is geared to marriage—the single adult is a misfit.

They often hesitate to share in community activities where married couples dominate the scene. “Either observing the love and companionship of a married couple leaves me lonelier than ever—or some jealous wife claims I’m after her husband,” complained one girl in her late twenties.

The Springfield (Mass.) Education Study revealed that 60 per cent of young single adults belong to only one organization in the community. Olds and Josephson quizzed young single adults searching for reasons why they were isolated from community activities. Some of their answers, which may or may not be honest, were: 1. Too busy getting ahead in a vocation—37%. 2. Job takes too much time—26%. 3. Had no experience in an organization like this—24%. 4. Didn’t see how it would benefit them personally—23%. 5. Their friends didn’t think it was the thing to do—9%.

Throughout life a basic task facing the young single adult is finding an answer to the question, “Who Am I?” He has a compound problem in searching for identity as an adult and as an unmarried person. He recognizes that perhaps a single life is God’s plan. Therefore, he asks, “How can I find meaning in life as a single person?”
Though the life of a single adult is filled with clothes, travel, job and freedom, these things wear thin. Meaning in life is found in close relationships. For a church program to exist simply to keep a single adult busy is not enough. Every person needs a close friend to bring out his best. Roommates can be lasting friends, but the intimacy provided in marriage is missed. The French philosopher Sartre wrote, "Man was not born to share in hatred, but in love." Much of life is spent searching for a close friend or a potential marriage partner.

A single girl recently expressed herself this way:

"When I feel lonely I feel that there is no one I can talk to who will realize that I am me. So there is not much use doing anything worthwhile if no one cares. Loneliness takes the heart out of much that we would do. When I am lonely I feel purposeless, tired, confused, weak and trapped. I picture myself as caught in a hard shell from which I speak in hollow tones. There is an opening through which I reach out my hand to grasp food, say words and occasionally grasp quickly the hand of another. When I feel I am peeking out desperately from the shell . . . then I feel lonely."

What can a church do? Several have taken steps in the right direction.

On the north side of Chicago, brown sandstone apartments surround the First Evangelical Free Church. In these three-story apartments live many single adults. The Rev. Arley Bragg, minister, describes the situation:

"These young people attended the preaching services of the church, but that's as far as the ministry of the church went in reaching them."

The College and Career Sunday School class had an influx of college students and the academic nature of the lessons tended to drive the career person away. To meet the need, Bragg and Jerry Hagelin, Director of Christian Education, organized a "20's-30's Club" to meet after church Sunday
 evenings. Other evangelical churches in the area were invited to participate.

"I discovered I had to sit on these single career people sometimes. They are so enthusiastic for fellowship, service and getting together that their programs get out of hand if not supervised," says Hagelin.

Grant Memorial Baptist Church of Winnipeg, Canada, ministers to approximately 80 young single adults weekly. The Career Youths meet Sunday evening after the church service. Special speakers, skits, panels, films, musical evenings and depth study of the Scriptures fill their schedule. The spring and fall retreats sponsored by the young adults are highlights of the yearly calendar. They also cooperate in denominational conventions and conferences.

"How does your church attract so many single young people?" the Rev. Frank Zuganis, minister, is often asked.

"We involve them in Christian service! The group helps staff the Bird River Camp, sponsored by the church, also work in area interdenominational camps. The church has four mission Sunday Schools, most of the superintendents and teachers are single," he says.

Actually, the Sunday morning class numbers about 25. However, when everyone returns from their Sunday School mission work the number swells to more than 80.

Single adults who give a life of meaningful service to others usually find happiness. Viktor Frankl understood this principle, "Man . . . finds identity (happiness) to the extent to which he commits himself to something beyond himself, to a cause greater than himself."

To reach the career group in St. Louis, Missouri, Hope Congregational Church in that city made available, to single adults, a large room. They set to work. Lounge chairs were arranged in conversation centers with coffee tables around the room. Contemporary American furniture was used. One
wall was covered with drapery. Behind the draperies was an audio visual screen. Lounging pillows were stacked on the floor. In another corner was a small kitchenette with refrigerator, built-in sink, range and cabinets for storage. Pole lamps, original art work and contemporary chandeliers added additional charm and appeal to the room. There is no problem with attendance: the young people are at the church a half hour before Sunday School for coffee and fellowship.

But service alone is not enough. What young unmarried people need to know is that someone is interested in them for what they are—not for what they can do. This means that members of the church must become friends of the young people, take a personal interest in them, invite them to their homes and in every way indicate their love and concern.

Other single adults are divorced or separated. These have unique problems such as self-image. Two radical transitions have transpired: the first from being a single person to being a partner in marriage; the second from an intimate relationship back to the role of an unattached adult. The problems of loneliness and search for meaning are usually increased by financial pressures and perhaps social ostracism from the local church.

First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood, California, has attempted to remedy this situation. A Sunday School class is entitled “Divorce Anonymous.” A single post-college girl who attends another well-known evangelical church in Los Angeles area said 90 per cent of the unattached males in her church were divorced. When the Sunday School superintendent was asked about the 90 per cent estimate, he indicated “the percentage could be higher.” Perhaps these churches have demonstrated that the divorced adult will respond if their needs are met.

Who, then, is the young single adult? He may be a lonely person . . . a man in a hurry . . . a question mark. The single young lady may be a person in transition . . . a seeker of meaning in life.
Yet the young single adult is a potential Sunday School teacher, a generous financial donor, a person with time to invest in service and prayer. Extending your church ministry to meet their needs will bring out their full potential—and the benefactor will be the church of Jesus Christ.
Debbie Lyons arrived in Chicago three years ago with two things in mind: to find a job and a husband. So far, she's found only the job.

Back home in La Salle, Illinois, she sang alto in the church choir and dated all the boys till they went into the service, off to college or took that separating trip down the isle to the altar.

Church to Debbie was a place of warm childhood memories and friendships. She often thinks of the Christmas program when she was six. Her father stood her on a piano bench and she sang "Away in a Manger."

Now home is only a memory, for Debbie is 200 miles away, lost in the big city. To her it seems that churches in Chicago have massive organs, robed ministers and a bone-chilling coldness.

* *Eternity*, October 1968
Printed by Permission
“Churches aren’t friendly,” says Debbie. “I’d like to meet a man of my own faith, but . . . I’ll take any guy that comes along.”

After meeting Debbie, you wonder why she has failed to reach her second goal, marriage. Her attributes are many: an attractive face, a good figure, a pleasant personality and a neat apartment on the Near North side. What’s more, she cooks!

Debbie works as a file clerk for Illinois Bell Telephone. Back home she was voted “Miss Congeniality” in the county beauty pageant. Now she finds in the city that “you are just one of the horses on the merry-go-round, circling round and round but going nowhere.”

“Why can’t I find someone to marry?” the slender brunette asks.

Does Debbie’s story sound familiar? Debbie is one of the 14 million single adults in this country called by sociologists “the loneliest of this country’s so-called lonely crowd.”

If you are single and under 35, they will tell you, don’t try a church for friendship and meeting a mate. Try the Young Republicans club or evening school classes. Even the lonely hearts clubs are better.

The church on the corner with its steeple pointing to God and its stained glass windows shutting out the world shouts to the careerist: “Stay away!”

If you don’t believe me, pretend you are single for a while. Next Sunday sneak in a side door, take the bulletin from the usher and sit in the back row. Don’t come early for church school. There they have classes for toddlers, beginners and juniors to attract the young, and the young marrieds. The laughter of the children only reminds you that you have none.
NO PLACE FOR YOU

Of course, there are high school classes with pimply-faced boys flirting with gigly girls. An usher may have tried to deposit you there, but that is an insult because you’re an adult.

Or he might have taken you to the adult class entitled, “Homebuilders.” The name has a matrimonial ring and just rubs salt in your “single” sores.

“Not for me,” replied an assistant editor who was invited to a “home-builders” class. “Observing the love and companionship of a married couple leaves me lonelier than ever, or some jealous wife claims I’m after her husband.”

The sermon is many times the crowning insult. Salvation is pictured as marriage. Christ is pictured as the Bridegroom, and the repentant sinner as the bride. But you want the real thing: a human relationship with someone who understands you.

And if you’re searching for fellowship, watch out for those church socials. While men play softball or discuss the Green Bay Packers, you’ll sit with the wives and learn about Johnny’s two new teeth or how to make a budget-stretching souffle.

Most single careerists avoid getting involved. If they seriously want to learn about God, they sneak into church on Sunday morning, worship God and escape after the service with a minimum of damage to their self-respect.

So you’re determined to be an active member? Stay in church two years and see if they elect you to any position. Some elder is sure to find the place in Scripture that names the qualification for the official board: “Husband of one wife . . .” And you are single.

If you are a woman, they may let you teach in the Sunday school. It saves them the trouble of finding you a suitable class. Of course, you have your childless state, and you are cut off from adult fellowship.
The average church is, above all, conservative. They think of you as fast, flighty and free, but won’t say it to your face. As one elder said, “You can’t build a mature congregation on single people.”

THOUGHTLESS STEREOTYPING

“A good-looking girl (or boy) like you ought to be married,” is the first observation from the ladies of the Women’s Auxiliary. Inevitably they try to match you with Homer—bald and 44 years old but still considered the most eligible bachelor in the church. Or with Mabel—fat and frumpy but “a sweet Christian girl.”

The single person is immediately stereotyped. If you wear stylish clothes or follow the latest hair fashions, they assume you’re a “swinger.”

If you do appear to be a “nice girl,” you might hear the fat lady with the big hat remark, “My dear, your standards are too high.” Obviously you should have settled for someone like Homer or Mabel. This verbal slap doesn’t help your ego strength. It surely doesn’t help you set different standards.

A kindly grandfather may console, “A nice guy like you ought to be able to catch a wife.” His psychological therapy only scratches the scab of your major irritation in life.

Finally, your pastor may reply, “The single life may be God’s plan for you.” This is a hideous application of predestination. God gave us a free will. Tell him you’d like to get married.

So what can you do?

March into your minister’s office, he claims to be concerned with ministering to mankind. He further claims to have no bias as to race, color or creed. Ask him if he is prejudiced against marital status—single status in particular.
YOUNG ADULTS

A VALID PURPOSE?

Tell him this church needs a fellowship for young single adults. Not a place to preach. Not a place to raise money. Not a dating bureau. But a place where lonely people can meet and have meaningful dialogue. Perhaps together you can solve some of life's problems.

Statistics tell us there is no middle ground with church groups for young careerists. "If you start a fellowship group in your local church, be prepared for success or failure," one pastor commented. Girls come in pairs or trios. Men also come with a friend. If the meeting doesn't provide opportunities to meet congenial members of the opposite sex, they go elsewhere.

But don't tell your pastor that the average church attender in the U.S. donates $154 a year while the average single adult will drop $280 in the offering plate. If the pastor knew this, he might get excited and start a work among the young single adults for purely financial reasons.

Also, don't tell him the average single adult hates to sit home at night looking at four walls or the television screen. Don't tell him young careerists want to act, plan and get involved.

If he knew this, he might use you to visit the sick, work in a settlement house, invite prospective members, serve on church committees, help maintain church property, write and edit the church paper, take care of bulletin boards, write plays, supervise children's programs, or plan and direct churchwide recreation and picnics. His motive might be to enlarge his parish rather than to minister to people.

Tell him honestly, however, that men come to meet attractive women and women come to see if there are any attractive men. If he says he doesn't think this is a valid purpose for founding a church group, ask him what's wrong with trying to find a mate in church? If you meet a life partner in church, out of gratitude you may serve the church for the rest of your married life.
CHAPTER XII
ADULTS STUDY?*

Lucille Brown had tears in her eyes. She heard, "If you don't get your Sunday School pupils to work: you aren't working." The speaker at a local Sunday School convention was emphasizing lesson preparation.

Lucille Brown taught the women's Bible class and the one thing she couldn't do—get her students to prepare their lesson.

The speaker's voice once again invaded Lucille's mind, "Anyone can get Sunday School pupils to study the Bible."

Lucille's chin dropped another notch. "I can't get my students to even read their quarterly," she thought.

Lucille Brown sat in utter frustration and defeat. It wasn't that she hadn't tried to get her students to try to study, — she had. "Every week I tell them to read their Bible and

*©The Evangelical Christian, June 1966
Printed by permission.

88
quarterly," Lucille told herself. But even her reassurance didn't take away her guilt feeling.

"You can get your students to do anything you want to," repeated the speaker. Yet Lucille thought to herself, "I study hard, I try . . ."

"Maybe I ought to quit, I'm not much good," thought Lucille.

Have you ever felt like Lucille Brown? Have you tried to get your Sunday School pupils to study their lesson and yet failed? Do your students seem uninterested in the Word of God?

Quitting is not always the best answer. Perhaps a few practical questions will help Lucille and you to get some results on lesson preparation.

To get lesson preparation—use the quarterly in class. Review the questions in the quarterly and call for students to share their finding with the class. One adult recently said, "I wouldn't think of coming to Sunday School unprepared. Our teacher might call on me, and I'd be on the spot." This Sunday School teacher actually used student reports on the lesson.

Try calling on your pupils. "Mr. Buzhart, what is the answer to question 4?" If your students know you mean business — they might.

However, if you never take time in class to cover the homework, the students are conditioned not to prepare their lessons. Most students do only what they are required to do.

Is lesson preparation important to you? Try phoning your students during the week to remind them of special questions. This may mean extra work on your behalf, but it is worth it. Students usually respond to motivation by their teacher.

Effective home visitation can improve lesson preparation.
When you are visiting in the home offer to help in preparing the lesson. "I would be committing Scriptural suicide if I did that," a Sunday School teacher responded.

Often when the Sunday School teacher visits in the home of the pupil they talk only of the weather, sports, or politics. By offering to help in lesson preparation you put your faith to the test. "Can you find meaning in the Bible?" If you can't, what are you teaching on Sunday morning? The teacher who was afraid of committing Scriptural suicide, was in essence saying "I'm not sure I can help the pupil get something out of Bible study." The teacher who is reluctant to study the Bible with his pupil is usually a fact dispenser instead of a fellow seeker. Teacher, remember you and the students are seeking answers from the Word of God. Your job is not to give out facts.

Lesson preview is another way to get lesson preparation. "Class, the lesson for next week 'Faith and the business day' is on page 27-35 in the Quarterly. Let's turn to page 31 and note question four." As the students turn they become familiar with the topic and scope of next Sunday's lesson.

You might point out, "Question four reads, 'What is the ministry of the Holy Spirit?' John 14:26." Here point out to the students this question is vague. Suggest they look up John 16:31. Extra help from you may make the question more explicit, also, add motivation to study. No quarterly can meet the needs of your class. If you guide them to other Scriptures for next Sunday's lesson, your students might take more initiative to do outside study.

However, when you point out questions in next Sunday's lesson, it assumes you have studied more than a week in advance. If more teachers prepared their lessons in advance, they might get better lesson preparation out of their pupils.

Perhaps the greatest hindrance to lesson preparation is—you. Your pupils are not sold on lesson preparation because
you are not. Are you convinced lesson preparation is important? If not, why not?

John should study his Sunday School lesson because *home preparation will actually teach* the sufficiency of Jesus Christ from the feeding of the 5,000.

Homer should study his Sunday School lesson because *home preparation will review* last Sunday's lesson on Lot's wife. He will be warned against covetousness.

Frank should study his Sunday School lesson on Matthew six because *home preparation applies the lesson* of trusting God for every financial problem.

Martha Sue should study her Sunday School lesson on assurance of Salvation from I John 5, because she has a shallow Christian experience. She is not aware of her need to have assurance. *Home preparation makes students aware of their need*, and hence motivating them to desired ends.

Mr. Jones, a deacon in the church, should study his Sunday School lesson because *home preparation will produce a spirit of inquiry*. Since he has been in the church twenty-three years, he knows most of the facts. He feels that a new convert should learn the Bible, but he has grown stale in his spiritual growth.

Deacon Jones needs a new first-hand acquaintance with Bible Study. Also, don't forget *home preparation causes growth*. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." As your pupils dig into the Word of God, their spiritual lives will become deepened.

One final tip on getting better prepared lessons—better teaching. If you use the same old method Sunday after Sunday, you'll kill your students' spirit and deaden their vision. New, vital, and exciting Sunday School classes will cause pupils to study at home. Buzz sessions, creative listening, Bible search and listening teams will put new life in your Sunday School class.
Try new and different types of assignments. Give them search questions. Reproduce these questions for research beyond the quarterly.

Ask them to find out the key words in the chapter, and how many times the word occurs. Ask them how many people are mentioned in a chapter and who are they. How many different titles can they find for God?

Try interviews, and opinion polls for home study. When your pupils find out what others think of the Bible, they will be stimulated to further thought and study. Don’t forget projects, scrapbooks, and oral reports. Some adults may gather poems, stories or news events to illustrate the lesson. Be different. Be creative. But above all get your pupils involved in the lesson.

At a local high school homework is called, “clam digging.” Whenever your adults study at home they should be digging—exploring the Word of God. They won’t find clams, but perhaps they will find the “pearl of great price.”
Twelve members of Faith Church Sunday School nervously took their seats. "Know it all" Jim Braun sat listless. Peggy Smythe thumbed through her Phillip’s Translation of the New Testament looking for Ezekiel. Jean Duffy pondered the communication gap between her husband Frank and herself. "He goes off to play every time we have a disagreement," she mused.

Each had heard threatening rumors of what was involved in group dynamics. Share your problems. Tell others their faults . . . their hypocrisies . . . failures. The goal was to be completely honest and open with the other group members.

Tom Chaffer, leader, explained the principle of group dynamics. "We hope to remove our masks, peal off veneer Christianity. Honesty is needed but it comes hard. I'm not

*©Christian Life, May 1968
Printed by permission
the teacher or a psychologist. I won't be teaching you or even solving the problems you share.

"Group dynamics is not a Bible study with discussion. Share your feelings and attitudes honestly with the group. As you do so, you will receive support and help from other group members," Chaffer continued.

Chaffer then listed guidelines for the discussion.

1. Don't look to the leader for direction. The group is the guide. It will make all decisions.

2. Each member is 1/12 of the group and has 1/12 responsibility for group direction.

"Won't we bog down?" asked Erma, an energetic looking school teacher who usually jumped into every situation with zest. "Everybody's decision is nobody's decision."

Eleven pairs of eyes looked to Chaffer for an answer. Chaffer looked at the floor, seeming to ignore the question, then remarked, "I'm not the teacher, I'm only 1/12 of this class. The group should handle this question."

"We are a democratic group. We should arrive at decisions by the democratic process. Faith Church is run by congregational government. This class should reflect the process of our church. I think this is the way to church renewal."

A housewife reasoned "The Holy Spirit can work through each member in group dynamics. Too often we think of the Holy Spirit working through the pastor or the Sunday School teacher."

Don't forget the church is the body of Christ, a graduate student at the local seminary pointed out. He quoted a Bible verse. "The body edifieth itself in love" (Ephesians 4:15). "Christ is in each of us and He can work through us to others. As I see it, Christian group dynamics is each person ministering to and receiving help from each of the other members," he said.
The subjects for the next four Sundays were quickly decided upon—by group consensus. For the following Sunday the subject, "Who Am I?" was discussed.

The next Sunday no one was absent. Also, no visitors were allowed. One of the members, a husky truck driver, had summed up the reason why the previous week: "We've got to learn to trust one another. Trust takes time and accumulated experience. New people coming into the group might destroy our continuity."

The group was divided into small groups of two members each. Each person in a dyad took five minutes to tell the other person, "Who I Am." Then the entire group came together. Each member introduced his partner to the group.

Let's get a profile on each member and see if we can identify each person's values and attitudes toward life, suggested a housewife who, up to now, had been a quiet member. She was chosen to record each profile.

The second Sunday, "Honesty" was the topic. After the first session not all members of the group were ready to be honest—but they were ready to admit their reluctance to share problems and were beginning to trust one another.

"How can we be honest? I want to be, but am I able?" asked one member.

Chaffer suggested, "If we each shared a problem this might help us toward honesty."

"I don't want to tell my problems to this group," injected Peggy, a court secretary. Electricity ran through the group. For a moment no one spoke.

"If you can't tell me your problem, I don't want you to hear mine," the fellow next to her retorted.

Anger and resentment threatened to rip the gathering apart. Several commented on mutual sharing. Before the class was over both had apologized.
The group didn’t have time for each member to share problems. But they learned the necessity of mutual trust if one was to be honest. Also, they discovered a risk is involved in honesty.

The third Sunday, loneliness was the subject. This time only 11 were present. One member decided group dynamics was not for her and transferred to another class.

The group took a test. Each wrote the names of others in the group in answer to the following questions.

1. With whom would you like to pray for missions?
2. With whom would you like to do evangelistic visitation?
3. What person would you like to have over for an evening meal?
4. With what person would you like to go to a baseball game?

As each member of the group read his list, the names were written on the chalkboard. Chaffer turned to John Kent, the only person whose name was not listed.

“How do you feel? Left out?”

“Hurt and angry!” blurted John. He threatened to leave and not come back.

The group spent time analyzing their feelings. Why had they left John’s name off the list? As the members revealed their reasons, John got a better picture of himself as others saw him. His friends told him what they thought—and he sat and listened. He knew they weren’t trying to hurt him.

Each member identified with John’s loneliness and rejection. They also learned that in group dynamics there could be acceptance and help.

Fred began the fourth and final session with a five minute Bible presentation of confession of sin.
The group was quick to pick up the discussion. The conversation soon switched to confession of real needs when we pray.

“We pray for safety on a journey and Mrs. Jones in the hospital. These things are good, but why aren’t we honest with our in-depth prayer requests?” asked a medical student.

Chaffer interrupted the discussion. “Why don’t we share requests and pray now?”

Quite frankly several told of intimate problems, one of an uncontrollable temper, another of pride and jealousy, a secretary who had just lost her job.

Group dynamics put relevance into this Sunday School class. Perhaps it can in yours. One participant after leaving a group dynamic experience exclaimed, “This is the key to revival!” Earle Anderson, high school teacher from Litchfield, Minnesota says, “I’ve grown more in my Christian faith and overcome personal inadequacies through group experiences.”

Testifying to a life-changing class, a teenage girl said, “For the first time I was able to be honest in a group of Christians and God met me through the help of 13 wonderful people in a group dynamics class.
CHAPTER XIV

THE HOME AND SUNDAY SCHOOL
WORK TOGETHER*

"I don’t want to go to Sunday school," twelve year old John announced to his mother.

"You have to go," replied mother with a worried frown. She silently thought, "Will I lose John, also?"

John’s father was a Christian but—he seldom went to Sunday school even though he went regularly to church.

John’s father had strong attributes, and being a building contractor he was a man among men. Father and son attended ball games, played golf and took fishing trips together. The Yankees and Blackhawks were household symbols.

A month ago John’s father picked up a Sunday school quarterly, "Kid’s stuff" was all he said. John got the message, now he doesn’t want to go to Sunday school.

*©The Evangelical Christian, March, 1967
Printed by Permission.
John will spend 86% of his time in the home, 13% of his time in the public school, and less than 1% of his time in Sunday school. Obviously, the home is going to have the greatest impact on John. Parents are teachers. Whether they admit it or not, they instruct children. Whether parents are good teachers, poor teachers, or mediocre teachers—they are still teachers.

Since the Sunday school is not going to get a larger quantity of time, it will have to use a quality of teaching. The Sunday school will have to teach through the home. Here are some suggestions how the Sunday school can help the parents teach children.

1. Parent-Teacher Meetings. The Sunday school teacher should meet with the parents of the pupils in the classroom at least once a year, twice is preferred. Parents should be shown the facilities and equipment used by their children on Sunday morning. Some of the methods used in teaching should be demonstrated. Perhaps an actual Sunday school lesson can be taught. One church asked the parents to pretend they were the children, and the teacher taught a lesson to them. Another church asked an authority in Christian Education to come in and address the group of parents briefly, leaving time for a question period.

"We let the parents know what their children are learning," indicated one Sunday school teacher, "and give the parents opportunities for questions and answers." When parents understand what teachers are trying to do, they usually give better co-operation.

"Our coffee time is the most effective time in the parent-teacher meeting." related one teacher of the Primary Department. Parents get to know us as teachers. Here we have a question-and-answer time. Some parents find other couples verbalizing the questions they have in their mind. If you plan a parent-teacher meeting, don't forget to save some of the pupils' handwork activities for the parents to take home.
2. Classes on the Christian Home. Most pastors exhort Christian couples to have a Christian home. One young mother complained, "We are told what to do, but never told how to do it." Provide instructions in how a Christian home operates as well as the principles and reasons for a home being Christian. As a minister said recently, "It is easy to put Christians in a house, but almost impossible to make it a Christian home."

Be sure to provide babysitting service in the Sunday school if you expect young couples to attend. The nursery is the "hand shake" of a growing church.

The Christian home is best taught through group discussion, research, and study classes. Young couples are not interested in listening to some authority tell them what to do. As they ask questions, react to problems, and listen to other suggestions, they learn of the Christian home.

A basic text book is necessary for study of the Christian home. Especially if the group is centered on discussion. The text book will present a systematic and organized coverage of the material from one point of view. Then the class can agree or disagree with the text book's presentation.

Lively topics for discussion group among parents would include the following:

- How to Have a Christian Vacation
- Teaching the Worth of Money to Children
- Inculcating Christian Standards through Hobbies
- Answering Questionable Questions
- Handling Children of Different Temperaments
- Motivation for Better Marks in School

3. Family Week. Give special emphasis to Christian Education through the family once each year. The pastor can
preach on the family in Christian Education. The opening exercises of the Sunday school can present special features such as films, skits, and testimonies. Posters on family life can be placed throughout the church emphasizing a return to the foundation of the Christian home. Also, special Scripture readings can be provided for the family altar during the week.

During Family Week, the church can encourage couples to share together in their family altar. Encourage one Christian family to visit a second Christian family to have evening family worship together. The pastor can volunteer to begin family altars in homes where the family worship is not being held.

In the visitation program, one family can visit another family to invite them to the Sunday School.

4. *Family Night Service During the Church Week*. Modern churches realize they are having too many meetings each week. Monday night mother goes to the Missionary Meeting, Tuesday night Father attends the Board meeting, and Wednesday night is Prayer Meeting. Thursday night Susie attends a Girls’ Club and Friday night the Youth Meeting is held. Saturday night Youth for Christ, Sunday evening the church service. There is not one evening left to have fellowship at home. Many up-to-date churches are placing more than one meeting on the same evening. The time a family would stay at church would be lengthened, but reducing the number of evenings away from home. One pastor said, “Our church allows no meetings on Monday and Tuesday evenings.” The church strictly enforces the rule since it sees the value of family togetherness.

5. *Enlist the Interest and Talents of Parents*. When parents help the ministry of the Sunday school, they are extending the influence of their home. Parents can help the Sunday school in many ways other than teaching. Fathers have painted, repaired or built furniture for the children’s department.
Mothers have sewn curtains, made aprons, or prepared cookies.

A father or mother may have a special interest that could be shared with the children. One father who collected coins, shared some of the New Testament coins with a junior class. A mother whose hobby was oil painting, helped a junior class prepare a frieze. Sometimes, a parent may assist the class by providing “taxi” service for a class outing. Other parents become interested in the Sunday school by opening their home for a class meeting or party.
"My parents are Monsters," said a teen recently. The family was a battle of Waterloo, and both parent and teen felt like Napoleon. "My boy is 130 pounds of mouth" one father told another. He didn't understand his son and relationships were to the place where communications had totally broken down.

What we need are some guidelines for adolescents and their parents. The Ten Commandments were given to guide God's people, and here are two sets of ten commandments for the Christian home. However, let us first examine some of the problems in the home.

For the most part you will find four different combinations in the family. These are: (1) Christian parents and Christian teenager. This is probably the combination from which you will receive the least amount of problems. Prob-

*©The Evangelical Christian, March 1966
Printed by permission.
lems will arise in this situation, because Christians are persons, but they will be easier to work out because of the common ground the family has in Jesus Christ. Greater cooperation in working out family problems between the parents and teenagers will be observed. (2) Christian Parents and unsaved teenager. The parents will probably receive less cooperation from the teenager than desired. As a result the parents will have to work harder at their ten commandments—going the extra mile. (3) Unsaved parents and Christian teenager. Here we may have various attitudes shown. The parents could be sympathetic toward the teenager's stand; they could be apathetic, not caring one way or the other; or they could be outright hostile to everything concerning the church, including youth work. The teen will have to be able to recognize these attitudes especially and be ever ready to go the extra mile in applying his ten commandments. (4) Unsaved parents and unsaved teenager. This is the group that will pose some of the biggest heartaches. Both may need new motivations to work out problems. Both need Christ. The church can help. The teenager may not receive any encouragement to attend church and youth work. The adult needs the same encouragement.

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR TEENS

1. Thou Shalt Treat Parents as "Persons." Many times teens don’t let parents live a life of their own. When the teenager’s big night is coming up, they should give their parents advance notice so that their schedule can fit the teenager’s. In most cases the parents will be willing to make adjustments if the teenager will share his plans. If the teen displays maturity, and treats his parents as persons, the parents will usually respond. Parents, you should take the initiative before being embarrassed by the maturity of your son or daughter.

2. Thou Shalt Consider Your Parents. Teenagers should not take time for granted. They can gain a few points if they walk in the door a few minutes ahead of curfew deadline. One of the signs of maturity is consideration, and one of the
best ways for the teen to show this is to not let parents worry. If they're going to be a few minutes past a deadline, the teen should invest a dime in a telephone call.

If there's a wall between the parents and the teen, the teenager can break it down, if he really wants to. He should be ready to give a little, possibly swallow his pride once or twice, and understand their feelings. The teenager can make a refreshing impression on people regardless of their faith when they meet and hear a teenager who has learned the art of courtesy.

3. Thou Shalt Not Give Thy Parents the Cold Shoulder. Home is not just a place to hang your hat and a place to eat and sleep. The parents have the teen’s interest at heart and even though sometimes it’s hard for the teen to accept he’ll find that what parents want is the very best for them. Parents are zealous for the teen and are anxious for him to make a success of his life. He should not appear bored when Dad and Mom are talking to him. Pay attention teen. It can pay off.

4. Thou Shalt Be On the Ball. The teenager will find that, “Get up and go” is often the key that unlocks Dad’s heart (and pocketbook). Today, too, many of us seem to feel that we’ve got a lot coming and we just sit back and grin, expecting the world to give us whatever we want. If the teenager is alive and shows some real spunk, he will discover that energy, enthusiasm, and success are triplets.

5. Thou Shalt Not Make Excessive Demands of Thy Parents. Often parents have a bad day when things haven’t gone the way they should. This is certainly not the time for the teenager to fire all his questions, complaints, and demands at Dad. It would be much better to wait and sit down, and discuss these various things together and openly.

6. Thou Shalt Not Be A Phony. The teen is certainly not going to lose his neck because he told the truth. He shouldn’t hide his feelings under his cuff and shouldn’t sulk behind
closed doors when there's something he wants to get off his chest. Parents take a great deal of pride in their teenagers who have the reputation of being above board and prove it at home.

7. Thou Shalt Take Part In Family Worship. If the youth has none at home, he should either help start it or make sure his own private devotional life is given prominence.

8. Thou Shalt Show Appreciation To Thy Parents. The teenager should be thoughtful of others in the home who are trying to be a part of his life. He should show respect by obedience as the Scriptures command. The parents have given up their pleasures, time, strength and even life for their children. The youth has an obligation to appreciate, even if he can't repay.

9. Thou Shalt Always Speak Well of Thy Parents. If the teenager feels they do not deserve it then he should say nothing. He should never run them down. This is carrying out the command, "Honor thy Father and thy Mother." The Christian teenager has no right of entering into the typical complaints heard about parents.

10. Thou Shalt Be Christian In All of Life. The youth who endeavors to show forth Christ in every way can and will work out the problems with parents. The Christian will seek to work out differences for the sake of Christ.

HIS PARENTS

The teenage years tend to be years of a beginning separation between teenager and parent. What separates the teenagers and their parents? The answer—neither the parent nor the teenager is able to accept the other as a "person." Parents are people to their neighbors and teens are people to other teens. Yet to each other, they are not persons. Their close relationship has covered up the fact that being teenagers and parents, they share qualities of fear, anger, love, jealousy, courage, unselfishness, and ability to make mistakes.
The problem which teens face is how they can escape from the relationship of dependency on their parents to become in their parents’ minds a person. If parents, because of their authority, expect too much of teens, then it is just as obvious that the teens, because of their dependencies, are given too little and emotional problems are the results. Some loss of parental control over teenagers is natural. This gap belongs; it belongs in life. This gap is a result of the teens establishing their own standards of measure and comparison under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Here they learn to be obedient to a new authority. This new authority (Christ) demands respect for the old authority (the parents).

However, this gap has limits. The rule should not be, as Ogden Nash stated it: “Children aren’t happy with nothing to ignore; so that’s what parents were created for.” The gap that brings so much grief to parents and to teenagers themselves is the hostility where there are bad feelings continually. Difficulties with parents are often the reflection of difficulties with the teen. If there are good relationships with parents, the same will apply in their relationship with other adults. Studies show that young people who have the best relationships with their parents also make the best citizens; the best husbands and wives; and the best business and professional men and women. Why? Because getting along with parents is one form of getting along with people in general, and authority in specific. Authority, such as speed limits, income tax, and the boss at work are a part of life. Therefore, teens, note that your relationship with your parents is often an index of what your character will be later in life.

Let’s look at what the Bible has to say about the relationship between a teenager and his parents. The Fifth Commandment carries both a command and a promise—“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you.” It is interesting to note that the two oldest cultures in our contemporary society, the Chinese and the Jewish have through the centuries
placed great stress on respect for parents as the center of social obligation and experience. In the New Testament, Jesus says that parents know how to give good gifts to their children (Matt. 7:9-11), and parents would not knowingly harm their children (Luke 11:11-13). Also, we read that a father pities his children (Psalm 103:13); when he punishes his children it is for their good (Hebrews 12:9); and he should do this if he is a faithful father (Proverbs 23:13, 14).

A teenager's responsibility to his parents is to honor them. Here, honor means love, obey, and respect. This responsibility of honoring parents, as was stated in the Ten Commandments, is emphasized by Paul in Ephesians 6:1-3. Sometimes this proves to be a difficult task for the teens because parents are at times, hard to know. This difficulty in knowing is a result of complicated emotions blocking the knowing, misunderstandings going back to childhood, carelessness, and lack of communication.

Teens must remember that parents are persons, which means, that they, like other people, are "knowable." If teens want to learn to know their parents they will have to learn how to identify with them. They should put themselves in their parents' position for a minute, attempting to see as they see, hear as they hear, and react as they might react.

Identification is God's idea. When God confined Himself to human life by invading human history as the Baby Jesus, He performed the act of perfect identification. In order for teens to identify with their parents, they must first look at them objectively; find out what they are really like; and what in their past lives has caused them to be this way.

The second step towards identifying with parents is to think about them. They are people just like you. They want to excel and they want their offspring to excel. Once the teenager recognizes this attitude of theirs, they will be able to lose some hostility. They will begin to realize that their parents really do want the best for them, even though it is
poorly shown. Because God is dependable, He is ready to supply teenagers with the understanding they may lack where their parents are concerned. God gives understanding to the teen anytime the teen is ready to begin to cooperate with God on learning to “identify” with his parents.

Teenagers have the responsibility to make their home a happy one. All too often teens blame home hostility on the parents. The teen must accept his responsibility. The Word of God has something to say about peace in the home. In Proverbs 15:1 we read, “A soft answer turneth away wrath,” and, in Matthew 5:9, “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” Avoid arguments with parents. A teen should ask his parents to explain why he can’t date past 11:00 o’clock, instead of blowing up. Try using these words, “I’m sorry,” and then prove that you mean it.

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR PARENTS

1. Thou Shalt Understand Thy Teenager. “Our children are not carbon copies of us, no matter how often we would like to think they are. We are now beginning to understand that a child is more like a musical instrument already tuned, on which he, and his parents, can play only the music written for it.” If a father or mother can honestly say, “I understand what you mean. I see your point”; it will be more acceptable to the youth.

2. Thou Shalt Be Fair With Thy Teenagers. This means that the Parent’s requirements and expectations of the youth are warranted by Biblical standards, economic soundness, circumstantial consideration, and social approval and individual ability.

3. Thou Shalt Be Frank With Thy Teenagers. The moral responsibility of parents is to give their children definite reasons for behavior. If a mistake has been made, Christian parents should admit it right away and take another course. Chirstian parents are afraid to talk to their youth about sex.
Lack of frankness is not fair to the teen, to the parent, nor to God.

4. Thou Shalt Use Humor With Thy Teenagers. Humor will not cause parents to lose their authority as parents. “There is no tonic for a home like a sense of humor. Humor is a fine art of seeing things that are out of joint.” (I. L. Ellenwood). Blessed is the child who remembers a mother and a dad who could always smile. Learn the things that are funny to teens. Laugh with them, not at them.

5. Thou Shalt Be Willing To Forgive Mistakes Of Thy Teenagers—and Forget. As the days of adolescence hurry by, there will be many things a parent will need to forgive—freely fully, understandingly—forgive and forget. (Luke 15: 11-32). Don’t keep throwing up the faults of the teen to his face. The truly forgiving parent will forget. If you can’t forget, you haven’t forgiven.

6. Thou Shall Be Humble With Thy Teenagers. Firm, yes; positive, yes; unflinching, yes, at times; but never infallible. As the teen feels his way through all the maze of his teen years, the true parent should keep an attitude of humility before him. It is possible that the parent may be wrong. A true humility will give the parent grace at times to say, “I was wrong. Perhaps I was too harsh. I did not understand.” There will be less strain, for example, if parents can simply accept the fact that a youth is a youth, a beginning adult, with much to learn and a long way to go.

7. Thou Shalt Guide Thy Teenagers Spiritually and Intellectually. Guidance is one of the primary and most far-reaching functions of parenthood. The Bible says, “Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule . . . whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle.” (Psalm 32:9). A parent who has spiritual knowledge of the way received through experience and observation, is qualified to direct his children in the safe and advantageous path.
8. Thou Shalt Love Thy Teenagers. "And now abideth . . . love." Anyone of the fine qualities of parenthood could be sacrificed better than love. Love is the first gift a parent offers to his new born child. True love is unselfish; it thinks of the growing youth's welfare and interest before its own. Love can not be blind. Love must be strong. True love, like the sun, must shine. Love will promote parents to expressions of appreciation for work well done, for home rules kept, for pleasing conduct, and for successful accomplishments in school or church.

9. Thou Shalt Establish A Family Altar. From time to time parents should sing hymns with their teenagers in the home. Read the Bible together and discuss the Scriptures together. Parents should "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4). They should pray with their teenagers and teach them how to pray.

10. Thou Shalt Make Thy Home Christian in Atmosphere. Home atmosphere may be more important in a teenager's experience of salvation and in the development of a strong Christian character than would at first appear. The home is the fundamental unit in society; and in the Christian family, relationships should be most perfect and intimate. The true balance of the Christian home cannot be maintained if there echoes from its walls words unbecoming to godliness. Therefore, Christian parents must teach teenagers that Jesus Christ is the Lord and the Bible is the family's constitution.
Mr. Johnston, Sunday school superintendent of Midtown Church, told the primary department, "Choose what curriculum you think best."

He was sure the ladies who taught that class would make the right decision. Superintendent Johnston said to the pastor, "Those ladies have been teaching children for years. What do I know about primaries?"

Mr. Johnston let the Sunday school "run" itself because he knew too little, he thought. Other church leaders, untrained like himself, were guessing on some decisions. They ran the Sunday school like it has always been run—sloppy.

Mr. Johnston was a failure as a Sunday school superintendent! First, he didn't inspire confidence. Second, he didn't know how to work with people. Mr. Johnston, found it easier to let people do what they wanted, rather than working with

*©The Evangelical Christian, April, 1967
Printed by permission.
them for Sunday school improvement. Finally, Mr. Johnston, didn't understand the function of a Sunday school superintendent and what his duties were.

One key to Sunday school success is the superintendent. He must supervise the whole Sunday school staff.

To many, the word “supervision” conveys a distasteful meaning expressed in terms such as spying, dictation, checking up, driving, or “snoopervision.” However, rightly used, the term supervision should carry with it the idea of leading and encouragement. Supervision is measuring teacher effectiveness with suggestions for improvement. Supervision aims to improve the quality of teaching. The goal of supervision is intelligent, democratic leadership, promoting the spiritual welfare of teacher and pupil.

Good supervisors (Sunday school superintendents) are obtained only through training. So, some could contend, only professionals should superintend. They would say, “Let’s hire a Director of Christian education and he can supervise the Sunday school.” The lay Sunday school superintendent is untrained, unwilling and unable to do his job. And if the Director of Christian education doesn’t do the job, it’s left undone.

Can one layman lead and guide other laymen in the work of the church? Can laymen supervise Sunday schools in our complex world? The answer is yes! But not without training and guidance.

QUALIFICATIONS OF SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

The Sunday school superintendent must analyze himself to see if he measures up to the Lord’s pattern. If he is willing and eager to improve, he can be a good superintendent.

Spiritually, no one is capable to take the responsibilities of the Sunday school superintendent. All men are sinful and finite. No one is qualified to lead a spiritual and evangelistic program for the Living God. Limited man cannot do God’s work by himself. First, the Sunday school superintendent must recognize his own inability to do a spiritual job. Second, he must allow the Holy Spirit to work through him. Only
then can he be a growing Christian. As a definitely yielded Christian, he will be mature in his personal life before the Lord. He must have a definite prayer life, and honoring to the Lord in talk, manner, and dress. He should have a genuine testimony at home as well as in public.

Physically. His fitness does not involve height, weight, or age. All kinds and types of people can be good Sunday school superintendents. His physical qualifications involve appearance, living habits, and desires. He is constantly a public figure. Therefore, he should be cautious that he looks well-groomed and well-poised. As a leader he must command respect from his followers.

Good Relationship with people doesn’t come naturally to everyone. If there is a problem of meeting people and keeping friends, the Sunday school superintendent should learn the fundamental principles of good social relationships. He should analyze himself and pick out his weak points; then work increasingly to overcome them until good social relationships reflect his life. The Sunday school staff will work better with him than for him. He must have respect for individuals, and be able to communicate with them.

Mentally, the Sunday school superintendent should also strive for better education. The Lord’s work must not be done in a haphazard fashion.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT IS LIKE A COACH

The Sunday school superintendent is like a coach to a hockey team, and the teachers are the players. The coach supplies motivation, plans and guides the play. But in the final analysis, the team members get the job done. So in the Sunday school, the superintendent guides the organization but in the final analysis, the teachers get the job done.

In looking at the program itself, an essential part of “coaching” is to have a set of standards to follow and to
measure up to in the Sunday school. Simply, the Sunday school superintendent must know where he's going. Standards may consist of a general statement toward which to work, or a specific, written outline to be followed. This enables the superintendent to know where he is, where he's going and how to get there. Also, standards tell each teacher just what is expected of him. Standards will also help keep the entire program of the Sunday school unified.

Improvement in the Sunday school is of vital importance and must be done by leading and coaching the workers. "Coaching" is applied supervision, helping those responsible for a job to plan intelligently for needed improvements. Coaching implies bringing people up to the standard of excellence. Also, coaching implies a face to face relationship between teacher and superintendent. When suggesting changes, do so with the teacher so he understands. When the superintendent "coaches," he must be kind, patient, sympathetic, using simple language—always factual and willing to listen to the view of others. Never boss, blame or belittle the teachers. Give them the kind of respect you expect them to give you.

THREE AVENUES OF SUPERVISION

There are many specific techniques which could be used to supervise a Sunday school. These enable the superintendent to keep in close contact with his teachers and direct them in the latest methods. Only three avenues will be suggested in this article.

1. The Workers' conference is a regularly held meeting of all workers in the Sunday school. The meeting offers opportunity for inspiration, fellowship, and training for service. A workers' conference is important because: it provides continuous training that teachers need; it unites the staff; it gives support to the entire Sunday school program; and new workers are made to feel a part of the staff. Essentially, a workers' conference is an added means for the superintendent to keep his finger on the "pulse" of the Sunday school.
2. *Demonstration teaching* is a method by which the in-experienced prospective teachers who have been briefed beforehand, actually attend a teaching situation led by an expert. The new teacher should help with the planning ahead of time so he can evaluate the plan as it is carried out. Demonstration teaching is profitable because the student teacher is willing to learn and to take pointers from a more experienced person. Superintendent, if you can’t do the job of demonstration teaching, secure someone for your workers. They need the positive example.

The limitations of demonstration teaching are readily seen. There is the problem of being observed, and the problem of keeping a teachable attitude rather than a critical attitude when attending the session. Finally, there is the problem of getting together with the master teacher before and after the class for planning and evaluation purposes. However, many have found this as an effective means of introducing improved teaching methods through supervision.

3. *Apprenticeship* is the third technique. It is an extension of demonstration teaching, with more refined techniques and often under continual guidance. The basic approach is that new teachers are helped under continual guidance. The basic approach is that new teachers are helped most effectively through direct assistance in a classroom or in closely similar situations. Apprenticeship takes place either through opportunity to observe and at times assist the teacher. The new teacher works in an assigned classroom, or visits the teacher consultant’s classroom. This plan has great potential for practical leadership training in the local church. It combines learning by doing under expert supervision and careful planning.

**CONCLUSION**

We have looked at the reasons for supervision, the qualifications of supervisors, and the methods of improving the teaching program of the Sunday school through supervision. Some would say these requirements for a Sunday school
superintendent entirely exclude volunteers. Some would even go so far as to say that volunteers for religious instruction will ultimately end in failure. They would turn supervision of Christian Education over to the paid staff. But volunteer help has been the method used in Christian work for years. Even though lay leadership has its drawbacks, God has used the plan. The advantages of lay help far outweigh the disadvantages. Christ's example was to choose His disciples from the common consecrated laymen; this is also where the potential service is for today's Christian education program.

Our Sunday school success is not measured by comparison of volunteer leaders to professional help, but by measuring leaders capable of multiplying themselves through the enlistment and training of future leaders. Volunteer help, even the Sunday school superintendent, may in itself lower the value of well-trained and qualified workers. Yet the whole Christian education program if given over to paid staff would be stunted. The people (church) must be involved in doing the work of the church. Laymen training and using laymen through supervision is the key to Sunday School success.
The potter holds in his hands a lump of unattractive clay. With patience he carefully begins to shape it into a vessel fit for the Master's use. At one point in the smoothing-out process, he uses a special tool to remove gently an underlying spot. On another section, his fingers move again and again over a rough area, gradually smoothing it down.

The Sunday school teachers hold in their hands the Sunday School. With patience they carefully begin to shape the lives influenced thereby into vessels fit for the Master's use. At one point in the smoothing-out process, the Sunday school teachers may realize a need for a special tool to help smooth out the problems and rough areas. The Workers' Conference can be a tool for that purpose.

The Workers' Conference is the tool of leadership education in the local church for shaping lives. It is a meeting of the workers of the church's Sunday morning Bible school,
RUNNING THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

held at regular intervals for conference, study, fellowship, business transactions, and inspiration.

Cummings has described the Workers’ Conference as an “educational session of the school’s workers for the purpose of exchanging ideas, receiving inspiration and instruction, and achieving unity in common objectives and programs.” Burke adds the idea that it is held “with a view to improving (their work).”

It is in the Workers’ Conference that problems are presented, considered, and a solution sought; new plans of work are talked over; failures are faced and the causes are discovered; successes are reviewed and the reasons found; programs of action are formulated. It is a democratic meeting where each has a voice and a part, and all have the common interest of the church and its school at heart.

While the main emphasis is on the conference idea, the devotional, educational, and fellowship aspects are also important. Workers need constant training to keep abreast of the times. They also need incentive and inspiration to accompany the best results, and the challenge to faithful, sustained effort, which is brought about by contact with fellow-workers together under conditions that stimulate and quicken interest, cement friendships, enlarge visions, deepen the sense of responsibility, strengthen loyalty, and give incentive to do the best work possible.

The importance of the Workers’ Conference was summarized in the 1960 Sunday School Encyclopedia by the following statement: “In the final analysis, the power and potential of a Sunday School is either generated or dissipated in the Workers’ Conference.

PURPOSE OF THE WORKERS’ CONFERENCE

The primary purpose of the Workers’ Conference is educational. It is the means whereby workers can learn to plan and carry on a better program of teaching. It must be a co-operative study and effort with common understanding
about major aims and the elements of a good program. Each worker should examine his own school and recognize the needs for improvement. An underlying reason for such a meeting is to provide an opportunity for workers to understand and solve the problems they are facing.

The Workers' Conference is not to be confused with the educational committee. The purpose of this committee is to give general oversight to the educational work of the church as a whole and to build it into a total comprehensive program. It sets up standards, goals, forms policies, chooses leaders, and sees that the heads of organizations carry out the plans delegated to them. It should relieve the conference of most items of a business nature.

The obvious goals of the Workers' Conference are: (1) fellowship, (2) inspiration, (3) information, (4) instruction (practical messages). Or it could be stated in another way: (1) smooth running school, (2) spiritual school, (3) evangelistic school, (4) growing school.

Some ultimate goals of the Workers' Conference are:

1. To gain a vision of the whole task. When we concentrate too specifically on the separate details of a picture, we lose the effect of the whole. There is a definite need to get a broad view of the work. The workers should have common understandings about the large general goals, including the elements which make up a comprehensive program. Each worker should make an effort to find out what is being accomplished by the others.

2. To see the place of one's individual work. Each worker should see the relationships, and interpedendence of the various parts. He should also see clearly the place of true perspective, of a sense of proportion, and of proper relationships when thinking of his work. It is important to note that the lack of co-operation at any point or in any phase of the work weakens the whole program.
3. To serve as a means for solving problems. Many problems are best solved through co-operation on the part of the workers; "Many heads are better than one." Suggestions can be made by a group that one person alone would not think of.

4. To reach more with leadership training. Only a few workers can arrange for trips to institutes, conventions, or meetings, while a once-a-month meeting usually has a large, regular attendance.

5. To make possible democratic planning. Workers understand more fully plans which they have helped to make, and they know better how to put them into effect. They are more able and willing to carry the work forward.

6. To keep up-to-date. The latest educational methods, and materials should be made available. Announcements and reports have their proper place here.

7. To promote better acquaintanceship and deeper consecration. Thinking together, teamwork, harmony in fellowship help to draw the departments together. Through cooperative worship and prayer the Lord can bless their efforts.

God's Word affords all the principles needed in any attempts we make to serve Him. In Proverbs 15:22 we read: "Without counsel purposes are disappointed; but in the multitude of counsellors they are established." God's blessing is always on those who obey His Word and on the advice we get from it.

ORGANIZING THE WORKERS' CONFERENCE

Let's get the ball rolling. In this chapter we are interested in the internal organization of the Workers' Conference.

As we look into this matter, it would be good to remember the importance of the task that is before us. Let us keep in mind the individual boy or girl, both those who have received Christ into their hearts, as well as those who have not
done so. Let us keep in mind the individual who was not fortunate enough to have been raised in a Christian home, but was raised in an unhappy environment, such as a broken home or the slum area of our city. With these thoughts deeply embedded in our hearts and minds, we can press on for a more effective ministry.

First of all, the initiative to start a Workers' Conference may be taken by anyone who has the firm conviction that it is really needed, and who has a knowledge of the purpose and general program of such a meeting. It is up to this conscientious individual to create interest among the other teachers and officers.

A good step to take next is to appoint a committee to look into the different aspects of a Workers' Conference, seeking the good and bad points that would be encountered. This committee should make a report to all the workers and receive their approval or disapproval of the program. Certainly the teachers and officers will be enthused about such a conference, for only as the entire staff works together as a unit will the over-all functions of the Sunday School operate efficiently.

The superintendent of the Sunday School is often responsible to plan and direct the conference. However, anyone who is a qualified leader could fill this position, making the principles adaptable to the needs of the local Sunday School. He should serve as general chairman of the meetings and should conduct the business sessions, although he should delegate most of the work for which he is responsible. Wide participation of workers in the program means greater interest and educational growth. He should appoint a committee to plan the program, another to conduct it, and another to put into operation the plans of improvement. The director should give guidance, supply materials when needed, and see that the conference is successful. The position of the director is somewhat like that of a liaison officer,
RUNNING THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

bringing the recommendations of the committee to the conference and taking the problems and requests of the conference to the committee.

There must be a secretary elected to keep notes of all that goes on in the meetings. This secretary should see to it that mimeographed copies of the minutes are given to all members including the absentees. A treasurer should be elected to care for all financial matters.

For the Workers' Conference to run efficiently, its meetings should be planned well in advance. A series of monthly meetings should be organized with a carefully arranged time schedule so as to accomplish the maximum results in terms of the total work to be done. Consideration should be given to the following: a theme for each month's meetings, a variety of methods of presentation, items that need to be covered throughout the year, content of the instruction periods, special speakers, and program participation. These meetings can be planned by a committee working with the pastor, the superintendent, and the chairman of the board; or the board itself can plan the meetings. A well-organized Workers' Conference means a well-organized Sunday School.

PROGRAM OF THE WORKERS' CONFERENCE

Many long hours of planning are put into a Workers' Conference in order to make it interesting and efficient. Therefore, explicit care must be exercised in advertising for the meetings. When a meeting is called, every effort should be made to assure attendance.

Since punctuality is also a very vital and important matter, the Conference should begin promptly at the designated time. Like any other important meeting, the Workers' Conference should start on time and end on time.

Of great importance to the Workers' Conference is the order of the meetings. Many churches find it difficult to avail themselves of a specific order to follow. To remedy this situation, the following pattern is suggested:
1. Devotions: This includes one or more hymns, scripture reading, and prayer.

2. Reports: Minutes of previous meeting, treasurer's report, and departmental reports.

3. Unfinished business: Reports on activities planned at previous meetings.

4. New Business: Action on recommendations made by departments or committees; also plans for coming events.

5. Educational feature: Instruction, various speakers, or film can be utilized.

6. Fellowship: Sometimes the meeting is preceded by a fellowship supper, but for better results, a fellowship supper should be given only once a quarter. Some groups practice giving refreshments in every meeting and having a period of informal fellowship.

7. Departmental meetings: Some churches have departmental conferences before the fellowship supper, later presenting reports and recommendations that are complete at the time of the general meeting.

In order to be practical, the plan for a Workers' Conference must be put into practice. The following paragraphs give a description of the pattern of the Workers' Conference in practice.

The conference usually begins with the devotional service. This includes hymns, scripture reading, and prayer. Obviously, it should be prepared in advance. The superintendent should either appoint an individual to make the preparations for the meeting, or he should appoint a committee, which is responsible for the devotions. It is a good idea to have a theme around which the devotional period is centered.

The devotional service has a four-fold purpose: (1) to recognize God's presence and guidance, (2) to bring the
spirit of worship into the conference, (3) to train the workers in expression or spiritual aspirations, and (4) to prepare the hearts and minds of those present to get the most out of the session.

In the business session, Roberts Rules of Order should be followed. The chairman should be familiar with these rules and should enforce them. The business taken care of at the Workers’ Conference normally includes the roll call, the reading of the secretary’s minutes, the attendance report, the treasurer’s report and departmental reports. Unfinished business should follow, such as the items on which action was deferred or the reports of temporary committees appointed for a certain job at previous meetings.

The new business is then considered. Action is taken on requests submitted in the departmental reports. Action should also be taken concerning unfinished business. The treasurer’s report should be summarized to show the incoming funds, the expenditures, and the balance on hand.

The educational part of the program is a period of instruction or training. The program could effectively be presented by means of reports, visual aids, panel discussion, forums, or demonstrations. Listed below are suggested types of programs.

The topic discussion is presented by one or more individuals giving ideas on the theme or topic of the meeting. In this type of presentation, the theme is defined, explained, and then suggestions are given concerning ways in which the improvement necessary could be made. A period for discussion should follow so that the group can come to some conclusions on the matter discussed.

A panel discussion could be very valuable if the subject was vital to every member of the group. Usually four or six persons are seated in front of the audience to discuss the topic among themselves, bringing out the main points. If the subject is controversial, arguments should be given on
both sides. At the close of the discussion the leader should sum up the main points and then invite the audience to question and discuss any problem or disagreement.

In a forum type meeting, four to six individuals are asked to come prepared to discuss ideas for or against a specific proposal. This discussion should be held before the group and time should be allowed for a question and answer period at the close.

Demonstrations include a lecture on a specific subject with a demonstrator or an explanation by example. Exhibits are good for acquainting workers with various types of materials, maps, charts, pictures, handcraft articles, records, and books. Visual aids should be used as a definite teaching assistance, rather than for the mere entertainment of the group.

Lesson planning instructions can be given in which the potential in a lesson can be stressed. The teachers may have questions in their minds regarding some point in the lesson. Such questions could be answered by the explanation of an appointed instructor. A speaker who is an authority on a specific subject that is to be presented would be helpful and of great advantage to the audience.

After the presentation of a subject by one of these prescribed ways, these points of interest and new ideas should be discussed, but of course the leader should be careful not to let the discussion wander to irrelevant matters. If different viewpoints are presented, the leader should be careful to give attention to all and bring the group to a definite conclusion.

The social hour should be considered as another portion of the conference. A competent committee should be set up to take charge of this part of the conference, whether there is a fellowship supper or not. The room could be decorated sometimes to add to the atmosphere desired. For activities
during this time, books on social activities can easily be acquired to give ideas for this part of the program.

Departmental conferences are also very necessary. They should give attention to aims, problems, projects, and ways of working of special concern to each particular department. The study and planning should be more detailed. Lesson applications and methods of teaching should be stressed at this time. The supervisor of the specific department is in charge of the departmental meeting.

Matters that are not important enough to be taken to the general conference meeting can be discussed and settled in departmental meetings sometimes. A conclusion should be reached as to recommendations that are to be submitted to the general meeting or to the education committee.

The departmental meeting could meet either before or after the general meeting, depending on the needs of the local Sunday School. If the departmental meeting is first, special problems can be brought up later in the general meeting. However, there is some advantage in first meeting together in a large combined group, and then planning in detail in separate groups.

If each program is well-planned and interesting, the workers will continue to attend and will receive inestimable value from them. Some suggested topics for discussion at the Workers' Conference are:

1. How can we increase average attendance?
2. What can be done to enlist and train more workers?
3. What can be done to make the worship period more meaningful?
4. How can we make the visitation program more effective?
5. How can we overcome absentees and late comers?
6. How should a lesson be properly prepared?

7. What is the proper use of the Bible in Sunday School?

These are just a few suggestions. Keep the needs of your individual Sunday School in mind when planning the programs. The workers themselves are usually glad to suggest areas in which they think special help or training is needed. Always plan your program in advance and then pray that the Lord will greatly use it—and He will.

THE VISION OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

As the potter holds in his hand the finished vessel, he is proud to put it on display. If he had not taken patience with his piece of work and smoothed out the rough spots, he would have been very unhappy and probably would have discarded it. The potter is the team of workers and the vessel is the Sunday School program. As a smooth vessel is desirable for use, so is a smoothly-run Sunday School desirable for the glorification of the Lord. The successful Workers’ Conference is the basis of the successful Sunday School, and will be a means of drawing the church family closer together.

The seven-fold purpose of the Workers’ Conference, as brought out, shows the necessity of continuing such a program after it has been put into operation, if there is a desire to have a successful and growing church school. Restated, this seven-fold purpose is:

1. Initiate with fellowship
2. Inspire with worship
3. Inform with facts
4. Instruct with practical studies
5. Involve with departmental groups
6. Interest with year’s program for Sunday School
7. Intercession through prayer
The organization of the Workers' Conference is basically business-like. The director, secretary, treasurer, and committees, made up of participating members, are responsible for the planning of the meetings, the conducting of the meetings, and the fulfilling of the improvement plans. If each leader is faithful in carrying out his responsibility, the meeting will never fail in accomplishing its purpose.

A suggested program has been presented incorporating the seven-fold purpose, which may be changed to suit individual needs. Variety in the programs is not only good, but essential for worth-while meetings.

God's Word has principles regarding every attempt His children make to serve Him. In Proverbs 11:14 we are told, "Where no counsel is, the people fail: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety." Also in Proverbs 13:10 God reminds us that "Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised in wisdom."

The conclusion may be drawn that as the Workers' Conference goes, so goes the Sunday School. A successful Workers' Conference, supported by hard work and fervent prayer, will bring about a successful Sunday School to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.
Workers already realize a Sunday School should grow, but the main problem is how to make it grow. There are some definite laws of Sunday School growth that should be followed; when followed, these laws have always brought good results. When these laws are ignored, results are limited and partial in the Sunday School. These laws of growth are not man made. They are scriptural, in that the responsibility for evangelism, growth and maturity of the local church is on the Christian and not on the pastor or professional Sunday School worker. If a Sunday School depends upon the pastor for its growth, the outreach of the Sunday School will only be as large as the outreach of the pastor. If the Sunday School depends upon every member for its growth, then the outreach is unlimited.

These laws of growth have come from the law of averages in the Sunday School over the years. They are proven by experience and will work in any Sunday School regardless of size, type or clientele.

*© The Evangelical Christian, January, 1967
Printed by permission
I. Enrollment increases in proportion to workers at the ratio of 10 to 1. Almost every Sunday School has ten times as many students as teachers. Therefore the law necessitates at least one teacher for every ten students in the Sunday School. Generally, when there is an over ratio of workers, that is there are more than one worker per every ten students, it is because the workers are not adequately fulfilling their job as Sunday School teachers. In contrast, a church with unusual effort and hard work may lift this ratio for a while, but it is most difficult to maintain this ratio for a period of more than a few months, unless there are extraneous circumstances. Most Sunday Schools experience a leveling off to a ratio of one teacher to ten students.

There are a few large classes in our Sunday Schools that are doing the job. But, they are the exception rather than the rule. The large classes are usually built around a strong personality rather than into the church program. Experience shows the large Sunday School class provides little growth, little motivation, and few potential Sunday School workers.

The first law of Sunday School growth would imply several principles.

A. Divide and conquer. A Sunday School by reducing this ratio of 10 to 1 will quite often grow. If the possibilities justify this expansion and if the new units provided work to reach their neighborhood, the enrollment will soon be lifted to the 10 to 1 ratio, if the other laws of growth are applied. We grow by dividing our units and conquering.

B. Teacher training. We cannot divide without having trained workers to take over the new units. Hence, it is necessary that we instill teacher training classes to provide more workers. Most Sunday Schools think that the way to grow is to get the students and then provide the teachers. This is backwards. The way to grow is to get the new teachers and send them out to enlist the new students. Hence, teacher training is important to the growth of a Sunday School.
C. Class average. The average for the entire Sunday School should be a ratio of 10 to 1. However, for the individual class this is not so. The average class enrollment for beginners is about 5; for primaries, 7; for juniors and intermediates, 9; for young people, 13. The average class enrollment for adults varies from 15 in churches with a more limited constituency to about 25 in churches with more people. Some churches have even more when there are many available adults. The average for all the Sunday School is still near 10 to 1 when you add the Sunday School Superintendent, the Department Superintendent and other workers.

D. Sunday School Rolls. Some Sunday School leaders maintain they must drop names from the roll in order to maintain a “live Sunday School roll.” It is evident that they are trying to have a functioning Sunday School with fewer workers than one for every ten people enrolled. The fact is, that in Sunday Schools where names are dropped, the average attendance is no higher than in Sunday Schools that start more classes so as to reach more people. The contrast would be that the more aggressive Sunday School with more names on the roll reaches more people and usually would do a better job of teaching the one it has, rather than dropping dead names from the roll.

II. The building sets the pattern for educational growth. This law indicates the Sunday School takes the shape of the building. It is difficult to put the right kind of a Sunday School organization into the wrong kind of a building. A Sunday School takes the shape of the building it occupies. A Sunday School that has ten teaching centers will have difficulty growing beyond a hundred in attendance in keeping with our first rule that the enrollment increases in proportion to teachers at a ratio of 10 to 1. Growth demands new teaching centers with more space and addition of classes.

It is difficult for a Sunday School to grow beyond the capacity of the building. There is a high correlation between
the square footage, available space and the growth of a Sunday School.

Time is needed to provide space. This should be on the preferred list for growth in your Sunday School. If your church has come to the decision that it must provide more space to grow, then it is believed that one of the following plans must be adopted.

1. If your Sunday School is now constructed on a class basis, plan your space so that your Sunday School may be graded on a department basis.

2. If your Sunday School now has one department for each age group, plan space for at least two departments for each age group.

3. Then, make plans to move in a multiple departments program.

III. Sunday School units usually reach maximum growth in a few months. Once a class has been divided and new units will reach an optimum limit. Then, it is time if the conditions are favorable to divide the classes again. To think a class will grow beyond the suggestions of the laws of growth, even though left over a number of years is a false concept. Hence, the addition of new units rather than the expansion of present units is the way of growth.

Fruit always comes through new growth, and Sunday School enthusiasm, energy and outreach comes from new units. Usually these new units win more to Christ and provide more workers. New units produce growth in a twofold manner. First, growth comes in the total number of enrollment, and secondly, growth in potential through provision of more teachers for other classes.

IV. Grading by ages provides the logical basis for adding new units. Grading a Sunday School means arranging classes for people of the same age or nearly the same age as the need demands. Grading by ages offers several strengths to
your Sunday School. Grading helps the teacher to meet individual needs. Grading locates responsibility for each period of life. Grading locates and overcomes neglected spans of life. Grading simplifies the teacher's task. Grading prevents a static outlook in Sunday School. Grading makes the organization of needed classes easy. Grading anticipates a student's advancement in life. Grading breaks down social and class lines. Grading prevents a class from enlisting easy prospects and neglecting the needy group. Grading puts more workers to work for Christ. Grading recognizes natural stages of life. Grading is scriptural because it meets the individual as and where he is and attempts to lift him to where he should be. Grading makes for growth because it puts more teachers to work for Sunday School and Christ. Grading paves the way for promotion which recognizes the natural laws of growth and progress. Promotions are a necessary factor in the normal health growth of a Sunday School. Students are not lost because they are ashamed to remain with those much younger. They are with their age and lessons are geared to their level.

V. Enrollment and attendance increase in proportion to visitation. The other laws of Sunday School growth are useless without visitation. Visitation is the practical application of spiritual concern for men. In a good visitation program you have a lay-centered evangelism which is scriptural. The great commission is best fulfilled in the local church through a visitation program.

Attendance is increased in proportion to the number of callers during a visitation program. Statistics indicate a growing Sunday School should have at least one tenth of its attendance out for weekly calling. If this percentage does a good job in its calling program, then one out of eight will produce results. Salesmen indicate if you knock on enough doors you are bound to make sales. Over a period of years, Sunday School records indicate one out of eight calls produce a regular Sunday School student.
WHERE THERE IS NO VISION THE PEOPLE PERISH

These Sunday School laws of growth are built on vision, progress and planning ahead. If you believe attendance increases in proportion to workers at the ratio of 10 to 1, then you will employ vision, plan ahead and provide Sunday School teachers and workers. If you believe attendance increases as the building sets the pattern for educational growth, then you will employ vision, plan ahead and provide space for growth. If you believe that new units will reach optimum size in a few months, your Sunday School will not be static in keeping the same classes, but will continue to add new units and become progressive in organizational growth. If you will keep the students you have, reach those in your area and teach them all effectively, you will grade by ages. If you will believe the above laws will work, you will visit the lost and build a Sunday School for the glory of God.
CHAPTER XX

SEX EDUCATION: THE CURE CAN BE WORSE THAN THE DISEASE

Rich Bonet, youth pastor at Elm Park Church, felt his ecclesiastical reputation crumbling.** He re-read the letter, “we feel the course on sex education intended for the youth group should be temporarily postponed till . . .”

The chairman of the Board of Christian Education had called a hurried meeting after the morning service. The posters in the church foyer and a notice in the bulletin announced a course on sex education for teenagers to begin that evening. Every one was caught by surprise.

Parents complained in the adult Sunday school class, then argued before church and finally threatened after the service. One lady secured 23 signatures that morning asking the official church board to cancel the sex education course. The Pastor couldn’t talk intelligently, for the course was a surprise to him.

**An actual case study. The names were changed at the request of the church involved.
Sex education has also caused a controversy in the public schools. The Minneapolis Tribune featured a story, "Sex Course detail shocks parents." Mrs. Robert Murphy of Minneapolis was quoted as amazed at the material given her 7th grade son. The detailed definition of intercourse was too much for her, for it gave only the physical aspect. Mrs. Murphy demanded her son be excused from the course. Other parents are concerned at what sex education is given their teens.

Yet a sex revolution is galloping, almost unchecked across the U.S. Dr. Marvin Buncher, director of student affairs, Point Park College, Pittsburg, stated in an associated press release, some reasons for the sexual explosion: "(1) the use of birth control, (2) a chemo-therapeutic treatment for venereal disease (removing fear of intercourse), (3) the chronic exposure of sex via the mass media, (4) the use of drugs, narcotics, and alcohol, (5) an unknown quality of the so-called stress syndrome based on the uncertainties of the world situation."

Sex is with us. It is as basic to the human race as people. Our children live in a "sex turned on" age. Why do parents protest, sign petitions and conjure demands when sex education is suggested?

1. The cure can be worse than the disease. "Our kids will become obsessed with sex," charged one mother. Parents are afraid exposure to sex information might overstimulate the kids. Another mother quoted Marjorie Isemen's article in McCall's magazine where a class of fifty high school juniors and seniors, boys and girls watched a visiting lecturer in sex education class, apply a contraceptive device to a life size plastic phallus. This mother didn't want her child seeing that and she didn't want her church teaching that.

Some parents felt the information-happy atmosphere of sex techniques would lead to experimentation. Of course the youth pastor, Rich Bonet hadn't intended going this far. He
only wanted to give Christian interpretation to the biological facts the kids were getting in public school.

2. Who will teach? "Kinky headed little ladies with guilt ridden obsessions about sex will indoctrinate my kids," charged a suburban mother, who considered herself Biblical in wanting sex taught in Sunday school. "That's bad because little old ladies preach sex is bad." The mother wanted the church to instruct her how she should teach her family.

Most agree sex education belongs in the home, but "Wow" said a 27 year old mother, "My folks didn't tell me about sex, I just picked it up. I can't teach my kids. Let the church and school do it."

Who in the church is qualified to teach the sex education? One teacher responded, "I'm scared. I see myself being bombarded with kids' questions and I'll be in a fix if I don't have some answers."

But even if the teachers have the facts the unintended messages creep in. A New Jersey teacher blushed uncontrollably when talking of "copulation." So she took to wearing a red dress on the days her sex education class was to meet, hoping to camouflage her blushes. When the ears of a Sunday school teacher turn red because he defines uterus, the kids get a false message. Sex doesn't belong in Sunday school . . . sex belongs in the "adult only" movie. Teens know the filthy language of the restroom wall doesn't make a beer drinking cab driver blush.

If the church sitting on the corner ever needed two fisted-grab hold leadership—sex education is that need. Can pastors teach laymen how to teach sex? Can the mere trickle of curriculum material from the publishers be increased in quality and quantity?

3. Content controversy—how much shall we teach? Sex education is more than naming parts of the body. "You can't teach the plumbing fixtures," stated Dave Veerman, Youth
for Christ club director, "without teaching the kids the ethics behind sex."

The Chicago Daily News reported on a sex education conference for public school educators at Northwestern University. Teachers were told to emphasize more than biological facts. "Sex is and should be the cementing force of the family." The conference concluded, "Sex instruction should be interwoven with concepts of responsibility, of parenthood and family.

Sexual techniques, perversion, birth control methods, and VD prevention were topics labeled by the conference as "booby traps" with special problems. Public schools were advised, "What to teach will depend largely on what the community is ready for." What can the church teach?

Films from Concordia Films discuss homosexuality, masturbation, adultery, and venereal diseases in its high school film "Take the High Road." Evangelical churches have responded positively.

The position of the church on sex education was summed up by Dave Wardle, youth director of Winnetka (Illinois) Bible Church, "The church should provide interpretation of the biological facts the kids are getting in public school."

WHERE DOES THE ROAD LEAD?

"No church decides to teach sex education," stated Ron Rynd, youth director of Bensenville (Illinois) Bible Church. "The fact is, sex education is taught, but the question is—does it have positive or negative attitudes?" Rynd's question screams for an answer.

The Scriptures are not silent. God is the Creator of sex and sexuality, (Gen. 1,2). Sex does not embarass God, for He speaks of it openly and honestly throughout His book. The Holy Spirit guides authors to write of intercourse (Song of Solomon), menstruation and child birth.

The church instructs parents, "How to teach sex to chil-
dren.” Begin with attitudes, handling of toilet training, role identification and acceptance of one’s sex role. Give Scriptural interpretation to what’s being taught in the public schools.

The church must integrate Scriptural teaching and sex education in passages such as Hosea, Song of Solomon, the Sermon on the Mount, I Corinthians, Ephesians and I John. Positive attitudes toward sex are needed for sex will always be with us, in fact, our young people may not always be with us, but may find solutions to their problems elsewhere.

**HOW TO ORGANIZE A SEX EDUCATION PROGRAM IN THE LOCAL CHURCH**

1. Discuss the sex education program with the pastor, Board of Christian Education and Church Board. Review motives, goals, methods of teaching, and approve literature.

2. Set target date far in advance to allow for scheduling qualified speakers and thorough review of literature.

3. Plan orientation meeting for parents. Give them a copy of the material to be passed on to the teen.

4. Distribute to the congregation a written statement of the goals, methods of approach and personnel involved in program.

5. Plan the meetings so the parents will know a week in advance exactly what the children will be receiving the following week.

6. All sessions are voluntary and if need be, each youth would sign an attendance list expressing parental approval of his attendance.

7. Provide an annotated bibliography of Christian and secular books that are helpful to both youth and parents.

8. Boys and girls need not be separated, although this detail should be left to those in charge of the program.
Sunday Schools generally are declining in attendance and membership. Churches are charged with "powerlessness." Yet in the midst of the uncertain sixties, the Baptist Bible Fellowship has shown phenomenal growth. Organized in the summer of 1950 with less than 20 churches, the 1968 Year Book lists more than 1,900 churches in the Fellowship. Six out of the 10 largest Sunday Schools in the U.S., listed by the Christian Life Magazine, belong to this youthful giant. Membership estimates range from lows of one million to a high of two million adherents. (The Fellowship doesn't gather these statistics so exact figures are not available.) What is the secret of this Sunday School success? They appear to be several.

First, pastor-administered churches. The 20th century has seen the development of committee-run churches. Leadership
is reported passing into the hands of the "common" man. Not so in the Baptist Bible Fellowship. The pastor directs the churches in a more influential way, than even other Baptist denominations.

The Rev. Mel Sabaka of Canton (Ohio) Baptist Temple says, "The pastor is God's under-shepherd. He is the leader appointed by God."

"The church boards in Baptist Bible churches are basically advisory in nature," Sabaka continued. "The most inefficient form of church government is a democracy." To him, the pastor-led church is the scriptural method. However, the pastor is responsible to the congregation. The successful pastor must be financier, promoter, preacher and soul winner.

Some have charged their pastors with dictatorship in the church. However, they answer by holding up the example of the apostles. "Paul didn't have a board to control him," stated Sabaka.

Who trains these pastors? The Baptist Bible College of Springfield, Missouri, was organized in 1950 with an enrollment of less than 100. Today, 1,200 students study on the multi-million dollar campus in Springfield, Missouri.

The Baptist Bible Fellowship hasn't emphasized education in the past. Many of the early pastors were laymen with high school education or less. They began churches in store fronts and fire halls. A concern for the spiritual welfare of their people was their academic pedigree. Many men started churches from scratch as did the Rev. Harold Henniger, Canton Baptist Temple, who built his church to an average attendance of 3,700. The physical plant is now worth $11/2 million.

The Rev. Gary Wilson of High Street Baptist Church, Springfield, Mo., commented, "It's not that we're anti-education. It's just that for years we believed all we needed was God and the Bible."
"There are no Ph.D.'s in the Fellowship," according to the Rev. Roscoe Brewer, youth pastor, Tulsa (Okla.) Baptist Temple, "and only four or five M.A. degrees. If there are any pastors with an earned doctorate, they must be in a church with about 40 people. If a man goes on for education, his church pays the price." (Meaning it doesn't grow spiritually and numerically.) Brewer went on to state, "60 per cent of the pastors do not have a college education." The implication is that the men are so enthusiastic for God's work they haven't time for higher education.

However, some ministers are changing. The Rev. Clifford Clark, senior minister of Tulsa Baptist Temple, claims he "came off the Kansas prairies with one pair of shoes and a burning heart for souls." He took a small struggling church and built it to 1,000 in Sunday School and over one million dollars in physical plant. During his years at the church, Clark received a B.A. and M.A. from Tulsa University.

Second, pioneering evangelism. The Baptist Bible Fellowship still has a pioneering spirit. Every month new churches are started by graduates of their college. But laymen also start churches. A plumber or clerk may be converted and work diligently in the church. As his ministry proves successful he is promoted to greater spheres of service. Finally, he is ordained by a group of local Baptist churches and the man either is called to a church or starts his own. If God is in the matter, the church will not fail, they affirm.

Ministers begin work with no financial backing, no church board and no buildings. "We go out to win souls," stated Jim Standish, youth minister in Wichita, Kansas. Each pastor of a new work knows he must work hard because no one will help them.

Wilson attributes the success of the movement to "God working among us." The Rev. Roy Thompson of Cleveland Baptist Temple added, "We are not like the New Testament church; we are the New Testament church."
Third, no superfluous denominational machinery. The movement is a fellowship, not a denomination. Editor Smith states the churches are "constitutionally independent" of each other. A church does not "join" the Fellowship, but becomes listed in the Year Book by support of foreign missions of the Baptist Bible Fellowship or making financial contributions to the Bible College. This past year contributions to the foreign missions budget approached $2¼ million.

The Fellowship agrees to disagree. Wilson stated, "We are not here to correct one another." Their loose-knit organization is viewed as the grounds for strength.

Some churches have "open communion" but other churches permit only members of the Baptist church to participate in communion services. Some churches will not accept non-Baptist immersion as qualification for church membership; others will. Sabaka commented, "Many denominations become machines, but we are a movement and we're still moving."

Fourth, the Sunday School is a growing edge. The Sunday Schools are the growing edge of the Fellowship. In the first issue of the Fellowship's magazine, strict guidelines were laid down. "The fundamental basis of the Fellowship . . . was not educational, but missionary. Sunday Schools are designed to be soul winning stations."

The Baptist Bible Fellowship breaks many of the laws set down in local Sunday School conventions, yet its Sunday Schools grow. Most churches don't have leadership training classes. "We teach leadership by knocking on doors, witnessing and serving in the church," stated Brewer. "You can't teach leadership out of a textbook. Involvement in the total church program prepares leaders and teachers.

Many churches don't purchase and use Sunday School quarterlies. They prepare their own. "Our teachers explain the Bible verse by verse," stated Sabaka. "We don't teach
out of quarterlies, but out of the Bible.”

First Baptist Church, Hammond, Ind., has a full-time director of literature to prepare Sunday School and training-hour materials. Dr. Jack Hyles, pastor, teaches the lesson to the teachers on Wednesday evening.

Also, the Sunday Schools of the Baptist Bible Fellowship stress large classes. (See *Christian Life*, July 1968). The gifted teacher should instruct as many as he can reach, the leaders say. Adult classes of 300 are not uncommon. “Why should students be taken from a gifted teacher and given, in many cases, to an incompetent teacher?” asked Sabaka.

Few churches have Boards of Christian Education. The pastor's representative, the Sunday School superintendent or director of Christian Education does the work of the Board of Christian Education. In many of their smaller churches, the pastor appoints Sunday School teachers.

The teachers are required to visit both absentees and unconverted members. In most churches, a teacher is replaced if he doesn't attend prayer meeting, church service, and do visitation. A pledge of agreement with church standards usually is signed.

Today, evangelical Christians are searching for new methods to evangelize. The Baptist Bible Fellowship uses the time-honored methods of preaching the Gospel and personal “soul winning” to build large Sunday Schools—and many of them. Techniques are not the answer, their leaders assert. Instead, it is the conviction that the world is lost, Christ is coming soon and their position is right.

The results, it would appear, are difficult to dispute.
"The church is a museum," stated Ron Harlan, layman and computer programmer from Chicago, Illinois. "It just displays dried up Christians who are living on an experience that's 20 years old." Such a statement reflects modern criticism against the church. Many feel the church is ineffective and for proof, point to the few converts and declining attendance.

"The church is a spiritual ghetto," stated a pastor from the West coast. Christians are stagnant, and need to get out of the stained glass sanctuaries into he manufacturing plants, suburbia and inner city where people are. The church has lost its power because it has lost its contact with people."

The church needs a new face of evangelism, which is defined as, "Taking the gospel out of a church building to the masses." A new message is not intended.

*Coffee house ministry. The "Christian renewal" issue of Time magazine (December 25, 1964) revealed an attempt to make the Christian message relevant. The coffee house or

*©Christian Life Magazine, November, 1968
Reprinted by permission.
"underground" ministry is an unconventional attempt to scratch man where he itches. The Potter's House operated by the Church of the Savior in Washington, D.C., was perhaps the first of such ministries. The non-churched were given a chance to come in, drink coffee, and discuss ultimate questions. The basic motive was "Christians far too often talk to each other instead of sharing their faith with and learning from the unchurched." An atmosphere of openness prevailed. The church sanctuary is where the unchurched listen to the Christian's slant. Coffee house ministry encourages dialogue—listening to each other.

Coffee house includes discussion of contemporary ideas, art exhibits, jazz and folk performances, dramatic and poetry presentations, film showings. The La Rapport coffee house in Seattle, Washington, had a weekend spontaneous informal discussion. The discussions were chosen on the basis of their significance in religion, the various arts and contemporary culture. Their discussions have centered around such topics as: civil rights, liturgical jazz, sex-love-and-meaning, existentialism, disarmament, political favoritism, Bertrand Russell and Christianity, the Bible, and modern science, James Baldwin, Ingmar Bergman's Theological Trilogy, and the McCarthy film, Point of Order.

**Pavilions.** Billy Graham and Moody Science Films take the gospel to the masses. The Hemisfair at San Antonio, Texas, featured pavilions by both while Moody Science films had one of the few presentations of Christianity allowed at Expo 67. Those who face the challenge of Jesus Christ number in the hundreds of thousands. Many Christian organizations sponsor booths at state and county fairs. Last summer, Earle Johnson, director of clubs for Youth for Christ, Lake County, Illinois, sponsored a booth, just to talk to high school kids.

**Open Air Campaigners.** There is nothing new about preaching in the streets, however, Open Air Campaigners carry the gospel from church sanctuaries and make it "curb-
stone Christianity.” Going where the people are is their whole philosophy—beaches, parks, shopping centers, schools or downtown.

A large door opens out of a panel truck and makes a platform. A loud-speaker is set up, a few songs are sung by helping Christians. A guitar or accordion helps to draw the crowd. A picture is drawn using chalk, by one of the campaigners following a religious theme. Prominent men from the neighborhood give testimonies of their faith in Christ.

Last summer after three months of ministry around the Toronto (Ontario) area, approximately six conversions per meeting were made, or 250 for the summer. They estimate 25,000 heard the gospel, many who would never have attended church.

Hippie Evangelism. Students from Gordon Theological Seminary, Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, invade the Boston (Mass.) Commons on Sunday afternoon. “We can draw a crowd of 200 hippies just by tuning our musical instruments,” said John Evans, youth director of Calvary Baptist Church, Peabody, Massachusetts.

The students use an actual wooden soap box on which to preach. Evans indicated, “We preach and compete” which meant that during the preaching of the gospel, they compete with the hippies, who by the time of the message, number 600. The hippies shout vulgar filth at the clean-cut boys presenting the gospel. Other times they would throw peanuts, pop corn boxes, or turn up their transistor radios.

Evans indicated that there were several other religious organizations holding simultaneous street meetings. “But we got all of the agitators. When the gospel is preached, it’s an offense to the unsaved. That’s why they oppose us.” One city official in Boston discussing the problem of the hippies in Boston Commons indicated, “Hippies do three things: urinate, defecate, and fornicate.”
Bob Shriers, a senior at Gordon, was preaching when a black militant began yelling, "What color is God?" The crowd became uneasy with the threat of violence.

"God is BLACK!!", said Shriers, pointing his finger into the black face.

The crowd gulped, and Shriers explained that Jesus Christ was a dark olive color like the orientals of his day, but God the Father is without color so that all races may identify with Him.

T.V. and Radio Commercials. Jesus Christ was proclaimed through 30 second spot announcements during last season's Twins' baseball games in the northern Minnesota area. Oak Hills Fellowship, Bemidji, Minnesota, sponsored the testimonies of leading Christian athletes in a brief but direct manner. Over 200 letters were received by the Institute.

Many churches have inaugurated dial-a-prayer as a means of reaching the unchurched. Day camps in the summer are effective. For Crystal Evangelical Free Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota, Gospel Billboards are used.

Don Loney and others with special speaking gifts in addressing high school assemblies, weave the gospel into their talks.

New faces of evangelism are springing up. As the world changes, the church must adapt to meet the challenge of winning the lost to Christ.

Many churches are abandoning the traditional visitation night in favor of home Bible classes. Many ministers no longer give an altar call to accept Christ. They feel the emotional pressure of "hitting the sawdust trail" is as out of date as running boards. In its place these ministers are scheduling counseling sessions. Dr. Howard Hendricks of Dallas Theological Seminary states, "We live in an aspirin age." An organized counseling program can be an effective outreach for today's minister.
THE OLD METHODS STILL WORK

The church doesn’t need new methods of evangelism, she needs to apply the evangelistic methods it already has. Visitation, evangelistic preaching and planting new churches have been the traditional methods—and to many, they still work.

“We build our Sunday School through evangelism,” stated Dr. Harold Fickett, minister, First Baptist Church, Van Nuys, California. “We believe in teaching evangelism.”

“We can reach the entire city of Fort Wayne (Ind.) for Christ through the establishment of branch churches,” states Rev. Tom Younger, minister, Immanuel Baptist Church. He began 12 years ago by announcing to his congregation, “We can give families away to start branch churches yet increase in attendance.” Younger’s challenge is found in Prov. 11:24, “There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that which withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.”

Ten branch churches have been started in the Fort Wayne area in the last ten years. The total attendance of the ten branch churches is over 1,000 in Sunday school. Immanuel Baptist Church averages almost 400 in Sunday School.

“We have done nothing different,” stated Younger. “We simply preach the Word of God, attempt to win souls and believe that God will bless our efforts.” On the previous Tuesday evening, 40 people had attended visitation.

Immanuel Baptist Church has the vision of starting 18 more branch works by 1975. This would make a total of 29 churches started by one church. Younger stated, “We could never reach the city of Fort Wayne through one large church.” He went on to say, “Fort Wayne will double by 1975 and we feel 29 churches are needed to reach the city.

“Church planting is the missing ingredient in evangelism today,” stated Younger. Beach evangelism, coffee house churches and city-wide evangelistic meetings all have their
place. However, God's plan for winning a city to Christ is
the establishment of churches in each local area for the con­
tinued ministry of residents to their neighbors.”

A minister from Boston, Massachusetts states, “The results
of coffee house evangelism are few—conversions are few.
The type of person who comes, looks for discussion and de­
bate and knows he will find it. Should the church major on
those who desire either to tell or to hear some new thing
(Acts 17:21)?”

Reverend Earl Umbaugh, Ohio state missionary for the
General Association of Regular Baptists, began 23 churches
in the past five years. Umbaugh stated, “We can plant
churches if we will believe God, preach His Word, knock on
doors, and invite people to attend.” He plans 12 new church­
es in the winter 1968-69. His past effectiveness indicates suc­
cess for the new challenge.

“Evangelicals are selling their souls for a mess of pottage,”
stated a seminary professor. “We are educating our young
ministers away from the methods that work: house to house
visitation, soul winning, evangelistic preaching, canvassing,
and establishing branch churches.” Perhaps we feel God has
gone modern, and no longer blesses evangelistic crusades.
IS SUNDAY SCHOOL BUSING EFFECTIVE?*

SUNDAY SCHOOL BUSES EVANGELISM TOOL

I was doing door to door evangelism in Peoria, Illinois, last April. An elderly couple responded to my knock and said they were members of a Lutheran church but didn’t attend because they had no transportation and the church was in a suburban neighborhood.

"Would you like to attend our church if the Sunday School bus stopped in front of your home?" I asked.

They said they would and were ready when the Sunday School bus stopped in front of their home the next Sunday.

1. Sunday School buses provide transportation for those who otherwise couldn’t or wouldn’t attend.

Elderly folks may have difficulty getting to and from public transportation. Most children will come to Sunday School when invited. If their parents do not assume the responsibil-

*©Christian Life Magazine, November, 1968
Reprinted by permission.
itiy to drive them to church, busing insures their arrival at Sunday School to hear the Word of God.

2. *Sunday School buses are a means of evangelistic outreach.*

“One of the most productive evangelistic outreaches in the Sunday School is the bus ministry,” stated the Rev. Jack Hyles, minister of First Baptist Church, Hammond, Indiana. His church has more than 50 buses, picking up pupils from as far away as 50 miles. In fact, First Baptist has more Sunday School buses than the entire public transportation system of Hammond.”

Effective Sunday School bus ministry begins with the appointment of a “bus pastor.” He supervises the children on the bus, contacts the absentees and door to door evangelism within his district. He is responsible to solicit new members to ride the bus to Sunday School. The bus pastor is responsible for the spiritual life of those on the bus, and outreach to the unconverted on his route.

3. *Sunday school buses encourage the congregation.*

A few years ago Grant Memorial Baptist Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba, had a problem of declining attendance and some discouragement among the congregation because they did not have as many children attending Sunday School as in the past. The church voted to add three Sunday School buses. The Rev. David Clink, minister, stated, “We needed the increase in attendance to encourage the older folks. There was an evident response in more giving, more enthusiasm and ultimately more growth in attendance among families.”

Christ has commanded us to “go into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in.” Sunday School busing is a natural means for carrying out God’s command to go . . . !

SUNDAY SCHOOL BUSES CAUSE TOO MANY PROBLEMS

Seven children stood on a dirty street corner of Chicago’s
south side. A Sunday School bus pulled up, but the children were hesitant. They didn’t know the driver.

“Come on, I’ve got donuts and chocolate milk,” replied the driver.

Still the children were hesitant. The driver got off and talked to the kids.

Finally they got on the bus and went to Sunday School—not their regular one.

This true incident reflects the aggressiveness of those successfully using Sunday School buses. The weakness and/or confusion resulting from the use of a Sunday School bus program is also evident.

1. *Sunday School busing causes the high drop out ratio found among evangelical churches.*

Sunday School buses are able to gather large groups of primaries, junior, and sometimes junior high school students. Parents are happy to get the kids out of the house so they can sleep on Sunday morning. However, when pupils become older, it is more difficult to get teenagers to ride Sunday School buses. If parents do not attend Sunday School with their youth, the pupils tend to drop out of Sunday School.

2. *Sunday School buses encourage proselyting.*

Sheridan Road Baptist Church of Tulsa, Oklahoma, does not run a busing program for fear of “sheep stealing.”

“We do not want to go into some one else’s neighborhood and bring their children to our church,” stated the director of Christian Education. Every church has a “natural parish” from which to draw its membership.

“It is fine to have members drive from other church parishes of their own free will,” stated the Rev. Bob Meyers of Springfield, Mo., “but it becomes an ethical problem to go and solicit members from someone else’s neighborhood. Our
church is in a poorer economical neighborhood and seven other Sunday School buses pick up within three blocks of our church. They do it because it's easy to get kids in our neighborhood."

3. Sunday School busing leads to false inflation of the attendance figures.

Some Sunday Schools send their buses into housing projects, slum areas, or other neighborhoods where parents exercise little supervision over their children. It is easier to attract children from these neighborhoods than more stable suburbia. Children are offered donuts, candy and other incentives to go to Sunday School.

4. Sunday School busing creates discipline problems by the type of student brought in.

"First, our upkeep was expensive," stated Roscoe Brewer, director of Christian Education, Tulsa Baptist Temple, Tulsa, Oklahoma. "The children were discipline problems. We had to rent the public school across the street to accommodate them. Windows were broken, desks were carved, and the disruptive behavior kept the children from our church families from learning the Word of God."

Moody Memorial Church, Chicago, has a busing program in the neighboring housing project. Careful control over the attendance of the Sunday School is kept, so classes will not have more children from the housing project than from church families. "Otherwise the disruptive behavior in the Sunday School classes would make teaching of the Word of God impossible," stated James Gwinn, director of Christian Education.

5. Sunday School buses are expensive to maintain.

Should a church invest anywhere from $500 to $4,000 in a Sunday School bus that is used only on Sunday morning? Voices are being raised in the evangelical movement against the unwise stewardship of tying up capital expenses in a bus
that is used only on Sunday morning. On the other hand, many churches are renting school buses from private firms. They claim that the cost per mile is less than the total investment of a church purchasing its own bus.

One California church had 20 buses (most were old clinkers). Only 15 were needed for the bus routes on Sunday morning. One mechanic spent his week nights working on the buses to keep them rolling for the Sunday morning ministry. Keeping the buses repaired was his ministry for the Lord.

North Suburban Evangelical Free Church (Deerfield, Illinois) buses approximately 70 students from nearby Trinity College. However, the greatest need in the church is reaching its teens. The official board considered dropping its bussing program to invest the money in a youth pastor. Ken Nilsen, Chairman of the Board of Christian Education stated, “We’ve got to place priorities. It’s more important to reach our teens than bus in students to expand our attendance.”

The church will have to examine its busing program. If the bus program is simply to expand the attendance statistics, let's drop the buses. If we use buses to reach the lost for Christ, let's be about the task.
ELMER L. TOWNS, a native of Georgia, is associate professor of Christian education at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois and Sunday School editor of Christian Life magazine.

He has taught at Midwest Bible College, St. Louis, Mo., pastored churches in Georgia and Texas and served as president of Winnipeg Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

He is the author of several books of which the best known is Teaching Teens, now in its third edition, published by Baker Book House.

Mr. Towns received the B.A. degree from Northwestern College [Minnesota] and holds the M.A. from Southern Methodist University, the Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary, and presently is a candidate for the Ph.D. at Northwestern University.
“An optimistic view of the future of the Sunday school is difficult to find today. Elmer Towns not only presents the Sunday school’s prospects as bright but offers some solid suggestions and helps to confirm Sunday school as an indispensible agency to teach Bible truth and evangelism. Mr. Towns covers the gamut of Sunday school work and he does it out of a background of practical experience. You may not agree with all his ideas but you will certainly be stimulated.

The Sunday school from tots through adults, is treated in this volume. Four chapters on administration plus another four on “Trends and Problems” make this book unique and more than worth the price. Every pastor, Sunday school administrator and teacher will profit from Mr. Towns comprehensive approach.

Read “The Bright Future of Sunday School” and you will work and teach in your Sunday school with new vigor and knowledge.”

Rev. Kenneth M. Meyer