

THE TEENS  
AND THE  
RURAL SUNDAY SCHOOL



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International Sunday-School  
Association. Commission for  
The teens and the rural  
Sunday school

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# THE TEENS AND THE RURAL SUNDAY SCHOOL

BRING THE SECOND VOLUME OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ADOLESCENCE  
AUTHORIZED BY THE SAN FRANCISCO CONVENTION OF THE INTER-  
NATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.  
A STUDY OF THE ADOLESCENT IN RELATION TO THE RURAL COMMUNITY UNDER  
2,500 POPULATION AND IN THE OPEN COUNTRY.

BY THE COMMISSION FOR THE STUDY OF THE ADOLESCENT  
IN THE COUNTRY SUNDAY SCHOOL

Edited by  
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YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS

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- II The Home.
- III The Church.
- IV The Sunday School.
- V The Community.
- VI The Adolescent in Relation to the  
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# The Teens and the Rural Sunday School

## CHAPTER I

### HISTORICAL AND EXPLANATORY

In September, nineteen hundred and eleven, the Commission on the Adolescent was organized in Chicago, with E. H. Nichols and Frank L. Brown as Chairman and Secretary. This Commission had been authorized by the International Convention, the source of authority of the International Sunday School Association, in the preceding June at San Francisco. The Commission divided itself into six parts for careful study: The Individual, The Home, The Church, The Sunday School, The Community, and The Country Sunday School. The first five reported in the spring of 1913, and the report was published under the title, "The Sunday School and the Teens."\* The report of the sixth sub-commission comprises the present volume, it being deemed best to keep the city and rural problems apart.

Dr. Kenyon L. Butterfield, President of Massachusetts Agricultural College and Vice-Chairman of the United States Rural Life Commission, has

\* Association Press, New York City.

directed the investigation and findings of this report. The personnel of the Commission is given on another page, and it is mere justice to say that the work of this group of men and women has not only been scientific in its approach, but thorough in its method and completion. It is no reflection on the work of the commissions reporting in "The Sunday School and the Teens" to say that the Rural Commission, by painstaking effort in repeated meetings, has gone far beyond any similar Sunday school group in the manner and method of their work. This present volume should be both a guide and a challenge to all those who would understand and lead in rural Sunday school work. The Rural Commission has had a free hand in its investigation and conclusions, and this book is the exact findings of the Commission. The name of the writer of each chapter—not necessarily the author—may be seen in the Contents.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HISTORY AND METHODS OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission for the Study of the Adolescent in Relation to the Country Sunday School was organized under the auspices of the International Sunday School Association and under the immediate direction of Frank L. Brown, directly representing the Association. The first meeting was held in New York December 7, 1911. At that meeting Mr. Brown stated that it was the purpose of the committee to investigate every side of the relationship of young people to the home, the Church, the Sunday school, and the community, and if possible report a plan that would save the waste caused by so many young people, particularly between the ages of fifteen and twenty, leaving the Sunday school. At that meeting letters were sent to members of the commission, asking them to submit questions for discussion.

The next full meeting of the commission was held in Cleveland, Ohio, January 15 and 16, 1912. The secretary presented a report showing the compilation of questions that had been presented by members of the commission, and it was voted to define the purpose of the commission as follows:

“How may the Sunday school efficiently serve the development of the country boy and girl in the adolescent period?”

There was a full discussion of methods of work to be undertaken, as well as on the general character of the enterprise. It was voted to confine the work of the commission to communities having a population of 2,500 and less and, so far as possible, to make a division in this field as between villages and the open country. The commission was divided into six sub-commissions and an Executive Committee. The list of members of these sub-commissions is appended.

I   THE INDIVIDUAL:

Dr. W. L. Anderson, *Chairman*.  
Dr. George A. Hubbell.  
Miss Anna Seaburg.

II  SUNDAY SCHOOL ORGANIZATION:

Dr. Joseph Clark, *Chairman*.  
Miss Eloise Snell.  
Dr. W. G. Frost.  
Dr. G. P. Williams.  
Ralph A. Felton.  
Fred Washburn.

III COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES:

Prof. W. A. McKeever, *Chairman*.  
Miss Jessie Field.  
E. W. Halpenny.



Prof. Ernest Burnham.  
Prof. Clark W. Hetherington.

IV LEADERSHIP:

Rev. N. W. Stroup, *Chairman*.  
Henry Yeigh.  
Prof. G. A. Bricker.

V TEACHING:

Prof. G. Walter Fiske, *Chairman*.  
Dr. Warren H. Wilson.  
Dr. T. N. Carver.  
Paul S. Dietrich.

VI SURVEY:

Dr. Warren H. Wilson, *Chairman*.  
Ralph A. Felton.  
Albert E. Roberts.  
Rev. George Frederick Wells.

VII EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Dr. K. L. Butterfield.  
Albert E. Roberts.  
Dr. W. L. Anderson.

At a full meeting of the commission, held in Cleveland, Ohio, March 11, 1913, each sub-commission reported in writing through its chairman. Each report was gone over by the whole commission, changes suggested, and the report approved. These reports appear in the body of the report, and have also been summarized in order that the reader may have, in brief space, access to the material gathered

by this commission. The Executive Committee also has made a report based in part upon reports of sub-commissions and designed principally to summarize the question from the large, general point of view.

## CHAPTER III

### CONDITIONS WHICH AFFECT ADOLESCENTS IN RURAL DISTRICTS

What are the existing conditions in rural districts which affect adolescents? The Department of Church and Country Life of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions has directed Surveys in rural districts in the States of Illinois, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Indiana, Tennessee, Kentucky, Maryland, and Ohio. The investigators employed have gathered their facts by a personal study of the field, one man spending two or three months in each county. Over sixty counties have been covered. These studies were intended to deal with the entire country life question without special attention to adolescents. Some of the information collected which has to do with adolescents furnishes the data for this paper. No pretense is made that the results are complete, that is, as affecting the entire country, though they present the facts affecting the communities studied. It seems advisable to have such a survey made dealing exclusively with adolescents. We would recommend it to be made by personal study instead of by the questionnaire method.

**Economic Conditions.**—The price of farm prop-

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erty in the United States has increased 100.5 per cent from the years 1900 to 1910 (U. S. Census Reports). This has made it more difficult for young people to get land of their own, the result of which has been to accelerate their going to the city. The increase in the urban population from 1900 to 1910 was 34.8 per cent, while the rural population has increased only 11.2 per cent. If the villages were deducted from the rural population in the majority of the states there would be a decrease. Young people generally do not leave the farm for the city until they are ready to "settle down," at which time they find from an economic standpoint that it is easier to get started in the city. This is illustrated by the following table from the United States Census of 1910:

<i>Age Period</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Population</i>	
	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>
All ages .....	100.0	100.0
Under 5 years.....	9.9	13.0
5 to 9 years.....	8.9	12.1
10 to 14 years .....	8.5	11.1
15 to 19 years .....	9.4	10.3
20 to 24 years .....	10.7	9.1
25 to 29 years .....	10.2	7.8
30 to 34 years .....	8.7	6.6
35 to 44 years .....	14.4	11.2
45 to 54 years .....	9.8	8.5
55 to 64 years .....	5.4	5.6
65 years and over.....	4.0	4.6

Another effect of the sudden increase in the price of farm property has been to increase the proportion of tenants. This rapid increase in tenantry has had a deteriorating effect on social institutions in the country, due to the low income and the tempo-

rary residence of the population. For example, in Butler County, Ohio, where 42 per cent of the farmer population were tenants, only 22 per cent of the church members were tenants. In Sullivan County, Missouri, in forty-five families studied it was found that only 10 per cent of the hired men and 28 per cent of the tenants attended church one-half of the time or more, while the proportion of farmers owning sixty acres of land and over who attended half the time or more ranged from 40 to 53 per cent. The same facts were revealed in Tennessee. Practically the same conditions regarding church membership and attendance in relation to land ownership was shown in Ohio as in Missouri. The proportion of tenants enrolled in churches was lower than that of the owner's group of the smallest-sized farms.

It is very encouraging to study the incomes of the successful farmers. Such a study convinces us that farming can be made one of the most paying, as well as one of the most enjoyable, occupations. Not all farmers, unfortunately, are well trained and successful, but we believe it is the duty of country churches and Sunday schools to develop better farmers and thus to strengthen the efficiency of the country church and Sunday school.

Though the income of farmers is large in some instances, the average is smaller than is generally supposed. This low income is due, among other things, to the necessity of a large investment, owing to the high price of land; to unscientific methods of farming, due, in part, to the influence of the city on

our rural education and religion; and to the profits of a succession of middlemen made possible by increased organization in the city and the lack of cooperation in the country, due to the increasing lack of leaders found there and the failure to recognize what leaders there are.

Regarding the profits of middlemen, President Dabney of the University of Cincinnati is responsible for the statement that for every dollar which the consumer pays for the farmer's produce only 35 cents gets back to the farmer.

In view of these economic changes it is evident that there is needed better methods of farming and more cooperation among farmers. A new emphasis by the Sunday school on the teachings of the Bible which deal with farm life and the religion of the farmer will undoubtedly greatly influence country boys to love the life on the farm, and to point them toward educational institutions which will better equip them for successful farm life.

When the Israelites crossed the Jordan, leaving their nomadic life to become farmers, the only motive which was strong enough to overcome their newly developing individualism and make them cooperate against oppression was the religious motive, and as the leaders in their cooperation came from a threshing floor or a palm tree in their midst so must the leaders of the American farmer be raised up from the farm, not imported. It is generally agreed that nothing is more needed in the country than leaders, and no institution has a greater opportunity for the developing of leaders than the rural Sunday

school, for it is the only democratic institution found there in which all the family come together regularly. Its meetings come regularly, while preaching services in the country would not average twice a month.

In Gibson County, Tenn., in the 82 country churches, none have preaching every Sunday, only two have it half the time, 74 one-fourth of the time, and the remainder less often. The Sunday school gives an opportunity for self-expression to all, and it deals with the members of the family while in their impressionable age. For the rural Sunday school to develop the much needed leadership it must look toward the organization of all classes, beginning with the intermediates, with a definite program and the substitution of open discussion in class for the lecture and moralizing method.

**Educational Conditions.**—It is generally understood that country people do not have educational advantages equal to the people in the city. From the report of the Commissioner of Education (1909, Chapter XVI, U. S. Bureau of Education) we learn that the average total expenditure on the education of the city pupil for one year is \$32.28; of the country pupil \$16.52. These figures are somewhat misleading, as they include interest on investment in land and buildings which are more expensive in the city, the advantages of which may not be so superior. Yet this report includes in the country classification all villages under 4,000 population. Deducting these villages, the facts reveal the true condition of the education of the farmer's children. In Gibson

County, Tenn., the per capita cost of tuition for the country pupil was found to be \$5.77 per year; for the pupil in the village \$10.00. In Webster County, Kentucky, a rural county, the average annual cost for teaching each white pupil was found to be \$5.89.

This discrimination shows itself in the length of term, in the material equipment, and in the preparation of the teachers. The average length of term in the country schools in the three counties in Indiana (Davies, Boone, and Marshall) which we studied was 6  $\frac{7}{12}$  months, while in the villages of the same counties it was 8  $\frac{4}{7}$  months. Only five schools in Webster County, Kentucky, have more than a six-months' term. The average salary of country teachers in Gibson County, Tenn., is \$45.50 per month; of village and city teachers is \$52.00. In the three Indiana counties the country teachers average \$2.63 per day; the village teachers \$3.21. The country schools were similarly lacking in material equipment.

If the function of the school is to train pupils for the environment in which they are to live it is generally agreed that country boys should be taught agriculture. In the three Indiana counties there was one country school teaching agriculture and none in the Missouri counties. Ohio and several other states have recently passed a law making provision for agriculture to be taught in all schools.

The improvement of the country schools rests largely with each community. The greatest improvement in country schools at the present time is coming through consolidation. This solves the



problem of material equipment and better teachers, and does much toward developing the community spirit.

In a study made in Tennessee it was found that country girls receive a higher education than the country boys. Fifty-two per cent of the girls went through the eighth grade, or beyond, as against 33.5 per cent of the boys. This difference in education seems to make the girls either unwilling or unfit to become wives of the boys with whom they have grown up. Out of two hundred country boys between twenty and thirty years old we find that 72.5 per cent of them have become farmers, while of the girls who grew up in the same community and are of the same age only 54.1 per cent of them have become farmers' wives. Thirteen and two-tenths per cent are wives of men in other occupations, 1.9 per cent are students, 1.2 per cent are clerks in stores, 5.7 per cent are teaching, and 23.9 per cent are at home. (The average age when girls get married in this community is 20 years.)

This same intensive study showed that the boys who left the farm were those with the poorest and with the best education, while those with the average education remained. Only 11 per cent of the boys who have stayed on the farm have gone beyond the eighth grade. On the other hand, 30 per cent of those who left the farm did not go beyond the fifth grade, while only 28 per cent of those who remained did not go beyond this grade. Sixty-one per cent of those who remained on the farm belong in this middle class, that is, those who dropped out

somewhere between the fifth and eighth grades, while only 30 per cent of those who left fall in this same class.

From this it appears that the rural districts are losing their best and their poorest, thus developing a dead-level type in which leaders are scarce and with little inclination to follow what leaders there are. The poor leave probably because they cannot get started. The best leave because their education has made them dislike farming.

**Social Conditions.**—We leave to the psychologists the question of the isolated country districts developing different characteristics in adolescents than the congested city. We are certain, however, that the opportunities afforded by country institutions for meeting those characteristics which are developed differ greatly from those afforded by the city. Instruction in hygiene, which the physical development of the early teens demands, is not provided for in the country. In this same period of rapid physical growth and activity, when hero studies taught by young teachers are needed to meet the spiritual demands, we find in most country Sunday schools the young adolescents are taught by an elderly person "who can keep a strong hand on them," and who is using the uniform lessons because they claim the graded lessons, with their present minute divisions, are not adapted to such small schools. The personal religious devotion of many of these teachers to their pupils does much to overcome the defects in the system.

The sense of independence which comes in the

late teens is more marked in the country than in the city, especially so in boys. The girls work and plan and share each day's experience with their mothers. The boys are alone with a team in the field many working days. This independence is shown by the way they indiscriminately claim things on the farm, such as colts and calves. Some farmers happily meet this desire of their sons by giving them the returns from one of the fields or perhaps a share in the live stock. Unfortunately most country boys meet with continual disappointment in their attempt at ownership, and again and again comes to them the thought, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me."

While the city boy demands many organizations and many writers advocate the same for the country, the studies which we have made so far do not indicate the need of many separate organizations. Unless the leaders are exceptional most of these separate organizations are not successful. This lack of success may be due to the fact that most organizations come from the city. It may be due to the unsocializing influence of country life. We are led to believe after studying the organizations of several hundred churches that there are far too many separate church organizations in the country now. It is difficult for separate organizations to succeed in the country churches. The people feel they should have them, yet most of these organizations are in a temporary state of existence. While the Survey was being made in the 211 Indiana churches 4 per cent of the country churches had

men's Brotherhoods, 25 per cent had Ladies' Aid Societies, 8 per cent had Ladies' Missionary Societies, and 12 per cent had other young people's organizations.

What the young people in the late teens need instead is a publicly recognized and independent share in the ordinary work. We need fewer separate organizations, but a share for the young people in existing organizations. Young men would much prefer to be given a chance to take care of the church property or repair the church building, build the hitch racks, plant the trees and mow the weeds on the church grounds than to work at home while their fathers do it. Their much developed spirit of independence makes them prefer a share in the church's work to its prayers and solicitations for their soul's welfare.

If there is a successful Grange or other agricultural organization in the community, why not have a young people's branch or special nights for the young, instead of making so many new clubs which die with the seasons? Instead of having half a dozen missionary and temperance organizations, why not have a missionary and temperance committee in the organized Sunday school class? Instead of leaving the athletic and social interests of the young people to the sporadic efforts of some envied "leader," why not have an athletic and social committee a part of some already existing institution, which institution is permanently located in the country?

In the late teens the anti-girl idea gives way to courting. In asking the reason for the discontinu-

ance of some young people's organizations in country churches we are often told that "it got to be nothing but a courtin' institution, so we stopped it." Dancing is the most successful "courtin' institution" yet invented for rural young people. It brings them together entirely apart from the old folks, and it furnishes an activity which makes them forget their feeling of clumsiness when they are together.

Country churches universally condemn dancing, yet in many communities it is the only popular institution found among rural country folk. In many cases it is the only typical young people's institution. Our limited study indicates that the control of the social life of the people in the late teens rests with the church, the Sunday school, or any other institution which will provide for the healthy comingling of the young men and the young women, and will treat domestic life problems from a natural standpoint.

In one county in Indiana where we made a special study of the relation of the church to social life we found that of those churches furnishing social life 59 per cent were not only maintaining themselves, but were growing, while only 20 per cent of the churches not furnishing it were growing. But in two of the Indiana counties only one-fifth of the country churches had more than one social event per year. In the three Indiana counties, Boone County ranks first, Daviess second, and Marshall third, in the proportion of population enrolled as church members. The order is the same for the proportion of social life furnished by the church.

The order is reversed for the proportion of social life furnished by commercial agencies. In totaling the results in the three counties we calculated that only 29 per cent of the social life found in the community is furnished by the church. Forty-six per cent of the social life provided by the church (except Sunday school picnics) is furnished for pay. The church has not conceived the notion of spending money for social affairs. Only one-third of a cent in every dollar of the church's money is spent in providing social life.

With regard to the church and social life the country churches are on the defensive. They generally do little more than condemn it, yet only 8 per cent were found to be opposed to all kinds of social life. Instead of being told to "provide social life" they need a program as to "how to provide it." This is easily arranged if there is a resident minister, but in nineteen counties in Ohio only 6 per cent of the country churches had resident ministers. Until this situation is changed the Sunday school must do much in this line. In a study of over a thousand Sunday schools we have been convinced that the local Sunday school officers are as thoroughly agreed that there is a dearth of social life in their community, and that they are as badly in need of it, as are the "rural experts" who compose church and Sunday school commissions. The question the Sunday school people continually ask is, "How shall we do it?" If a little pamphlet were furnished the Sunday school officers telling them just how to conduct a Field Meet for the boys, de-

scribing each event and giving simplified rules for the same, it would meet a real need. If a suggestive social program could be worked out for these communities they would welcome it. Such a program would need to smack of the soil, however. The words of a young Indiana farmer illustrate a general condition, "The last dance we had in this community was seventeen years ago, the last church social two years ago, the last Sunday school social a year ago, but what can we do about it?" If recreation offers an opportunity for developing self-expression, for teaching morals, and for training the young for their place in the Kingdom of God on the earth, surely a great chance has now come for religious people in the rural districts.

**Religious Conditions.**—Having used the word church to designate the congregation, both worshipping and studying, we now must limit our discussion of religious conditions to the relationship which the Sunday school bears to them. The best country Sunday schools are those which report at county conventions, and the best counties are represented at state gatherings. From such we are apt to get our impressions. No one ever goes to a convention or a committee meeting to make a report for the boys and girls not in the Sunday school.

In Gibson County, Tenn., we found that 60 per cent of the children of school age were not in the Sunday school. The country Sunday schools were much weaker than those in the villages. More than five-sevenths of the children in the villages are in the Sunday school; in the country less than one-

fourth. In Boone and Marshall Counties, Indiana, where the Sunday schools are far above the average, two out of every five of all the children in the teen ages are not enrolled in the Sunday school.

There are 7,250,000 people in the rural districts of the United States in these ages. If the Sunday schools throughout the country could suddenly become as efficient as these Indiana schools there would still be nearly three million adolescents in the rural districts who are not enrolled in any Sunday school.

Important as the adolescent problem is to these country churches, we find that in Indiana only 3 cents out of every dollar of the church's money is spent on the religious education of the young people in the teen ages. Only 9 per cent of the country churches have more than one room, yet denominationalism has built many extra buildings. If, instead of building thirty-three new church buildings in Gibson County, Tenn., in the next ten years, as they have done in the last ten, with little increase in the population, they should spend this amount in building extra rooms on the churches now standing, which rooms could be used for the religious education of the adolescent pupils in the Sunday schools, the results would be interesting.

The importance of the work with adolescents is shown in a study of those who joined the churches in the three Indiana counties during one year by profession of faith. Out of the 551 people half were under 16 years of age and 75 per cent were under 24. Not only is the question of joining the church



settled in the adolescent years, but the so-called "Men and Religion" problem is largely accounted for during these years. In 211 Indiana churches we found that 40.1-3 per cent of all church members were males, and 39.2 per cent of all church members under the age of 21 were males. The proportion of males in the churches is settled before the members reach the age of 21. In 173 churches in Marshall and Boone counties 46 have no young men in them under 21 years of age. This losing of the young men on the part of the church seems a somewhat recent development in Tennessee. Here 72 per cent of the heads of families were church members, 75 per cent of the females between the ages of 20 and 30, while only 45 per cent of the males between those ages are church members. These cold figures certainly call loudly for active interest and sympathetic prayers.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE INDIVIDUAL

The Committee on the Individual appointed by the Commission for the Study of the Adolescent Period as Related to the Country Sunday School was asked to answer two questions: How do country boys and girls differ from city boys and girls? What are the causes of such differences? We are charged with an investigation to discover facts rather than the construction of a program, but our conclusions cannot be separated from practical suggestions, which we submit to the Executive Committee for final action.

It will be convenient to begin with a survey of the possible causes of peculiar characteristics in country boys and girls.

#### FORMATIVE RURAL INFLUENCES

Any study of character must make large use of heredity. Country boys and girls are what they are because they are the children of country fathers and mothers. The rural line is rarely broken. In the city there is a double ancestry; some of the children having an urban ancestry for many generations, others being born of parents recently trans-

planted to the city, and others still combining the two strains. In the country heredity tends to accentuate the rural type. If a rural peculiarity is developed it will be perpetuated and intensified; it will not be leveled and dissipated as in the city. Urban character, so far as it results from inherited qualities, will be more fully standardized; rural character will be peculiar, inelastic, tough-fibered—in a word, rustic.

It should not be forgotten that country children have an unbroken line of descent through countless generations of rural folk reaching back to the Garden of Eden. Country people are the typical human species, urban folk being a late and local variation. Cities are exceptional, and, in their present magnitude, modern. The urban type, therefore, is less deeply rooted; it is more plastic. Human nature, as a product of ages, is found in the country. We cannot follow out the implications of this evident fact; suffice it to say that we may look for a rural character of some definiteness, showing considerable tenacity, and retaining a kind of consistency in many locations and periods. Here, at least, is a foundation for rural conservatism.

The city has received great accessions from the country; the people who have removed from city to country are negligible. What is known as the rural exodus is a most striking social phenomenon. It has wrought serious changes in the rural population. More than a process of subtraction is involved. If three hundred people in a community of one thousand go elsewhere they take with them their char-

acters, and they leave behind their old neighbors with their peculiarities. The average rural community has lost its people in about this proportion, exceptional communities being reported whose losses aggregate six hundred, or even eight hundred in one thousand. Mere subtraction of qualities would be alarming, for it is probable that the vigorous, the ambitious, the daring are chosen for removal; but the change in rural character is really to be figured out as a complex problem in biology. This is a case of selective breeding. Had the population remained intact marriage would have unified its strata and heredity would have carried the whole mass of qualities to new generations. To perpetuate a species from a part must change its type. How far the present generation of boys and girls is modified by this selective process it is impossible to say. Assuming that those approximating the urban type go to the city, those who remain tend to develop a more distinct rural type. It is fair to suppose that this selection tends to make the country boys and girls, as we find them to-day, as a whole somewhat lacking in energy, alertness, initiative, and vivacity.

This conclusion is modified by at least four considerations. Economic pressure has forced out of the rural community great numbers of inferior persons, as well as many of the superior sort. The invasion of the foreigner adds new blood, and, it must be acknowledged, ordinarily new habits of industry, frugality, and primitive efficiency. Frontier communities assemble aggressive, restless, and com-

petent settlers, being established from seed sifted out of the older rural sections. Selection itself may be overborne by influences of the times which lift otherwise sinking populations.

The degree of isolation is important in the development of rural character. Isolation in itself is not an influence; it is only the description of conditions which exert positive influence, or of conditions that bar out positive influences. An isolated community or family is subjected to the forces of the local environment, and is cut off from the influences of a larger world. The result of isolation is an accentuation of the rural type as contrasted with the standardized type of the city. There is also a tendency in isolated persons to diversify the rural type by response to a great variety of local conditions. There seems to be a possibility of preserving, perhaps of originating, more human variants, filling the whole range between queerness and genius, where individuals are protected by isolation. In modern conditions isolation need not be harmful, although it is still a serious disadvantage in many localities. It protects some good qualities, but on the whole it tends to arrest progress.

Of a different sort from the contribution of heredity and selection and isolation to rural character is the influence of nature. This is positive and immediate. It acts to the end of life, but it affects the development of adolescence. The country has an environment of nature; the city is artificial, conventional, human. To be born and bred in the country gives a closeness of contact with nature which

must have large results. Nature is a stubborn opponent, and she teaches by harsh lessons. She meets man with rock and soil that resist the plough. She is pitiless with her exactions, ruthless in hurling her predatory hosts upon the farmer's crops, inexorable when she decrees frost or drought or storm. Whoever will conquer her must be resourceful, alert, active. The arbitrariness of nature excites resentment at times, but on the whole it is a most effective discipline.

Incalculable as nature is in her combinations and caprices, she is orderly in her own intricate way, and all her performances are accordant with law. She challenges to find out her laws, and she promises rich rewards to such as will submissively obey. She trains to a perception of cause and effect, and she compels the payment of a fixed price. She will allow no cheating; she gives no encouragement to smartness. It is not easy to strike the balance between country and city. In the city the contrivances and institutions of men are easily comprehensible, so that there is less of baffling mystery; but, on the other hand, what men contrive and establish allows rich profits to dishonesty and gives to the tricky rare opportunity. We shall not err if we attribute to nature a powerful influence for the virtues that make men solid, trustworthy, and effective. And then we must add that many of her laws are so secret that only highly trained men can make headway against her seeming caprices. All this makes character, and country boys and girls are developed by this experience. This influence of nature

goes far to explain that inexhaustible procession of youth from the country, emerging from obscurity in the old-time vigor and advancing to the leadership of cities with familiar mastery.

Nature is beautiful. Some sense of wonder and joy is awakened in country children, who feel what they do not understand and cannot express. Boys and girls might observe more, appreciate more. Nature waits for a generation of lovers who will frankly confess their devotion. The coming age will break the stolidity of the rural habit and drive out shame for honest emotion. Here is opportunity for boundless improvement, but can any one affirm that nature has offered her charm to those who live nearest her without effect?

Nature inspires reverence. She makes the appeal of authority, but she does it worthily. Those who have richest experience come to feel that nature is divine, being the manifestation of a personal presence and the expression of a real providence. Dependent for daily and hourly favor, country people are deeply religious. God is near and accessible for the trusting heart.

The influence of nature is, perhaps, the strongest of the many forces of the rural environment. Personal forces in the country are very effective. The imitative boy or girl has closest contact with a few older persons. The character of these is vividly conceived, and distinct and sharp individuality cuts into plastic adolescence like a die. And there are also evil characters that spread sin like a contagion in the country. These may be massed in groups or



gangs, which are less counteracted than in the city, offering, it may be, the only jolly fellowship. Social institutions work differently in the country; they are less highly organized and less commanding. They are at once feebler and stronger—feebler because of slender resources, stronger because of closeness of personal contact. At least the impact of social forces is different in city and country. The total influence tends to differentiate the rural and urban type.

Heredity, selection, the degree of isolation, the influence of nature, the personal and social forces of the environment conspire to produce a rural type of character that is clearly distinguishable from the urban type, and this difference must inevitably appear in the adolescent period. Add the fact that in the country a single vocation molds the whole population, yielding development, exciting discontent, inspiring attitudes and interests by its own character and fortune. In the general pursuit of agriculture there is a ruling condition such as the city does not possess. Whether they love it or hate it the farm is a portentous fact in the experience of country boys and girls.

We are convinced by such facts as this survey inadequately summarizes that the individual with which the Sunday school deals has traits and tendencies that compel a wise pedagogy to take note of them. It is not expedient to standardize methods for all schools. A commission for the special study of the rural field is justifiable, not only because or-

ganization and procedure are determined by the smallness of the Sunday school, but also because the material out of which the Sunday school is built differs in country and city.

We accept the statement of one of our correspondents: "There are so many phases of rural life which have determined the peculiar trend of the rural mind that the psychology of the country boy and girl is a study by itself." And we approve also the limitation urged by another correspondent: "There is more difference between different individuals than can be assumed to exist between the city children as a whole, on one hand, and country children as a whole, on the other." We do not believe that country boys and girls are so deeply stamped with rural characters that if they remove to the city they cannot ordinarily take on the urban traits. We do not suggest any finality nor fatality, but only the practical wisdom of adapting instruction to existing tendencies and of attempting to supplement where the rural training has left the character one-sided or defective.

We pass now from theory to fact. In order to determine what differences distinguish country boys and girls from city boys and girls we sent a questionnaire to experts of various sorts who were presumed to know the subject at first hand. This was somewhat widely distributed, but comparatively few replies were received, probably because of the novelty and difficulty of the questions. We have received replies from forty-four persons, of whom

thirteen are educators; eleven State or County Young Men's Christian Association secretaries; five ministers; and the other persons related to the problem in various ways. We disclaim any authority for the testimony of these men except what belongs to their opinion. We think that their judgment, sitting as a jury, may be a safe guide in the shaping of policy and method. It was not our purpose to test boys and girls, but to ascertain the views of careful observers who have had opportunity to know in what way adolescence develops in country and city. We record here a caution from Prof. Edwin D. Starbuck, and we concede the peculiar value of material gathered as he suggests. For our purpose, nevertheless, we consider the mature judgment of workers and scholars concerning boys and girls of more significance than the results of any self-analysis of immature minds, that could not possibly comprehend either their own distinction or the multifarious influences and relations in the mesh of which they have been fashioned. Professor Starbuck writes:

"If you will allow a confession, it is that the more I have worked at the questionnaire business myself, the more I am convinced that questions which ask for opinions about things can never catch up genuine psychological stuff. If, on the contrary, you could get among the country boys and girls, gain their confidence, and secure from a hundred of them their personal confessions, supplemented by careful observations of the same number of city boys and girls, you would be obtaining real psychological data."

We make no claim that we have collected psychological data. Our observation being limited and our judgment fallible, we have tried to check error by consulting as many observers as could be easily reached.

#### DIGEST OF REPLIES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

I. What differences have you observed between country boys and girls and city boys and girls in the adolescent period?

The replies are chiefly significant from their diversity. About half of our correspondents passed over the question, thinking it sufficiently covered by their answers to the second question. It was intended that under this head free range should be given for original comment. It is as if in conference one and another had spoken with but little repetition. The composite picture may be sketched thus: Country boys and girls mature slowly; they are physically strong; they are thoughtful and stable in character; they are less restless and nervous. But they may be timid; moody, through isolation; awkward physically and socially. They are self-reliant, resourceful, and individualistic, but reverent, religious, and easily guided. They are more romantic, more idealistic, more conscientious. They are defective in culture, but superior in things fundamental. City adolescents have more self-assertion and more conceit. In this complex characterization the agreement seems to be that the material, raw and crude as it is, possesses virility and stability,

and that rural adolescence is specially promising by reason of the open mind and the idealistic spirit.

II. Add your opinion on the following points:

(a) Are country boys and girls more inclined to industry?

Yes, 27; no, 3; doubtful, 6; more industrious by necessity, but not more inclined, 7; more industrious except in villages, 1.

The agreement is that boys and girls on farms are more habituated to industry, and the preponderant opinion is that this results normally in a real interest in work and a genuine love for it. To this is added the caution that the village must be considered by itself.

(b) Are country boys and girls more serious and ambitious?

Yes, 27; no, 3; doubtful, 7; more serious but not more ambitious, 6; more ambitious for the unusual, 1.

The agreement is that they are more serious and more ambitious, with the reservation that a few think otherwise, and that some others recognize the peculiar vigor of ambition in city adolescents of the superior sort. With this comes the suggestion that seriousness may be mere introspection and self-pity.

(c) Are country boys and girls more silent and disinclined to talk?

Yes, 28; no, 3; doubtful, 5; to strangers only, 6; in presence of adults, 1; in hill countries, 1.

There is general recognition of the habit of silence, with the discovery on the part of some observers that country boys and girls talk freely upon acquaintance and by themselves. This means that there is failure to talk in consequence of shyness or lack of convention or the absence of encouragement from older persons. One suspects an undue estimate of the virtue of silence on the part of young people in the country home, especially on the farms.

(d) Are country boys and girls more interested in play?

Yes, 4; no, 15; doubtful, 9; yes, but no chance, 2; yes, but ignorant of organized play, 10; country play more complicated, 1; different in expression, 1; more inventive, 1; more natural, 1.

The agreement plainly is that there is no lack of the play instinct in the country, but a serious inferiority in the interest that develops by cultivation and practice.

(e) Are country boys and girls more observant?

Yes, 16; no, 12; doubtful, 10; yes, of nature, 2; yes, of natural objects, not social forms, 1; not of special things, 1; not of details and things outside of work, 1; different in expression, 1.

There is a slight preponderance of opinion in favor of the more exact observation of country boys and girls, with the suggestion that this is partly a discipline of the environment and of rural activities.

(f) Are country boys and girls slower in mental action?

Yes, 25; no, 7; doubtful, 4; in unfamiliar lines, 2; in early years only, 2; except when excited, 1; more deliberate, not slower in comprehension, 1; not in practical things, 1; differ in expression, 1.

A minority makes a discriminating protest against the common view that rural adolescents are slower in mental action.

(g) Are country boys and girls more deferential to authority?

Yes, 33; no, 4; doubtful, 4; yes, with crude rebellion, 1; no, except when it is policy, 1; differ in expression, 1.

There is only a faint protest against the general verdict that they are more deferential.

(h) Are country boys and girls more self-centered and self-willed?

Yes, 19; no, 16; doubtful, 5; more self-centered but not more self-willed, 3; no, but more self-reliant, 1.

The replies are entirely indecisive.

(i) Are country boys and girls more easily influenced?

Yes, 13; no, 15; doubtful, 9; yes, by right persons, 3; yes, by special appeals, 1; not at first, 3.

Opinions about equally divided.

(j) Are country boys and girls more emotional?

Yes, 5; no, 26; doubtful, 9; more elemental, 1; of finer sensibility, 1; do not show emotion, 1; not keyed to so high nervous pitch, 1.

The common view that rural adolescents are more

stolid is confirmed with recognition by some observers of a peculiar richness in depths beyond customary expression.

(k) Are country boys and girls more conscientious?

Yes, 28; no, 5; doubtful, 10; by local code only, 1.

The preponderating opinion is clear in favor of their greater conscientiousness.

III. Does the series of adolescent changes as traced by modern psychology apply to country boys and girls in the same manner as to city boys and girls?

Yes, 17; no, 5; doubtful, 5; according to responses called for, 5; less marked, 3; later, 1; later and less marked, 2; periods differ, 1; stronger restraints in the country, 1; less stimulated by social environment, 1; more exceptional cases, 1; expression differs, 1; sentimental tendency is earlier, 1.

On the whole the verdict is that the series of changes is the same in country and city so far as it depends upon a natural order of development, but that it is modified by the rural environment as it is altered in other ways by the urban environment.

IV. Is this course of development retarded in country boys and girls in comparison with city boys and girls?

Yes, 21; no, 5; doubtful, 10; to some extent, 2; in some particulars, 1; nearer the normal, 1; retarded in pre-adolescence, hastened in post-adolescence, 1; begins earlier, lasts longer, 1; manifesta-



tion is different, 1; social and play phases are late, 1.

A large majority believes that adolescent changes are retarded in the country, but this varies according to the conditions that act as causes.

V. Is the religious life marked by the crisis of conversion in the country to a greater extent than in the city?

Yes, 17; no, 10; doubtful, 14; no, because the stimuli are weak, but there is more latent religion; yes, because of revival traditions, but no difference when Decision Day is used; in some places. Each of last three replies, 1.

The answers are indecisive. Evidently the experience of conversion depends upon environment and teaching, so that location in city or country of itself has little influence. Probably the religious revival is more general in the country.

VI. Does the gang spirit prevail in country boys and girls so as to be considered and used as is the case with city boys and girls?

Yes, 10; no, 23; doubtful, 1; yes, in boys, but groups vary according to age, 1; yes, in small towns and villages, 2; yes, but conditions are unfavorable, 7.

As a matter under observation the gang spirit seems to be less; as a tendency manifest according to opportunity for association the gang spirit may be assumed in the country.

VII. Is discontent with the farm and desire for the city a phase of adolescent ferment, confusion, and expansion in such a sense that adolescent rest-

lessness is a significant contributing cause of the rural exodus?

Yes, 14; no, 8; doubtful, 4; only in later adolescence, 1; hard conditions in country main factor, 9; attraction of city chief influence, 4; desire for change and ambition fundamental, 3; lack of play in the country important, 1.

A considerable minority recognize the contribution of adolescent changes to the restless spirit. These alone would have little or no effect. Combining with rural repulsions and urban attractions they tend to increase the movement cityward.

VIII. Treat in your own way any distinctive traits of country boys and girls, or any peculiar conditions in their lives that call for special methods in the Sunday school.

We should take note of (a) smallness of schools; (b) insufficient social opportunities; (c) conversational slowness; (d) the rural opportunity for uninterrupted thought and intimate knowledge of human nature. Special suggestions are (a) magnify phases of life in the larger world, such as heroism, patriotism, citizenship; (b) make larger and more inclusive plans; (c) exalt distinctly religious training; (d) give more attention to youngest children; (e) stimulate discussion; (f) repress crudities.

IX. What modifications of the Sunday school are required by the rural environment in so far as it tends to develop boys and girls of a distinctive type?

(a) The rural Sunday school needs a new curriculum of study.

Truths of religion must be interpreted in terms of rural life.

Problems arising from life and surroundings in the country.

Literature and teaching with rural illustrations.

Contentment with rural life.

Less of the abstract, formal, and mystical.

Biblical treatment of economic and social life.

Lessons in cooperation.

Appreciation of nature.

(b) There is reiterated demand for better provisions for social life:

By the organized class with social opportunities.

By athletics and community games.

By training for social service.

By sociological instruction.

By personal efforts to meet individual reticence.

By encouraging sociability and organizing social life.

(c) Many suggestions recognize the special needs in the country of standard improvements.

Better pedagogy and better teaching.

The graded Sunday school. Avoidance of heterogeneous groups.

Making programs for the year.

A missionary department.

Monthly councils and committee methods.

The training class for teachers.

Recognition of patriotic days and great events.

Use of pictures.

A broader hospitality for varied types of character.

More appreciation and use of the resident pastorate.

More preparation of lessons at home.

Male teachers for adolescent boys.

Christian personal leadership.

#### OPINIONS WORTH PRESERVING

"It is well to have a high standard and place it before all our schools. When the country child becomes aroused, there is no limit to its attainment."

"Old folks are so humdrum in the country that youth finds it hard to put up with them."

"I suggest an effort to get bigger areas centralized, with one big church, a parish house, an athletic field, and some supervision besides that of the minister."

"The farm must give up some portion of the time to recreation, and the cravings of youth for a larger life must be met."

"I believe that the same lessons, the same class organization that succeed in the city will succeed in the country. The untrained leaders and the small numbers in many country Sunday schools make up-to-date methods difficult or impossible to apply, but fundamentally the boy is not different."

"The Sunday school calls too much attention to subjective conditions and makes country boys too conscious of their own souls. A healthy boy should know no more about his soul than about his liver. He should be taught a religion of action, of achievement, of production."

"If proper recognition were given the desire to reach out into the new, we should not have the desire for new things culminating in so many of the boys leaving the farm."

"It is an amazing spectacle to see how discontented country boys are. Long days, monotony, etc., drive boys out."

"There is great need of a country teacher and social worker combined in one person."

"I believe very strongly that in day school and in Sunday school it is of absolute importance to make our boys and girls feel that they are part of a great world-movement, and that their life and their character affect life everywhere."

"I should like to see a fifteen-minute intermission between the church and Sunday school sessions, that ample opportunity may be given for social intercourse."

"The finer feelings of the country youth need finer treatment."

"The Sunday school needs an appeal along normal and spiritual lines to the independent convictions and untrammelled ideals of the boys and girls of the country, who need not restraining, but unloosing and developing."

"The Sunday school needs to use its outdoor opportunities in study and social life. The sweep of God in the big life of the country adolescent is an immense advantage over the commercialized and hemmed-in life of the city adolescent."

"A country boy thrives under the advantages of his disadvantages, and the city boy suffers under the disadvantages of his advantages. In the development of the boy, I feel that he should be naturalized, then humanized. Association with nature makes one frank, open, honest. After the boy has acquired some of these elementary virtues, then he is fitted to go to the city to become humanized. I think this contrast to a certain extent is true—that religion is of the country; Christianity of the city. Naturalization is of the country; humanization of the city. The home life is of the country; society

life of the city. The raw material is of the country; the manufactured product of the city."

"Taken out of his habitat, the city boy is quite apt to be helpless. He knows a good deal, but has learned to do so little that he is handicapped when thrown on his own resources. The country boy has little done for him, and is left so much to his own initiative in field and forest that he becomes a man in judgment somewhat earlier than his city cousin."

"In the case of the city boy the plethora of sights, sounds and human stimuli check the work of the imagination; the reverse is largely true of the country boy."

"The movement cityward is almost wholly an economic movement. As economic conditions in the country are improved, the exodus is checked. To-day there is a large drift of country boys to the agricultural colleges and back to the farms."

"The adolescent development begins earlier with country boys and girls, but it lasts longer, and each phase of the development is prolonged. For example, one can keep together boys and girls of widely varying ages in the country better than in the city."

"Individual prowess, individual success, yes, and individual failure, are elements of life that the countryman understands. The country needs to develop a social consciousness, and at no time can this be done so well as in the period of adolescence when conditions are psychologically right for such development. The rural Sunday school should more and more emphasize the social gospel. The Sunday school should be a cooperative social body, and each class should place special emphasis upon socializing influences. The spirit of cooperation should take the place of the old spirit of individual competition. Efforts should be made to develop a group

consciousness to replace the old individual consciousness."

"The boys in the country are better developed physically than the boys in the city; boys in the city are, perhaps, a little more agile, a little more graceful, but not so strong, not so self-dependent, not so independent. A well-trained and well-educated boy in the city is usually far in advance at eighteen of the country boy who has had fair chances at education. But in general the country boy knows more than the city boy, is acquainted with more things, has much more valuable general knowledge, not upon society, nor politics, nor history, but upon the doings of life in the world of nature. He is less graceful than the city boy, and is, therefore, likely in his presence to seem a little awkward and to appear somewhat shy. It is not shyness, but only a disinclination to make a fool of himself. To him the ordinary city boy is enough of a fool, and he has no desire to make a fool of himself. The boy in the city is better developed socially, but the boy in the country has developed more selfhood than the boy in the town. He has been thrown back upon himself at every turn, has studied himself, and, though perhaps he has had no guide in that study, he has an unconscious knowledge of himself which the city boy seldom possesses. He is usually more sober, more steady, more reliable, less quick and active."

"Before the age of fourteen the business of the country Sunday school teacher is to keep the boys interested in the Bible, the story of Jesus Christ, and in the songs and hymns that tell the story. From fourteen to eighteen what the country boy and girl need is to be 'personally conducted' to themselves and God by some one a little older than themselves who understands them and is interested in them and will give portions of his time to **them**,

who will meet them individually and socially and will see to it, before they get through, that they have laid hold upon God. There are thousands of things that can be done by a bright young pastor, by some teacher, or by some devoted man of younger years who will live with the boys, play with them, meet with them socially. The ideal situation is when a young married man and his wife give themselves socially to that group of young folks until they have won them."

"The type of inducements offered by the average rural Sunday school, considering the school as a whole, or the work of the teachers, is, in my judgment, absolutely divorced from the real interests of the rural youth. There is nothing there which these boys and girls really care about. It is my firm belief that, if vital connection can be made in any Sunday school between the things for which the Sunday school stands and the real interests of the young men and women, there will be no difficulty in holding them in the school."

#### THE PERSONNEL OF THE OPINIONS

The names of our correspondents will indicate the representative value of their replies.

Edward P. St. John, Professor, School of Religious Pedagogy, Hartford, Conn.

E. E. Reed, President, Lenox College, Hopkinton, Iowa.

E. N. Davenport, Dean and Director, College of Agriculture, University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill.

C. B. Robertson, Professor, School of Education, Pittsburgh University.



R. D. Emerson, Professor of Rural Education, University of Missouri.

C. C. Kohl, Professor of Education, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Mass.

George E. Vincent, President, University of Minnesota.

Mason E. Stone, Superintendent of Education of Vermont.

R. Watson Cooper, President, Upper Iowa University.

Rovillus R. Rogers, Superintendent of Schools, Jamestown, N. Y.

Henry F. Cope, General Secretary, Religious Education Association.

E. E. Balcomb, Professor, State Normal and Industrial College, Greensboro, N. C.

Rev. C. K. Powell, Field Representative, Presbyterian Home Missions in Northern Colorado.

Rev. Margaret B. Barnard, Rowe, Mass.

Rev. J. O. Ashenhurst, Author of "The Day of the Country Church."

Rev. J. N. Pardee, Bolton, Mass.

Rev. Joseph J. Erstine, Redwood Falls, Minn.

E. W. Halpenny, General Secretary, Ontario Sunday School Association.

Mrs. George O. Pratt, Rural Secretary, Wayne Co., Mich.

Miss Carrie B. Wasson, Rural Social Worker, Sanborn, N. Y.

Howard Hubbell, State Secretary Y. M. C. A., Wisconsin, County Work.

William D. McRae, State Secretary Y. M. C. A., New Jersey, County Work.

Fred M. Hill, State Secretary Y. M. C. A., New York, County Work.

J. H. Engle, General Secretary, Kansas Sunday School Association.

George A. Joplin, General Secretary, Kentucky Sunday School Association.

T. N. Carver, Professor of Economics, Harvard University.

John C. Carman, General Secretary, South Carolina Sunday School Association.

D. W. Wallace, Alliance, Neb.

Edwin D. Starbuck, Professor of Philosophy and Psychology, State University of Iowa.

#### SUMMARY OF DIGEST

The digest of the replies to our questions is an attempt to condense the entire expression of our correspondents without coloration from the views of the committee. After careful study of the replies and the digest of them, Dr. Hubbell expressed his personal judgment in the following statement, with which the other members of the committee agree substantially:

I. Country boys are, as a rule, more reserved than those in the city. They are slower of development and more likely to prefer solitude. In some fields they are more conscientious, but that is largely a matter of education.

II. Country boys are:

(a) More inclined to industry from force of circumstances.

(b) More serious, more ambitious, only when they have been specially kindled. The city boy will more quickly decide upon his life work and take steps to begin it.

(c) The country boy is more silent and disinclined to talk except when he is well acquainted.

(d) The native interest in play is about the same in both cases.

(e) The city boy is much more observant; the country boy more thoughtful. There is a great need to train the country boy in observation. He must be taught to do many things consciously, which he certainly can do well when his attention is called to them.

(f) The country boy is slower in mental action, but more likely to obtain satisfactory results when he applies his mind.

(g) The best class of boys in country or city are deferential to authority, but the city boy knows better how far he may go in opposition to it.

(h) The country boy may be more self-centered, but is not more self-willed.

(i) The ease with which either may be influenced is a matter of temperament. At certain ages the country boy because of his narrow range of knowledge may be more easily influenced.

(j) The country boy is more intense in feeling, due to his quieter and more thoughtful life, but probably shows emotion a little less.

(k) Conscientiousness is perhaps a little stronger as a feeling with a country boy, but he is often untaught in its use.

III. Adolescent changes apply to country boys in much the same manner as to city boys as the period is somewhat prolonged with the country boy.

IV. The course of the development of adoles-

cence is certainly retarded in country boys as compared with city boys.

V. The religious life is marked by the crisis of conversion quite often in the country and the small town. Perhaps this is frequently due to the tradition of conversion which still obtains in the country.

VI. The gang spirit, or spirit of the crowd, prevails less among country boys because there is less opportunity for it. It is much seen among city boys and in the larger towns and villages.

VII. The discontent for the farm and desire for the city are due almost entirely to the economic stress, to the monotony, and to the smaller opportunities afforded by rural life under present conditions.

VIII. In all Sunday schools the children in the adolescent period should receive much more definite attention in the way of training the moral judgment. The Sunday school exercises should often give to the student an opportunity for conference on the questions of right doing. The development of the social consciousness is one of the distinct obligations of the Sunday schools, and there should be opportunities provided for the development of the social nature.

IX. No modification of the Sunday school should be made with the purpose of developing a distinctive rural type. Country boys should be trained to become good men, versatile, useful, and effective. Many of them may find their future homes in the city. On this point President Cooper rightly says:

“What we chiefly need in our country schools is better teachers; and what we chiefly need in our country Sunday schools is better Sunday school teachers. This is especially true for the ages before fourteen. Before the age of fourteen the business

of the country Sunday school is to keep the boys interested in the Bible, the story of Jesus Christ, in song, hymn, etc., etc. From fourteen to eighteen what the country boy and girl both need is to be 'personally conducted' to themselves and God by some one a little older than themselves, who understands them and is interested in them and will give a portion of his time to them."

In a word, the necessary condition for country Sunday schools is a teacher who is a friend a little further on in the way of life and will give to the boys his time, thought and personal inspiration; such a man can do them untold good and will bind them to himself in a most helpful and successful way.

From the standpoint of the religious life, Decision Day is one of the most important features to be regularly included in the plans for conducting the rural Sunday school.

There could be great teaching advantages, and particularly the development of the right type of social consciousness by the wise use of games, pageants, play festivals, and historic celebrations.

Several of our friends are opposed to the mystical element in religion for country life. This seems a mistake. It is well that the fundamental principles of moral life should be carefully set forth and that the moral judgment should be carefully trained, but the country lends itself with special readiness to the development of the spiritual, and the mystical element in religion should find here a great field of practical service, making life rich, hopeful, and happy.

#### FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

From the mass of suggestions we have gathered, and from our own observation and reflection, we

single out for final emphasis the following recommendations:

1. On the ground of distinctive qualities of character and modes of mental action in country boys and girls, we advise an adaptation of pedagogical method that shall take note especially of the deeper thoughtfulness, the slower mental movement, the habit of silence, and the spirit of independence.

2. Because of the retardation of the chief adolescence crises, and the traditional power of the revival in the country, we advise a patient but forceful use of a wise and careful evangelism, to the end that the latent spirituality may be awakened and moral and religious decision secured.

3. The less prevalent gang spirit and the consequent individualism suggest the utmost use of personal association and personal influence through every kind of contact of teacher and pupils.

4. There is special need of fostering the social spirit and training in social facility, and therefore there should be much additional provision for social life outside of the Sunday school itself. We call special attention to the social opportunity in the organized class or group of classes, and we suggest that a small Sunday school may foster and supervise the social life of its boys and girls through its own organization, rather than surrender this responsibility to independent clubs and societies that needlessly complicate and burden the social structure.

5. The urgent need of more ample instruction in social service and the problems of society is nowhere

more evident than in the country, where the simplicity of social relations makes their recognition critical. The country Sunday school may use biblical material with peculiar profit, especially in the Mosaic laws, the prophetic program, and the social teachings of Jesus, since the historical background is everywhere distinctly rural.

6. The discontent and restlessness of country boys and girls in their life on the farm call for a new policy in the Sunday school, definitely conceived, prosecuted through an adapted literature, by which there may be a more fruitful teaching of the love of nature, the opportunities of the farm, the higher ideals for home and neighborhood, the appreciation of local institutions, and the happy way of living.

7. We protest against all systems and methods that recognize or perpetuate provincialism. We would train country boys and girls for citizenship of the world according to universal standards, adapting the common Christianity to local conditions without injury to normal character.

8. We dissent from the view that would neglect the momentous relationships of the human spirit in order to emphasize instruction. We would not impoverish country children by taking away their birthright of a positive religious experience.

9. We would make free and confident use of the idealism of unsophisticated youth, of rural vigor, earnestness, resourcefulness, and industry, of natural tendencies to morality and piety in the country, in full hope that the future will find the boys and

girls, trained in the country Sunday schools, competent for service and for leadership in country or in city, as opportunity may invite.

10. The larger attendance of adults in country Sunday schools makes it possible to present to mature minds those conceptions and ideals by which country life and the country home may be transformed, and the environment of country boys and girls so altered that discontent with rural life will be greatly diminished, the rural exodus checked, and the open country reinstated in its basic rights in the loyalty and affection of the generation rising to influence.

11. In view of these critical and measureless interests, and in consideration of the greatly preponderant numbers enrolled in country Sunday schools, we favor graded instruction when the material will be treated from the rural point of view.



## CHAPTER V

### LEADERSHIP AND THE RURAL SUNDAY SCHOOL

The task assigned to your Committee on Leadership is of such a character that it has been difficult to place limitations upon the question in hand, owing to the fact that it has to do with the success or failure of almost every phase of the Country Life problem. There can be no difference of opinion as to the importance of trained leadership if we are to do efficient service in church and Sunday school. Equipment is valuable; a carefully graded curriculum is very essential; devotion to the work is very helpful; but, lacking good leadership, all these together cannot bring success. We find that in the church and in the educational work, and in the economic and social life of the community, everywhere there is the clear call for leaders.

The great majority of people in every rural section are willing and eager to be led, if we can but furnish those who possess those elements of character that will inspire confidence and cooperation. There are some who would have us think that the rural community is antagonistic to the very principle of leadership. They say the farmer is extremely democratic and will have nothing to do

with "bosses." That may be true if the leader assumes to be a boss, but the fault is with that type of leadership, and not with the people to whom they make reference. In the true meaning of the word a leader is never a mere boss, but a man among men, and a brother with his brethren, constraining them to follow the manlier motives of ministry to mankind.

The question of leadership presents a double opportunity to the rural Sunday school:

First. The discovery of young people who, at an early age, give prophecy of strength of mind and will, and yet require careful direction in right moral channels. It is easy to recognize leadership when it has been fully developed, but the genius of Christianity is in making an appeal to the best in each one, and thus calling forth the latent talents that are the test of each individual. We believe that there is a rich field for pastors, teachers, and superintendents, as well as for Christian parents and day school teachers who are well qualified to do this kind of service.

Second. The Sunday school, if efficient, is one of the best institutions in the community for the development and disciplining of leaders. The lessons they teach and the spirit of the Great Teacher whom they set forth as the ideal and exemplar are calculated to call forth those characteristics that always insure leadership. Jesus possesses the gentleness that makes men great. He was meek and lowly and yet the mighty Master of men. To know

him is to be like him, and to be like him is to be a leader in the best things of life.

Leadership is another word for genius. Efficiency stands for business in religion as well as religion in business. The few lead and the many follow. Men go astray like sheep, and come back very much in the same way, i. e., they follow a leader. The descent of vice is easier and more rapid than the ascent of virtue. We may drift into disease and sin, but we must will our way back into moral health and rightness. The latter calls for personal conviction and conquest in preparing the way and walking therein. Emerson's "Representative Men," and Carlyle's "Heroes" have attracted the attention of the world, because they were preeminently the leaders of their eras. The world has had its adventurers, its leaders in colonization, its philosophers, and its great generals. But this new century is to be the time of bloodless battles, and our leaders are to be moral and spiritual heroes. The Prince of Peace is to be our Great Captain, and men are to catch his spirit of courage and self-denial. "The demand for a few *strong men*," says John R. Mott, "is even more imperative than *more men*." The times demand individuals who not only have the prophet's vision, but who possess the power to inspire and lead others to do the task.

The prophet of God is the moral general who commands the latent forces of his audience or community. His message is a call to ministry and, in that sense, each leader may be a Grant or a Sherman in the war against sin. The response to the call

will depend upon the authority of the messenger. It was said of Jesus that he spoke with authority and not as the Scribes and Pharisees. Luther received his commission direct from God, and then went forth to command the men of Germany to fight for religious freedom and personal purity. It could have been said of John Knox, as it was of Napoleon, that his presence was equal to ten thousand men on the field of battle. His word was a command to all Scotland, and it even compelled the attention of Kings and Queens. John Wesley, like John the Baptist, was sent to prepare the way of the Lord, and to call England out of her spiritual sleep and moral lethargy, to take up again the redemption of a race.

The leaders of the present hour are not only the watchmen on the walls of our modern Zions, but they are divinely commissioned commanders of the economic, political, social, and moral forces of our twentieth century civilization. Then we should not forget that in the very forefront of the advancing armies must be found the spiritual leaders. It is our privilege to call men to battle for virtue and against vice; for knowledge and against ignorance; for temperance and against drunkenness; for faith and against doubt; and for love as against hate.

“The word of command,” says Mr. Roosevelt, “is useless in the fight unless a reasonable number of those to whom it is uttered, not only listen, but act upon it. Talk—mere oratory—is worse than useless if it has not a worthy object and does not cause

men to actually put in practice the message received."

The new patriotism must be interpreted in the terms of Christian conquest. The call for volunteers must be recognized as the call of the Christ. The Church, in city and country, will be the institution through which the modern patriot will find the expression of the higher sacrifice of victorious conquest. "The moral substitute for war," that Professor James declared was the need of the hour, will be realized in the army of Christian soldiers to be found in every community. The number of private soldiers who fight in the ranks may vary from year to year, but there must ever be a sufficient number of valiant leaders to command the regiments and to organize new recruits.

The rural communities call for a special type of leadership. We need men who appreciate the greatness of the field, and who will be able to discover and train those who are waiting for some one to command them. An institute lecturer declared recently that in a certain community where it was commonly thought that no young people remained the right call brought forth forty young men, all ready for service, and only waiting for the right one to redirect their restless energy. We must not fail to utilize this latent leadership, since, as Mr. Mott says, "The cities themselves need help, and cannot be relied upon to furnish the Christian leaders of the future." It is a common statement in rural communities that "There are no leaders." Some explain by saying that the best young people

have for many years been moving into the cities. Others assert that the people in that section do not tolerate any boss. Democracy is made synonymous with leadership and an equally false notion of cooperation. Doctor Hale stated a few years ago that "Together is the twentieth century word." This is one essential of efficient leadership. There must be more federation and less competition; more brotherhood and less hate. In the interest of economy, as well as comity, we must stand together. The strength of an army is accounted for, not by the character of the individual soldier, but by the united loyalty to the Commander-in-Chief.

We have based our deduction of principles on a careful study of rural communities. The larger part of our recommendations are taken from contact with conditions as they now exist in various parts of Ohio and other states. We were privileged to be associated with the Advisory Council of the Ohio Rural Life Survey that made a very careful study of about one-fourth of the counties of the state. We were also in conference with other Commissions on Rural Life that afforded a very sympathetic touch with the adolescent boy in the rural community. Several hundred letters have been written to the clergy and laity of our churches containing various questions as to their personal experience in dealing with adolescent boys and girls. We briefly set forth some of our findings.

There is a very decided need of a better type of trained leadership in the churches of all denominations. The rural communities have suffered very

serious losses in the removal of the older settlers and in the increasing number of foreigners and tenants who are now occupying the farms. This has affected, not only the churches, but the schools and other rural institutions that must depend upon a settled population for support. Denominations have not been able to readjust themselves to the changed conditions, and the result has been that the supply of leaders has deteriorated with the decrease of the salary below a living wage. The former members are gone and the newcomers have not been reached or won to the Church.

The coming of the suburban electric railway has brought the country people in close contact with the vices of the city without affording any knowledge of its deeper Christian virtues. The daily newspaper now visits almost every farmer's home and carries its highly colored and sensational story of the world's crime.

These modern conveniences of country life, while rich in a commercial way, are not without their perils to the moral and religious life of these heretofore secluded sections. We would not condemn these aids to progress, but rather point out the perils of an era of transition to those who misuse these material blessings of our rapidly advancing civilization. A superficial knowledge of the city, such as is gained by the transient visitor, is apt to be very misleading, while a deeper study of the unseen Christian forces is just as certain to be beneficial. For these reasons it would be well for those who have to do with young life during those formative

and impressionable years to provide instruction that will not only point out the evil, but illustrate the better side of urban life.

We find that the social evil which a few years ago was confined almost wholly to our large cities has spread its dire contagion even into the villages and rural communities, and calls for careful instruction and warning on the part of every friend of the purity and perpetuity of the home and the nation. Along with this we find a marked increase in Sabbath desecration. This peril is tied up with the play and recreation life of the youth. The Church having lost contact with the young people, great numbers are left without Christian leadership and are at the mercy of the godless gang.

The out-of-city population at present depends to a very large degree on the professional leadership that is brought in from the outside. The teacher in the school, the preacher in the church, the County Young Men's Christian Association secretary, and the institute lecturer are usually too transient in character. Though their services are good, their term of service is like that of the tenant—too short and uncertain. The country not only needs, but must have, a leadership that is native and as permanent as the institutions they serve. We are convinced also that the tendency of having female teachers in day schools and Sunday schools is not in harmony with the modern thought of securing the training best adapted to the adolescent boy. It stands to reason we ought to have a fair percentage of male teachers if we are to intelligently under-



stand the boy and efficiently minister to his deeper needs.

We are led to make the following recommendations to the Commission:

1. A careful study of the new era in country life with its attendant new conditions, demands, and opportunities.

2. A closer cooperation and federation of all Christian organizations in developing and training leaders.

3. A sympathetic interest and assistance from State and National institutions and individuals that are awake to the importance of rural civilization.

4. That classes be organized in each community for the study of the economic, social, and religious phases of country life with reference to local community needs.

5. That added emphasis be given to discovery and training of community leaders who possess the rural mind and are in accord with the highest ideals of rural well-being.

6. That the rural Sunday school be made the efficient agency for the religious education of the entire community. In some places this will call for the cooperation of denominations for real Christian conquest.

7. We believe the present problem of securing competent leadership and the development of native leaders will be greatly aided by the new appeal to build up the community, rather than by the competitive effort to conserve denominational organizations.

8. We would recommend that adolescent boys and girls be supplied with trained teachers of their own sex. The modern ideals and problems of Christian manhood and womanhood demand this change of method in Christian pedagogy.

## CHAPTER VI

### TEACHING IN THE RURAL SUNDAY SCHOOL

It is our opinion that the Sunday school is the great popular agency for the training of rural Christian citizenship and leadership, and should therefore be recognized as a vitally important part of the educational system, as well as of the social and religious equipment of the nation.

We therefore bespeak for the rural Sunday schools a more effective cooperation from all classes, adults as well as children and youth, and a worthy recognition of the Sunday school teacher's opportunity, as a strategic chance for personal influence and community service. In view of the facts as we find them, and of what we conceive to be the possible function of the Sunday school in the country, we venture to offer the following suggestions as to the teaching in these schools:

1. That Sunday school officers be encouraged to enlist none but the most capable men, women, and young people of the community as teachers, and tactfully to eliminate the ineffectives whose sole reason for teaching is their willingness to teach; even reducing the number of classes if capable teachers are scarce.

2. That men of virile Christian character, community leaders when possible, be intrusted with the classes of adolescent boys.

3. That, as far as practicable, teachers, instead of continuing year after year with the same class, remain in the same department, teaching a succession of classes, thus specializing in some one period of boy life or girlhood.

4. That the efforts of the International Sunday School Association to develop teacher training in rural Sunday schools be heartily commended, and that the standard be persistently raised until teaching in Sunday school shall become a skilled worker's privilege.

5. That Teachers' Conferences or Councils be encouraged, both on the township and county basis, to foster higher ideals of teaching, to be a medium of social fellowship and an agency for enlisting and developing better trained teachers.

6. That practical grading of Sunday schools be encouraged, along lines consistent with the limitations of rural schools, guarding against loss of enthusiasm from over-division and loss of unity from diverse teaching material.

7. That the rural Sunday schools select with greater care their teaching material and lesson helps. Too frequently the cheapest available is the most popular, regardless of quality. Most lesson helps now are city made for city use. We urge the preparation and publication of a Sunday school literature indigenous to country life and adapted to its needs, which shall utilize the vast body of rural

material in the Bible for the making of country character, a literature prepared by writers who understand rural life and the viewpoints and needs of country people.

8. That objective methods of teaching be more generally adopted, using such plans as outdoor teaching, clay and pulp modeling, and stereographs to make real the scenes in Palestine which seem hopelessly remote from our modern life.

9. That the work of the Sunday school teacher be not limited to the single hour on Sunday, but be related to the social, recreative, and industrial life of the boys and girls. The fact must be frankly faced that no rural community can reach its highest plane until its play life and its work life are redeemed, and the wholesome recreation provided upon which rural work and morality depend.

10. Not only should the men of the community find in connection with the Sunday school a convenient forum for discussing local needs, but we suggest that the older boys and the young men may well be trained more thoroughly in Christian civics in a citizenship class in the Sunday school. In this way, or some other, the rural Sunday school should be made to serve vitally the broader needs of its community and to develop a consecrated and intelligent leadership in line with the best ideals of the country life movement for rural redirection.

The above suggestions make it sufficiently clear that your committee interpret the function of the Sunday school teacher as something more than an instructor in biblical facts, or an evangelist to secure

the personal devotion of the pupil to Jesus Christ. Both of these functions are exceedingly important; but enlistment is only a soldier's first duty, and knowledge is but the beginning of wisdom. We believe the teacher of adolescent boys and girls in the country Sunday school should be satisfied with nothing less than the developing, through teaching, training, and life-sharing, of an efficient, useful citizenship and a symmetrical Christian manhood and womanhood in its boys and girls. For this thoroughgoing service no preparation can be too complete and no devotion too costly or exacting.

## CHAPTER VII

### TEACHER TRAINING FOR THE COUNTRY SUNDAY SCHOOL

No movement of the last ten years has developed so rapidly in connection with the Church as the growth of the Sunday school. It is no longer a school for the little children alone, though its instruction is far superior to that of other years in its kindergarten and primary work. It is now a school for the teen years and for Bible study among men and women. The country church has oftentimes failed to fall in line with this inspiring educational movement. Its leaders have believed that their difficulties were special ones: that the graded school and graded lessons, and better instruction, and more complete organization belonged to the city and could be used there alone. There are indeed grave difficulties before the country church. Its Sunday school usually meets in one room. It has no folding doors, rolling partitions, or adequate equipment. The rough roads and bad weather, the distance of the people from the church, all seem to hinder the adoption of modern methods; but this is a mistake. The best things can be adapted, not all adopted. It is a question of spirit, intention, and intelligence, and thousands of country Sunday schools have

gained new life and increasing interest by taking the new methods and adapting them to their own circumstances.

**The Training Class.** The question of all questions is—the teacher; for everywhere the teacher is the school, and wherever a superintendent and body of earnest well-equipped teachers can be found there the Sunday school flourishes in city or in country. The training class is a necessity for the efficient Sunday school. How can it be carried forward successfully under the conditions of country life? There are several types of training classes:

(a) The class of pupils meeting at the Sunday school hour is now the popular type of class. They are the teachers of to-morrow in preparation. They are chosen at from fifteen to eighteen or nineteen years of age—carefully chosen, one by one, according to their fitness and willingness, and especially their conviction and earnestness regarding Christian truth. The superintendent, pastor, and teachers must make the choice, but it should be done with great care and with prayerful personal attention. The young people are then pledged to a year of work. A training course means at least one hour a week of class work with two hours for preparation. The subjects are: the study of the Old and New Testaments, child nature, methods of teaching, and management and organization of the Sunday school. It is customary to begin with the Bible study. Some classes, however, succeed best by beginning with the study of child nature, or the study of the Sunday school. Two years should be given



to this work, with some practice teaching, observation work, reference reading, and opportunity for discussion in the class. Theme writing and practice teaching under the guidance of an experienced teacher belong especially to the second year. Young people really want to work. Many of them desire leadership and activity in the church if they can only be properly directed.

(b) The second type of class is the class of teachers meeting at the week-day hour or at some hour on Sunday, as frequently the preaching service in the country church is only on alternate Sabbaths. These teachers follow much the same course as indicated in Bible study, the study of child nature and methods of teaching, but they should be prepared to take more advanced books, give more time to discussion, and especially to reports of their own teaching and to discussion regarding methods and efficiency in the school. They should also be expected to take up the question of the school in its wider relation to the community, and to discuss the problems of community life in a very broad way, because oftentimes this class is the only class with definite hours of study connected with the church, and they should study the means by which the church can promote the welfare of the community.

(c) A third type of class is the union class, where the teachers, officers, and older students from a number of schools meet together. This is often the most successful class, because the willing and studious spirits from a number of churches form a strong group, and oftentimes such a class can

secure teachers for the different subjects rather than give the whole work to one teacher. Then, too, they have a wider community interest and can discuss more of its problems and have a far wider influence than the class from a single church. There is only a very limited amount of the instruction in the teacher training courses that is essentially doctrinal. There is found little difficulty in bringing several churches together, in fact, this hindrance seldom appears.

**The Teacher of the Class.** The teacher of the training class is often a minister, sometimes a public school teacher or Sunday school teacher of studious habits. Some fitting teacher can be found in nearly every community, and very often where a group of young people have organized for study they have chosen one of their own number as teacher and have carried their work on with success, the teacher studying with the class. The examinations and credits are given by the denominational boards or the State Associations of the International Association. The examination questions are sent to the teacher, so that there is something of supervision and guidance offered to the teacher through these strong outside influences.

**The Social Life of the Class.** The class in the country can frequently be nourished and its interest sustained by some attention to the social life. An instance has been brought to light recently in which a minister's wife in a village church called a group of young people together by giving them a luncheon and pleasant hour in her home, and found them

willing to do some study later. They were indifferent to it at first, and only her persuasion and social tact secured any interest, but as she invited them week by week they soon became absorbed in the work itself, and study which they would not have pursued without the social inducement was carried on later for its own sake. Frequently these classes meet at the homes of the members, going from place to place, and enjoying a social hour before or after the period of study. The work must usually be discontinued during the summer, but seven or eight months of work are entirely practicable.

**The Small Class.** Much of the best work is done in small classes. Classes of five or six in number have frequently worked with success; where nine or ten can be secured the class may be made more interesting. Where the number is larger than this the class should be organized, with a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and committees. In this way very much more of social life and class spirit can be maintained. Buttons, ribbons, badges, and the like are often delightful means of developing a class spirit and binding its members together. When the Bible is really studied in a fresh and earnest way it is found to be the most interesting book in the world, and the new light on child nature makes it so fascinating that it has proved a subject of wonderful interest to many groups of workers; so that no small group need be discouraged or afraid to undertake a definite course of study, as it is not the size of the class, but its sense

of responsibility and willingness to work that determine its success.

**Fitting for Special Work.** While the course of study follows general lines, the students must begin early to give their attention to preparation for special work. The teacher of the little child should study the Bible and study the child with the little beginner or primary child in mind, and the one who is being fitted to teach boys or girls in the teen years should make a different preparation, for the problems of that work will demand some special knowledge and training very different from that needed by the teacher of the little child. Now these special tasks can only be taken up by reference reading and by discussion in the class. The teacher must choose and guide the members of the class in regard to their future work.

**Conventions, Institutes, and the Like.** No school can live to itself: it must be part of the big world. The urgent demand for Christian unity and a fine spirit of brotherhood in the country life reaches the Sunday school. There must be keen work among the Sunday schools if they are to give really religious instruction and make a real contribution to the social life and truly assume moral leadership.

The township convention is one of the most effective agencies within the reach of the country Sunday school. It brings officers and teachers together, it offers some outside help—some inspiring leaders from county or city, it offers a program which is now usually fairly practical, educational, and inspiring. After the township convention comes the

meeting of the workers for the county, which is held once a year. This brings a larger group into discussion, and in it are frequently heard men and women of fine training who are giving their lives to the Sunday school as a field of service.

There is now an increasing number of schools of methods, lasting five or six days, holding meetings in the country, or sometimes at some lake-side or like pleasant resort in summer time, sometimes in town or city in winter. This school is to the Sunday school what the county institute has always been to the public school. Its instruction, its leaders, its conferences, and discussion have inspired and guided many teachers and officers who are leaders in the most successful schools in America to-day.

The township and county conventions are now taking far wider range in their programs and inviting agricultural experts and social workers, successful country leaders, and the whole problem of country welfare is discussed in a broad Christian spirit. The value of the church in the country is clearly recognized and the Sunday school is found to be the very heart of the church; and so the problems of the Sunday school are the problems of Sunday and of week-day, of sport and recreation, of reading and good roads, of well-equipped homes and a united community.

**The Workers' Library.** Each church should begin to acquire a small workers' library. This should contain books for each department of the Sunday school. They should be chosen very carefully and a few at a time. The training class should have a

Bible Dictionary, a few maps, and then begin to acquire books for the younger and older child, books regarding boy life and girl life, class organization, story telling, Bible study, country-life problems, the organization and efficiency of Sunday school management. These books should be in the care of some one chosen as librarian, who should keep a record of the reading done, and be competent to suggest to the different members, officers, and teachers of the school the chapters of special value to them, and also to suggest the books that are the most helpful in regard to country-life questions.

It will be seen that the problem of teacher training is really a problem of training leaders, of developing special talents, and of meeting the live problems in regard to Christian service.

A training course for a class of younger students should contain at least fifteen lesson hours of Old Testament study, at least fifteen lesson hours of New Testament study, at least ten lesson hours on the study of child nature with the reading of at least two books on the study of childhood or adolescence, ten hours on the methods of teaching, and from eight to ten hours on the study of the Sunday school and organization.

## CHAPTER VIII

### COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES

Your Committee appointed to make a study of the Cooperative Activities that might be used in relation to the rural Sunday school beg leave to offer the report given below.

#### HOME ACTIVITIES

We believe that the rural home can contribute much toward the successful maintenance of the Sunday school. In fact, without parental cooperation it is practically impossible to conduct a Sunday school that is anything more than a hit-or-miss juvenile gathering. We believe, however, that rural parents possess far more willingness than ability to give adequate support to the Sunday school work. Two particular lines of parent instruction and guidance seem to us well-nigh imperative. First, there should be placed in the hands of every rural parent an inexpensive leaflet treating with full care and detail the following topic: "How to assist the children in their Sunday school work." This pamphlet should take up item by item the small home affairs that need a readjustment in the interest of the Sunday school. This printed document should begin

with a clear and forceful enunciation of the meanings and principle of Sunday school work. It should attempt to make clear to the reader the idea that Sunday school training is an essential part of the whole course of discipline in any good life. It should point out and explain the fact that a well regulated, well attended Sunday school will bring in as big returns in every way as any other institution. This pamphlet should explain that the Sunday school is worthy of support because of its making for better contentment among the boys and girls of the neighborhood, and because it will furnish the parents much assistance in their efforts to instil lessons of moral reliance and social purity.

After the best purposes of the country Sunday school have been adequately set forth the pamphlet should take up and consider the best means of inducting country youth into Sunday school work and the most reliable methods of securing their regular attendance. It should urge parents to relieve their children as far as possible from the Sunday performance of the week-day tasks.

#### SCHOOL COOPERATION

We believe that the rural school can do very little of a direct nature and very much of an indirect nature to foster the Sunday school. What we especially urge in this connection is that everything possible be done to unify all the agencies which contribute to the better development of the country



boys and girls. That is, we wish to have all the rural dwellers to regard the Sunday school in the same serious light as they do the day school. As a means of showing the right neighborhood appreciation of the Sunday school the board of public school trustees should aim to elect a teacher who will contribute something toward the Sunday work. While no contract to this effect could be drawn, a board could show their appreciation of the Sunday service rendered by the teacher by allowing her a liberal salary for her regular school services.

The public school is not permitted to teach religion; nevertheless, a full respect for religious teaching and practice can be indirectly inculcated in the day school. We therefore believe that it would be most helpful in building up a substantial religious sentiment in the rural neighborhood if there could be furnished every country teacher a well-thought-out, well prepared leaflet, written under the title: "How the teacher may aid and encourage the rural Sunday school." This pamphlet would present clearly and suggestively the following points: (1) How the teacher may allude to the work of the local church and Sunday school during the course of the lesson recitations, with a thought of showing their worth to the community. Let her be shown how the lessons in reading, history, civics, and other subjects may frequently lead to sentiments and conclusions favorable to the religious work. (2) How the teacher may defend the religious work against slurs and slighting remarks, and also how she may defend and call favorable attention to the characters

of those who are putting their voluntary efforts into the maintenance of the Sunday school. (3) This pamphlet should aim especially to explain to the rural teacher precisely how and why a well managed local church and Sunday school contribute to the economic worth of the community.

We feel certain that the ordinary district school teacher has given this important matter little or no thought, and that she is greatly in need of a clear and stimulating exhortation in regard to the matter. We also believe that when once the teacher has acquired the right appreciation of the religious work she will willingly and effectively lend her heart and her hand to its support.

Were there means for doing so, we should also be inclined to have some descriptive, argumentative, and stimulating literature treating the value of the Sunday school to the community placed in the hands of every member of the rural school boards. And what we especially recommend at this point is suggestive of one of the main threads of our entire report, namely, that everything possible be done by way of uniting the thought and the sentiment of all of the members of the country community in such a way that those who have special aptitude as Sunday school leaders may have sufficient backing and encouragement to enable them to go on and establish their good purposes permanently.

## RECREATION

We believe that the possibilities of linking up the rural Sunday school work with various recreative activities are very numerous and important. There is no need of argument to support the contention that country life nearly everywhere is very much lacking in facilities for helpful recreation. Not only are the working days on the farm as a rule too long, but the working seasons are too little interspersed with rest periods and recreative activities.

The old-fashioned Sunday school picnic in the woods, if rightly managed, furnishes an excellent summer outing. Its chief fault hitherto has been its infrequency. Once a year is not often enough for such an affair. The boys and girls of the Sunday school and the community have something enticing to look forward to and to think back about. Of course much will depend upon the ability of the leader and organizer. He or she must be a person who can make a typical rural dweller regard the half holiday spent in recreation in the light of an economic investment—which it really is. The busy farm father needs to be shown, for example, that his boys will accomplish more work and do it better in eleven days and a half of each fortnight spent in the field, and one half day spent at the recreation center, than they will in twelve days all consumed in the heavy farm occupations.

Conditions are so varying that it is difficult to offer a detailed plan for the Sunday school picnic, but as a rule the country people should not be taken

to town for their recreation, enticing as that may be to some. Rather, they should go together to the woodland for purposes of camping, fishing, and the like; or to the mountainside, if such be available; or to the open meadow land, if neither of the places just named are accessible, where temporary shades may be set up, and where baseball, tennis, and other athletic sports may be engaged in.

We believe that baseball may be made an especially helpful agency in relation to the Sunday school. We recommend that definite suggestions be given the rural Sunday school leaders for organizing baseball clubs and for bringing the ball team into active contests with neighboring Sunday school teams. We believe that it would be practicable to organize a county league of rural Sunday school baseball clubs; that a series of games could be arranged for, say, either every Thursday afternoon or every alternate Thursday afternoon, with two to five Sunday school groups in attendance. While this county league suggestion has not been carried out to our knowledge, we know personally of rural baseball clubs which have developed such a sentiment in their favor that practically everybody in the community ceases work on a mid-week afternoon to witness and applaud the games.

We find that in many rural communities there is maintained a Sunday afternoon baseball game which is antagonistic to the well-being of the community. The most common method of procedure in overcoming this evil is that of direct attack, the law frequently being sought as a vehicle of reform. We

do not find that this method of force and direct opposition is successful or desirable, and we earnestly recommend a radically different method as follows: Have the local church and Sunday school organization unite in an effort to make peaceful terms with the Sunday baseball players. Let the committee representing the religious element remind the players that they wish to participate in the ball game, but cannot do so on Sunday for obvious reasons. Let the committee agree that if the Sunday game be permanently discontinued and some week-day substituted they and the members of the church and Sunday school will make an effort to attend and support the games. It is our belief that the Sunday baseball game is quite as much a reflection on the local churches and Sunday schools as upon any other element of a community; and we further believe that the Sunday game may not only be discontinued as a result of the method just described, but also that an active participation in the game by the church and Sunday school members will put a new kind of religious zeal into such members and likewise prove a means of increasing the attendance at the religious services.

We do not see any good reason why the Sunday school might not organize general field meets for the community on one or more occasions during the year.

The attitude of the Sunday school toward all the foregoing athletic and recreative practices is largely a matter of the education of public sentiment. In many instances where opposition to such sports

was once very great, such opposition has been gradually broken down and in its stead there is a united enthusiasm. We therefore urge the necessity and the practicability of placing in the hands of rural Sunday school leaders well selected literature on this subject.

#### LOCAL IMPROVEMENT AND CIVICS

We find that in a few notable instances the youthful members of the rural Sunday school have done effective public improvement work as follows: (1) The young men of the Sunday school were organized into a good roads association, the first stated purpose being that of improving the roads over which the various members had to pass in reaching the local church. Roads were dragged through voluntary effort, crossings were made through muddy streams during the summer seasons, and passageways were opened through the snow during the winter seasons. The second purpose of one of these clubs was that of bringing about the construction of hitch racks and wind sheds at the church to serve the needs of the horses during the religious services. A third purpose of the club was that of beautifying the grounds surrounding the local church, by clearing débris, planting out trees, laying walks, and the like.

Associated with such a club of young men as described above there has been reported in at least one instance a Sunday school organization of young women, which, operating under a euphonious name,

furnished the bulbs and flowers for adding to the beauty of the local grounds, and also looked after the internal decorations of the church building.

A third local improvement club, constituted of the young men of the Sunday school, acting with the older men of the community, is reported to have done effective work in opposition to desecration of the Sabbath. They worked for a better enforcement of the law prohibiting Sabbath desecration, and also labored with their representatives in the interest of the enactment of better laws. They also sought out the persons and places where young men were enticed into evil practices, and did what they could to correct such abuses.

In a few localities it is reported that there exist bands of purity as an adjunct of the rural Sunday school. The purpose of these youthful bands is usually that of insuring temperance and purity on the part of boys, and also of inculcating a better sentiment in behalf of the practice of purity of speech, thought, and action.

In some instances economic clubs have had a helpful relation to the Sunday school. The local minister in a few instances has given the boys' corn club much prominence by means of a so-called Corn-Sunday. On this occasion the church has been decorated with farm products, corn predominating. The sermon has been applied to farm-produce problems, and the Sunday school likewise considered a scriptural lesson related to this important subject. Many of the states are now calling urgently through the medium of their agricultural colleges for volun-

teen economic clubs of rural boys and girls. We do not have in mind any reasons that would prevent the rural Sunday school from organizing such clubs within its own membership.

Along with the boys' corn club there may be conducted a girls' bread-making club. While we do not believe that these organizations will succeed well if organized with a purely local interest, we can see how they might contribute much indirect life to the Sunday school which encourages them as a means of carrying on the work directed by the extension department of the college.

We commend all the foregoing forms of civic and local improvement activities among rural Sunday school youths, and we recommend that there be formulated for the rural Sunday school workers a specific plan for organizing and rendering effective the types of activity included in the list.

#### SOCIAL AFFAIRS

If the various forms of activity described above have any merit it is probably because of their having a strong social element. Indeed, we must recognize that the adolescent boy and girl, no matter where their lot be cast, are above all things else interested in social affairs. It is therefore altogether practical for the Sunday school worker to arrange for a series of regular social events for the adolescent members of the Sunday school. We believe that the adolescent boys and girls of the ordinary country community need to be brought together in



a social way more than they are to-day. The association of the sexes during this period of life, under guidance and supervision, proves to be the means of enhancing personal purity rather than the opposite, as many have seemed to believe.

The rural leader may therefore frequently plan for an evening party of the young people within the church and Sunday school. It would be well to designate this organization in some such way as the following: "The Social Union of the \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday School." Such a name would tend to keep out undesirable practices and undesirable guests. It would also suggest the generous spirit of the religious leaders of the community, and would constitute an indirect invitation to the hesitating young people to ally themselves with the Sunday school organization.

In a few instances the social union has been fostered under the guise of a literary society with a literary program. There is every reason to commend this literary form of adjunct to the rural Sunday school. In respect to the management of such an organization we would note the necessity of allowing much time during the evening of the performance for the social intercourse of the young people. Again, the name of the society may, and doubtless should, suggest the Sunday school organization which is backing it. The success of a literary organization is dependent very largely upon the tact and insight of the leader.

We also wish to call attention to the necessity of **conducting an active campaign looking toward the**

education of public sentiment. In not a few of the rural communities where the church and Sunday school are well attended there is poverty of social life for the young, and this most certainly means a scattering of the growing generation in the near future. Indeed, the prejudice among many religious parents of the country communities against any form of social life for their children is most astonishing. And yet we believe that this prejudice will soon yield to the force of new ideals.

In many of the rural neighborhoods there is already in existence some form of dancing club, the conduct of which is often open to the most serious criticism. In such case we recommend that no direct attack be made upon the dancing society or its members. Indeed, we would caution against arousing antagonism under such circumstances, and would recommend that the leaders of the new social life already suggested make their organization and activities more attractive and more appealing to the old and young members of the community than the less worthy forms of social practice.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** All or nearly all of the activities mentioned in this chapter are being conducted by the organized teen age Sunday school classes and departments. The International Sunday School Association's Bulletin of Information can be secured, giving nearly a thousand such activities centering around the Bible in the Sunday school class.

The creation of extra organizations for secretarial, civic and social activity is deplored in recommendation 4 in the chapter on "The Individual" and under Social Conditions in the chapter on "Conditions Affecting Adolescence in Rural Districts." All agree as regards the need of cooperative activities.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE RURAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ORGANIZED FOR ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

Other Committees appointed by the Commission for the Study of the Adolescent Period as Related to the Country Sunday School have devoted their attention to the conditions which surround the Sunday school and which contribute to its success or failure. It remains for this paper to deal definitely with "The Rural Sunday School Organized for Largest Service in the Development of the Adolescent in the Rural Community." This is the crux of the whole matter, for to the country Sunday school, more than to any other organization, the world is turning, and must turn, for the development of the rural youth in moral and religious character.

**The Rural Community.** In defining a country Sunday school it is essential that one should have a clear understanding as to what constitutes a rural community. As commonly understood, a rural community is a group of people living in the open country; but to residents of large cities or populous centers the rural community includes the suburban population and residents of surrounding smaller towns. There are, however, many purely industrial centers of less than 2,000 which possess marked

urban characteristics which have been transmitted to them through trolley line connection with large industrial cities. On the other hand, many communities of more than 2,000 population, shipping points or trading centers for farmers, or residential towns for retired farmers, possess decided rural tendencies.

The United States Government, in the last report issued from its Educational Department, fixes all people living in communities of less than 2,500 in the rural class. Taking the United States as a whole, these figures are doubtless correct. In this article, however, the term "rural community" is construed to mean a group of people living either in the open country or in villages of less than 2,000 population.

**A Paramount Factor.** Viewed from many standpoints, the rural Sunday school is the most important factor in the whole Sunday school scheme. The reasons are obvious. First, rural Sunday schools make up at least two-thirds of the Sunday school family. Second, they are found everywhere. Third, they reach proportionately more boys and girls in the early years than do urban schools. For these reasons the rural Sunday school is to-day being stressed as never before in the interest of the solution of the country problem in its moral and religious aspects.

**The Rural School of the Past.** The rural school of yesterday, loose-jointed and imperfect as it was, was the forerunner of the school of to-day. It began as a children's school in which, before the

day of the public school, children, and occasionally adults, studied the "Sunday School Spelling and Reading Book," recited the Catechism, and memorized Scripture for rewards. In time came the question book, then the lesson leaves, then the lesson quarterlies. Along with these were introduced song rolls, leaf clusters, the blackboard, and other equipment through which the school was assisted to do better work. The Bible became more generally used in the school-room, and the Sunday school entered upon an era of great improvement. The children and the boys and girls were large in the eyes of the school, and special attention was given to them—to their comfort and to their instruction; but the adolescent was overlooked. Somehow he was abandoned as a hopeless proposition. In fact, he was regarded as an "impossible," and was occasionally "fired," as shown in Hymn 61 in the "Sunday School Hymnal," published early in the last century, which is announced as a hymn to be sung on the occasion of "The Dismission of an Incurable Scholar." The first verse is as follows:

"How dreadful to be turned away  
In anger from our place.  
May we be careful every day  
For fear of such disgrace."

Few men in those days attended the school sessions, and the youth, imitating the adults, conceived that the manly thing for a big boy to do was to "quit." The Sunday school seemingly didn't care.

In the matter of teacher training there was a little sporadic Normal Class work in those days, but most teachers were not specially fitted, either by selection or training, for masterful work. A few trained and educated public school teachers were skilled in Sunday school work, but the average teacher had little knowledge of the pupil, the Bible, or the principles of education which govern in all teaching. However, the intense earnestness of many of the early teachers not otherwise qualified, and the evangelistic emphasis given the teaching, was remarkably blessed of God; for out of the Sunday school teaching of the past have come the leaders of to-day, who are now zealously correcting past Sunday school errors.

The city has largely been the beneficiary of the country Sunday school of yesterday. With the exodus of youth from the country toward the city the country-bred Christian men and women, products of the rural Sunday school, have become and are to-day officers of the city churches, superintendents and teachers in city schools, and Christian "stalwarts" in the commercial and professional life of the city. The rural Sunday school of yesterday has largely conserved the spiritual life of the city church. One dares not conjecture what Christianity in the city would have become were it not for the leaven of Christianity which the rural Sunday schools have poured into urban communities through the lives of men whose early Christian teaching and whose conversion are due to the rural Sunday school of yesterday.

Notwithstanding the truth of the above, the average rural Sunday school has not kept pace with the times. While it has furnished many noble and strong men for the cities, it has largely failed to liberally provide for the local community its own Christian citizenship. Many boys who left the rural Sunday school with a Christian bias have been gripped in the city by the Young Men's Christian Association, the Organized Adult Class, or the strong and attractive city churches; whereas, the average rural adolescent who left the Sunday school at fourteen and remained at home has not been won back to the rural school nor to the rural church, because of the failure of the rural school to make a place for him.

**The Rural School of To-day.** The rural Sunday school of to-day finds itself in a new era. It faces new conditions. The extension of public school education into rural communities, the emphasis given scientific farming, the science of soil analysis, soil feeding, seed selection, germ destruction, cement construction, the use of gasoline as a propelling power for farm machinery, the advent of the automobile, the extension of trolley lines, and the emphasis upon college education as an essential for successful farming, have in a measure checked the emigration from the open country to the city. The rural adolescent in increasing numbers is remaining at home or on the farm, and is available as a Sunday school asset. The rural Sunday school is now facing as never before the responsibility of shaping the lives of rural youth. The moral and religious

salvation of the rural community is to-day dependent upon the rural Sunday school reorganized and vitalized to meet the situation—a school so charged with magnetic power that it will draw to it the rural adolescent.

**Essential Qualities of the Rural School.** If the country Sunday school of to-day is to command the respect and interest of the rural adolescent and win him to its sessions and its activities it must possess an attractive individuality and a wholesome inspiring atmosphere. To him it must be more than a “joke” or an apology. It must be a well-organized school, with a practical program. Be the Sunday school well officered and prompt in its introductory worship period, be its teachers well equipped and punctual in their attendance, be the courses of study fitted to the unfolding adolescent years, be its Secondary and Adult Classes organized for real business, if it has strong music, a good Superintendent of few words, worshipful opening exercises, a business-like dispatch of the school program, and real zeal in winning and culturing youth, it will grip the adolescent.

The rural school which is attractive to the adolescent must therefore speedily become an *efficient* school, carefully organized, with its several classes or departments graded and well developed. The school must be more than an aimless meeting, more than a perfunctory service. It must be a real *school*, with elements of dignity, purpose, and strength. These qualities are possible to the *small* school, and are to-day found in many of the best small rural



schools. Be not deceived with the will-o'-the-wisp of "size," for youth is captured, not so much by numbers in the school as by the strength of the school, its real educational and spiritual value, and the place it provides for youth in its Sabbath and week-day program.

The reason why the rural school has not better held its adolescent pupil is because he has never been seriously considered in the school plans, and has not been regarded as a "worth-while" factor in the school life.

**The School Organization.** The modern efficient rural Sunday school should be organized into the following Divisions, and when the school is sufficiently large the Divisions should be subdivided into departments or classes:

I. *Elementary Division* (birth to 12 years), 4 Departments or Classes; (a) Cradle Roll Department (0 to 3); (b) Beginners' Department (3, 4, 5); (c) Primary Department (6, 7, 8) 3 grades; (d) Junior Department (9, 10, 11, 12) 4 grades.

II. *Secondary Division* (13 to 19 inclusive), 2 Departments or Classes: (a) Intermediate Department (13, 14, 15, 16) 4 grades; (b) Senior Department (17, 18, 19) 3 grades.

III. *Adult Division* (20 and over), as many classes as desired, men, women, or mixed.

It should also have a Home Department, Organized Classes, a Missionary Committee, a Temperance Committee, and such other features as are included in the goal for Standard Schools (inquire

for some of the State Sunday School Association or your own denominational Sunday School Board).

In addition to the teachers the school should have the following officers, which, combined, constitute the Sunday school cabinet: Pastor, Superintendent, Associate Superintendent, Secretary, Treasurer, Superintendent of Classification, Cradle Roll Superintendent, Beginners' Superintendent or Teacher, Primary Superintendent or Teacher, Junior Superintendent or Teacher, Intermediate Superintendent or Teacher, Senior Superintendent or Teacher, Adult Superintendent or Teacher, Home Department Superintendent, Librarian, Organist, Chorister.

Small schools may look upon such a required list of officers as super-organization. However, if the school is to be converted into an efficient working machine these officers should be recognized. Many of the superintendencies may be assigned as teachers in the respective departments. Their duties are so well understood that none but those of the Superintendent, Associate, and the Classification Superintendent are here considered.

**The Superintendent.** The rural Sunday school should have an efficient man for superintendent, for it is he who makes or breaks the school. The superintendent largely limits the work. The school can scarcely rise higher than are his ideals as to what a Sunday school should be. The work of the superintendent is a "man's job"; that is to say, it is a big job; and it should command the time, thought, and devotion of a man who in a marked degree possesses qualities of organization and leadership.

Where such a man is not available the next best man should be secured, while the school diligently seeks to find or train a man fitted to the task. The best schools in these days are training their superintendents. Select a promising, bright, developing young man who consents to prepare himself for the work. Make him temporarily the Associate Superintendent. At the expense of the school provide him with books on "The Sunday School at Work" and kindred text-books for Sunday school superintendents. Send him to State Conventions and Summer Training Schools where he can study at the feet of masters in Sunday school work. Send him away to visit several successful schools as an observer. Superintendents should be retained as long as the school prospers and is kept abreast of the times in Sunday school efficiency, and no longer.

If the Sunday school is not gaining it is losing. If it is not improving it is deteriorating; if it is sluggish and sleepy and slow the superintendent needs to be quickened or excused.

**The Associate Superintendent.** This officer should share the duties and responsibilities of the superintendent, and each Sunday be given some work from the platform. He should, if possible, be a young man, selected to become the superintendent's understudy—a man in training for the position in the event of change. He should be encouraged to fit himself by study and observation for his prospective position, and should be given opportunity occasionally to superintend the school. Every superintendent owes it to himself and to the

school to welcome such an associate, and should take pride in insuring for the school a trained superintendent in the event of death or removal.

**The Classification Superintendent.** To this officer should be committed the assignment of all new pupils to their proper classes. The more thoroughly graded the school, the more the need of such an officer. He or she should, if possible, be a public school teacher, or one who knows the grading of the public schools. It is important that pupils under twenty should be placed in classes where they are grouped with their kind in mental or educational standing. The superintendent will often be saved embarrassment by having such an officer whose decisions are authoritative. The Classification Superintendent may be one of the teachers or possibly one of the adult pupils.

**The Physical Conditions.** If the rural Sunday school is to be organized for largest service in the development of the adolescent the physical conditions as to building, equipment, etc., should be studied.

1. *The Building.* Scarcely too much stress can be placed upon the utility of the building in which the rural school meets. The churches now in use are not to stand forever. When the new building comes it should be built for to-morrow, not for to-day. New village and open-country churches are going up everywhere. Some are planned to better house the Sunday school. Most of them, however, are planned and constructed by building committees which have little conception of the modern educa-

tional demands upon the Sunday school, be it big or little. Their notion is to have, at least once on Sunday, the "dear little children" and everybody else thrown together in one room. The whole architectural plan of the building is surrendered to this bit of "sentimentalism." When on rare and special occasions it is desirable to assemble the whole school in one place the church auditorium may be used. It should be remembered that the Sunday school must more and more become "a school," and it will increasingly need separate rooms in which, without interfering with or disturbing each other, the several departments can work out their departmental problems. Church and Sunday school architects who fail to appreciate this are handicapping for years to come the efficiency and usefulness of the school.

Multiplied thousands of Sunday schools, however, meet in one-room churches. Many of these, with comparatively little expense, can build an annex or wing, and thus provide, at least for the Elementary Division of the school, a bright cheery room, subdivided into three, for the use of the Beginners and Primary Departments or Classes, and the nine, ten, and eleven-year old boys and girls in the Junior Department. Where these changes cannot be made a proper use of curtains hung on wires, or the use of portable screens, will provide separate places for departmental or class instruction. Superintendents of even the smallest schools should study the building, and organize the floor space with a view to giving each group of pupils, by departments or classes,

a definite "spot" which belongs to them, and from which they pass on promotion to some other "spot" of higher grade or rating.

2. *Seating.* Inasmuch as one-half of the Sunday schools in America are held in one room and are seated with stationary pews, how can the seating in such churches be utilized? Certainly the two "Amen Corners" can be cleared of the pews and small chairs of three sizes can be substituted for the use of the children under six and between six and nine. Curtains or portable screens can shut off these corners and convert them into separate places or rooms for the Beginners or Primaries. The gallery, if there be one, can be likewise seated for an adult or secondary class. Where the space between the pews is generous every other pew with little cost can be made convertible. This change will make it possible for the members of the class to be seated opposite each other, and at the same time be grouped about the teacher.

In churches where, in addition to the church auditorium, one or more extra rooms are used for the Beginners and Primary Departments the seating should consist of three sizes of chairs. In churches where separate rooms are available for Sunday school purposes the most desirable seat is a *chair*, rendered noiseless in handling by the use of rubber tips. Chairs yield to departmental and grade divisions and uses. They are far more comfortable than pew or settee.

3. *Bibles.* Plenty of them. Encourage each member of the school to purchase and use his own Bible,

but have enough Bibles on hand, the property of the school, to provide, if necessary, one to each pupil. A school equipped with Bibles has taken a long step toward making the school a real Bible school.

4. *Maps.* A set of good clear outline maps of Bible lands. He who teaches Bible history without maps is as lame as would be a teacher of ancient or medieval or modern history without a geography. A missionary map of the world should frequently be displayed.

5. *Singing Books.* Select books which contain the strong, inspiring, dignified, worshipful, and deeply religious hymns of the Church; such hymns should be memorized. They will live forever. Avoid the light, rag-time, popular, trashy music with nothing in it but jingle. The Sunday school attractive to the adolescent is one in which are often sung the hymns that have stood the test of years and have an established place in the hymnology of the Church. These will create in the school an atmosphere of reverence and worship secured in no other way.

6. *Mottoes.* Neat illuminated texts, mottoes, or striking expressions of great missionaries and Christian statesmen should be hung on the wall and often read by the school in concert. They should be frequently changed to freshen the attractiveness of the school-room.

7. *Pictures.* Decorate the room with reproductions of Bible scenes and characters painted by the great masters, portraits of noted missionaries, noble

churchmen, great exemplary characters of history, and the martyrs.

8. *Flags.* Display before the school at each session at least two flags: "Old Glory" and the "Flag of the Church," or the "Conquest Flag."

9. *Attendance Bulletin Board* through which the record of attendance and offering both present and past are displayed each week in contrast.

10. *A Workers' Library* containing books on modern Sunday school work, books written to help the teachers who wish to specialize in their several grades; a good Bible Dictionary and reference books for Bible study. In other words, give the officers and teachers literature, through a study of which they may become better equipped for their work.

11. *A Blackboard* and other equipment required in an up-to-date Sunday school.

**Lesson Material.** In considering the organization of the rural school for largest service in the development of the adolescent it must be remembered that the Intermediate and Senior Departments and the Adult Division cannot be made what they should be unless the *whole* school is improved. The adolescent of to-morrow is to-day in the Elementary Grades. The improvement must begin there and be carried through all departments of the school. The adolescent must be captured as a child, and the attractions of school environment and educational material must be so carried up into the teen years that in adolescence the school is as attractive as in childhood. This compels a square look at the ques-



tion of lesson material in all departments of the school.

A large number of the small schools in the open country use the International Uniform Lessons throughout the entire school. An increasing number of schools, however, both in the open country and in villages, are using Graded Courses in the Beginners and Primary Grades, and continuing through the Junior Grade, while some have extended their use through the Intermediate and into the Senior Grades with varying degrees of success.

Inquiries from country schools are, however, increasingly numerous as to how to use or adapt the Graded Lessons to the small rural school. To all such schools it should be said that in the larger rural schools the present courses of Graded Lessons are usable. In the very small school it is impossible to establish as many grades as are required to use the lesson courses just as they are planned.

*Beginners and Primary.* In these grades the present Graded Lesson Course can, by teaching the course consecutively year after year to all of the children in each department, be used in *any* school. Should there be only two or three pupils in the Beginners' Class or Department, they should have their lesson quite apart from the Primary.

*Junior.* Fitting the course to the Junior is somewhat of a problem. As the lessons are at present arranged it is impossible to use the books prepared for the fourth year Junior lessons in a class in which are all of the boys or girls or both from nine to twelve years of age. The lesson text might, how-

ever, be used, the scrap-books being made by the children, the teacher carefully guiding. She should need to prepare her own book in advance. This, however, will mean more original work on the part of the teachers.

*Intermediate.* Where Intermediate lessons are introduced into a small school the problem is to find enough teachers to follow a plan of lessons adequate to the needs of the various ages taught. One of the mistakes made in many schools, large and small, urban and rural, is that teachers believe that classes, to do effective work, must be *large*. Indeed, quite the opposite is true. Large groups should be used for social work, etc., but for the lesson teaching much better results will be obtained in the class of four or five. Even here there is always the difficulty of securing a sufficient number of efficient teachers.

It is generally agreed that the greatest force in the life of the ideal-forming early adolescent is personality. "Personality is the vernacular in which ideals speak to youth." It is well, therefore, to put the boys and girls of 13, 14, and 15 into one class and use the biographical lessons of the First and Second Year of the Graded Intermediate Series, with an outline study of the life of Jesus prepared similarly to the Fourth Year Junior work. This method will preclude the advantage of building upon the work of the previous year, but it will have the advantage of acquainting the pupil with the great heroes of the Church, and, best of all, with the one Great Hero.

*Senior.* In a small school pupils in the later adoles-

cent years would also necessarily be grouped in one class. In such a class careful study should be made of the teachings of Jesus, and of the great Church of Jesus Christ: its organization, ordinances, relation to kindred organizations, etc. Upon this kind of teaching, with pupils in later adolescence, depends much of the future of the rural church. If they can be given a vision of the Universal Church of God with its mighty possibilities they will not be content, as have been their fathers, to see the good of the whole community handicapped because of denominational differences and because of a mistaken "loyalty" to a particular branch of the Christian church. The church—undivided—in the rural community will more and more become a community center—not only of religion, but of the *whole life*.

With 16 to 20-year pupils there should be also the study of the Bible *by books*. A wealth of material is available for this work. It may be obtained from the various Graded Lesson Courses, from Teacher Training Books, and many other sources. A senior class may elect to take up a Teacher Training Course of study, the entire class taking the biblical part of the course, with each member specializing (outside the Sunday school hour) in the department of Sunday school work in which he or she is specially interested. Thus the Senior Class will be training the teachers and officers of the school for the early future.

**Extended into the Week-day.** No Sunday school, rural or urban, is at its best if it confines its activities to the Sabbath. Efficient schools are more

and more interested in the week-day life of their pupils, and are providing means to meet the social, mental, and physical hunger of the adolescent. And this is being done in the village and open country. The Organized Class provides a means for working out many practical plans for week-day activity. Many pastors and teachers are gripping the Intermediates through tramps and hikes in connection with which, for a whole season, groups study bird life, insects, forestry, botany, rock formation, photography, and other subjects of fascinating interest to all boys and girls. Baseball clubs and tennis teams, under Sunday school leadership, capture boys through the play life. A Sunday school camp, in which groups of boys and girls in turn, each with proper chaperonage, enjoy a week in the woods, with all the accompanying sports of fishing, swimming, boating, camp fires, etc. Basket ball, microscope parties, stereopticon entertainments, musicals, sleigh-ride parties, etc., are provided for winter evenings. Skating and coasting invite to outdoor life in winter. All these are utilized by many village and open country schools with success, and hold to the school the interest of the adolescent.

### Community School Cooperation

1. *For School Improvement.* In the matter of school improvement, Sunday schools can do *together* that which they cannot do separately. In every community there are problems common to all schools, which cannot be solved by any one of them.

Separated as they have always been by denominational lines, each school working for itself, the problem of the Sunday school as an efficient *moral* and *religious* educational institution in the community remains unsolved until the schools unite, on common ground, without the discussion of doctrine or polity, to reach the last boy and girl, the last youth, the last man and woman, and the last home in the community. This Sunday school team-work in the interest of improved schools is provided for by the Interdenominational Organized Sunday School Work through the Town or District Sunday School Association, under whose auspices are held conventions and institutes, served by Sunday school experts. These conventions are clearing houses for the exchange of Sunday school plans, methods of teaching, etc. It is there the strong school helps and inspires the weak one, and the strong school also learns where it is weak and discovers a remedy.

Under the leadership of the Town or District Associations local school conventions should be held, perhaps consisting of an evening session only, in which certain county departmental specialists deal alone with the local school problems, and, in counsel with the pastor, superintendent, and teachers, impart to the school the help which that particular school needs to reach the "Standard" or "Efficiency" goal of ten points of excellence. In course of a year each Sunday school in the town or district should be the beneficiary of such specific and practical help brought to its very doors.

Rural schools which keep in vital touch with

county and town or district conventions, and are regularly represented by the superintendent and pastor and teachers in such conventions, are invariably the most efficient schools.

2. *For Community Improvement.* Aside from the affiliation of the rural schools in the Town Association in the interest of general Sunday school improvement, there is another school-cooperative-movement in the interest of community welfare. This is due to the new vision of community uplift, through which many schools are ministering to community welfare along every line related to moral and religious community betterment. This they are doing through the self-same Town and District Associations in which they unite for Sunday school improvement.

This is a far broader objective than Bible teaching. The Bible teaching school steps out into the week-days, and through the Rural Department of the Town or District Sunday School Association seeks to cooperate with the County Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Grange, the Day Schools, and other organizations which have as their objective the vitalizing of community life.

The Rural Department usually introduces its work with a survey of community life which is more than a house-to-house visitation in the interest of the church or school. It is a survey in the interest of the discovery of the special needs of the community and includes a definite knowledge of every phase of the community life, including its popula-

tion, industries, civic, educational, social, recreative, and federated interests.

The work of the Rural Department is under the care and supervision of the Township Rural Superintendent, who is in close contact with the County and State Rural Department Superintendents. The Township Rural Superintendent should be the recognized representative of all the schools in their cooperative community welfare work. He is to gather the surplus or waste material, or literature, books, etc., from the schools and distribute the same; organize Sunday schools in neglected communities; provide, in connection with the state (where states furnish them) traveling libraries to schools or for the community; arrange for educational lectures with lantern slides covering Temperance, Hygiene, Social Problems, Travel, Industries, Community Betterment, and foster and supervise the social and athletic life of the town, union Sunday school picnics, and field days.

In this article the writer has not aimed to make the rural Sunday school satisfied with its present achievements. He has rather sought to create a wholesome discontent with the old order of rural Sunday school work and to set before schools present-day ideals as to what the rural Sunday school of to-day should be, and what it should do for itself, its neighboring Sunday schools, and the community life.

The suggestions given are born of experience and observation. Only such plans have been suggested as have been successfully worked out in many rural

schools, schools which are conspicuous because of success in holding their youth and in contributing to the moral and religious development of the adolescent in the rural community.



## CHAPTER X

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE ADOLESCENT COMMISSION FOR THE RURAL SUNDAY SCHOOL

The reports of the various Committees of the Rural Sunday School Commission, appearing in the foregoing chapters, have covered the main lines of investigation and also the larger problems of the rural Sunday school. This chapter is a summary of the material offered in the preceding chapters, together with such other material and opinions as the Executive Committee of the Commission could secure, as a brief, general statement of the whole problem. There may appear to be some duplication or even difference in recommendation in this summary, nevertheless it seems best to the Commission to present its findings in this manner.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RURAL SUNDAY SCHOOL

**The Importance of Rural Life.** We must learn to approach the problem that lies in front of every social institution by endeavoring to discover the real reason for its continued existence; in other words, by trying to learn its function. We ought

to be willing to discard outworn social institutions, as well as to adapt efficient institutions to human need as it develops under different and changing conditions of society.

We cannot, therefore, understand the importance of the rural Sunday school, and if necessary reshape it, unless we understand its place in rural life; and its place in rural life is determined in part by the significance of rural life itself. If we think of the rural people as simply so many human beings choosing to earn their living by tilling the soil, and of the farm problem as chiefly the problem of assisting those people to grow a larger food supply for the rest of the world, we can find little need for the Sunday school or for any other institution which interests itself in the higher life of the countryman. The real importance of rural life lies in the fact that we have in America over fifty millions of people living under rural conditions. The growth of great cities; the concentration of wealth in a few hands, largely in the cities; the development of modern facilities of communication and transportation; the amazing array of means of entertainment or enjoyment which the cities present; the steady drift of a large share of the best brain and virility of the country communities to the city; the increasing cost of land, thus making it more difficult to gain access to the soil; the influx of foreign-speaking peoples who are willing temporarily to sacrifice standards of comfort, to which the American farmer has become accustomed, for the sake of securing a foothold on the land; the introduction of habits of

life and modes of thinking alien to our country communities—all of these things bring us face to face with a problem of national welfare which can no longer be ignored or disregarded. What shall be the type of life among these fifty millions of rural people? What shall be the character of coming generations whose number is sure to be greater? What shall be their modes of thinking, their standards of morals? How are they to fulfil the complete obligations of citizenship? Are they to be inferior to the people of the cities? Is the rustic to take the place of the independent American farmer—the peasant to supersede the yeoman?

**The Importance of the Spiritual or Religious Element in Rural Life.** To the man who interprets success in terms of economic gain, or who believes that the foundations of morality lie in knowledge rather than in motive, institutions similar to the Sunday school make little appeal. Economic efficiency is unquestionably the foundation for a permanent rural life. But we believe with all our hearts that the most significant phase of the rural question is how this economic prosperity may ultimately be put to the highest spiritual uses. To Christian men and women the idea of higher spiritual uses signifies immediately that type of life which is motived and molded by religion. They hold a firm belief that God rules the world, and that the work of man is a partnership with God in a service for men as individuals and as a race. To those who believe thus the institutions which foster the religious spirit are, therefore, the institutions

of greatest moment in any movement on behalf of rural progress.

**The Importance of the Country Church.** Consequently we do not hesitate to affirm that the country church is the most important rural institution, and its work the most significant and far-reaching of all the many phases of the rural life movement. If we desire a rural civilization based on other foundations than those of material prosperity, if we cherish the hope of maintaining upon the land a fertile seed-bed of great men and women, if we desire to retain as soil-workers the highest type of American citizenship, we believe it imperative that the Church, as the great foster-mother of the religious motive, shall have real leadership in any movement intended to usher in the new day.

**The Importance of the Rural Sunday School.** The extent to which the Sunday school, as distinguished from the Church, is to be a factor in rural life depends upon the conception of the work of the Sunday school as an institution. If we think of it as a school of religious education, embracing adults as well as youth and children, we see at once that it must have a prime place in our rural institutional life. Even if its function be limited to the religious training of the young, it must still play a most important part. Its greatest value, however, in our judgment, will be shown by this test: Can it hold to itself the *youth* of both sexes? Can the boys and girls of the ages from twelve to twenty be kept in the rural Sunday school? Here is the whole problem in a nutshell. Under modern conditions, if an

institution for the study of the Bible, either as a religious book or as a guide to a practical life, or both, can succeed in retaining the interest of a great majority of boys and girls until they have reached the age of eighteen or nineteen years, that institution will have a more powerful molding influence upon the life and character of our American nation than any other single influence within its borders.

This broad statement is made without any qualification and is based on two or three simple principles:

1. That the ages from twelve to twenty are the most impressionable in the life of the individual. It is in this period of life that dynamic and guiding ideas are likely to root themselves in the heart.

2. If the religious motive can at this time of life be made the dominant motive it will be the greatest single factor in the development of the best life of the individual and of the community.

3. That the fact that the Sunday school can retain the interest of its pupils during this period is of itself evidence of its influence and of the molding power that it exerts.

**The Sunday School the Key to the Country Church Situation.** So keenly do we feel the possibilities of the country Sunday school that we do not hesitate to say that one of the most powerful agencies in bringing the country church to its normal leadership in the country life movement is the revived Sunday school. Within ten years boys and girls at present in the teen age will be the men and

women most completely alive to the new demands upon the country church—if they are in the church; and if they are not in the church the country church will be in worse condition than it is to-day. The rural Sunday school, then, in large measure, holds the key to the country church situation, and the country church, in our philosophy of country life, holds the key to the highest type of rural development. And the question whether we are to have the very highest type of intellectual and social and moral life out in the open country is indisputably one of the prime problems of the twentieth century in America.

We are quite aware that by somewhat similar logic the indispensable character of other institutions for the training of youth might also be established, and we are ready to admit the logic and to join with those who plead for a better rural school, for larger recreative facilities for boys and girls in the country, or for any other institutions or agencies that bring zest to life in the country or that enlarge its opportunities. But we assert that inasmuch as the religious motive is the only sufficient motive in the life of men, the institution most completely responsible for the development of the religious motive at the time of life when the motive must take root, is the most important institution connected with the solution of the problem of human life.

## THE PRESENT SITUATION IN THE RURAL SUNDAY SCHOOL

We must face squarely the actual situation that confronts the rural Sunday school of to-day. If it is possible for us to find out the facts we must know them, no matter how discouraging a condition they may reveal. From the statistical point of view the situation seems to be somewhat as follows:

**The Deficiencies in the Rural Sunday School.** A canvass of the entire commission on the question, What are the main defects in the present rural Sunday school situation? brought varying answers, but, at the same time, a surprising unanimity on certain main points. These agreements may, therefore, be summarized somewhat as follows:

1. *A Lack of Competent Leadership.* This has reference largely to the lack of trained teachers and supervisors—the difficulty of finding persons who know how to make the rural Sunday school attractive to young people, and who can build up a permanent institution that abides the frequent change of personnel that every Sunday school must undergo. This also recognizes the lack of supervision by the denominational bodies particularly charged with the work of Sunday school development.

2. *Inadequacy of Teaching Material.* There is a firmly rooted conviction on the part of our commission that in the country Sunday school we should interpret the Bible in terms of the every-day life-experience of the boys and girls, and that whenever

those experiences are developed in a rural environment that environment must serve as the background for effective teaching. This implies an existing failure to provide just the right sort of helps, as well as an adequate supply of teachers who can teach in this way.

3. *The Inadequacy of Equipment.* A very large proportion of the small country churches have but one room. Many of them have no maps, nothing with which to work, in fact, very little to indicate that the institution is really a school.

4. *Failure to Understand the Real Task.* A fundamental defect is a failure to understand the real work of the Sunday school, its place in the community, the actual task it has in hand, and hence to organize the right sort of program to make the Sunday school effective.

Other deficiencies are suggested, but these seem to be the main criticisms of the present situation. The extent to which they are valid depends in a large measure upon our belief in the possibilities of such an institution as the Sunday school. Of course, if we have in mind an ideal Sunday school, it is easy to point out most glaring defects, but we believe that, judged even by practical and reasonable standards of achievement, on the whole the rural Sunday school of the period is in a bad way. It is not retaining the youth, and consequently it is not doing its work. The Church is dependent upon the Sunday school to bring its own children eventually into the Church. And if the children do not



stay in the Sunday school how can they cross the bridge into the Church?

**The Advantages of the Rural Sunday School.** But it must not be supposed that the rural Sunday school situation is wholly disheartening. As a matter of fact, in many of the better farming regions the country Sunday schools are in as good condition as they are in large sections of our cities, when judged by their success in retaining the young people. It is difficult to analyze a situation of this sort without seeming to forget the magnificent work that is being done, the large number of devoted and intelligent helpers who are rendering a significant service. For the fact, after all, remains that human institutions fall short of our ideals for them. The rural Sunday school is not a dead institution.

**Economic Conditions as Affecting the Sunday School.** Studies by the Sub-commission on Survey bring out pretty clearly the fact that in a great many rural communities the proportion of the people near the ragged edge industrially is so great that resources for the adequate support of the institutions of religion are quite lacking. Consequently the statesmen of the Sunday school—and this applies equally to the Church—must join hands with those who are endeavoring to build up more efficient farming, because only on the foundation of greater economic prosperity can permanent rural institutions be reared.

**Tenant Farming as Affecting Religion.** Reports also indicate that wherever tenant farming has become dominant interest in Sunday school is at a low

ebb. This seems to be due, not merely to the fact that in some sections the new people are of a different class, and perhaps bring their own religious institutions with them, but also to the fact that, being tenants, and often temporary tenants, they have less interest in the institutions of the community.

**The Influence of Foreign-Speaking People.** To an increasing degree the Protestant Sunday school situation in country districts is being complicated by an influx of foreign-speaking peoples. These people, though usually with large families, are in a sense not "material" for the rural Sunday school which we are now discussing. As a rule they bring their own language as well as religious institutions with them, and do not amalgamate ecclesiastically with the older American types with whom they cast their lot.

#### THE PLACE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL IN RURAL LIFE

We must cease to regard institutions as ends in themselves. Their aim and methods should be tested and retested in terms of the human needs which they serve and for which it is believed they are indispensable, or at least highly important. Doubtless a statement of the real work of the rural Sunday school would be phrased by different individuals in diverse ways. It is necessary, however, as a prerequisite to a large development of rural Sunday school work that the leaders may agree in substance, if not in phraseology, upon the main

task which the Sunday school is set to perform. We have endeavored to formulate this task, not in precise scientific thought, but by simply and in general terms indicating what we believe to be the function of the rural Sunday school as an organ of service on behalf of the higher interests of our rural people.

**The Fundamental Function of the Sunday School.** The Sunday school is the Church at work in a particular manner. The Sunday school is not a separate institution. It should always be regarded as a means by which the Church seeks to accomplish a definite end. Broadly speaking, the Sunday school is a school of character building, in which the emphasis is laid upon religion as the governing motive of life. Its mission is more particularly, though not exclusively, to the younger children and youth. It is an educational institution, but it has a very definite objective. That objective is the development of Christian character.

**Its Aim and Purpose.** The immediate aim and purpose of the Sunday school is to utilize the Bible as the supreme religious literature of the race, and the chief means of developing Christian character. Bible study, therefore, is the core of the Sunday school. But in order to make the study effective the Sunday school must teach in the terms of life and experience which the pupils appreciate and understand. The inculcation of religious principles applied to the whole range of human life as it is actually lived by the pupils is the important aim and purpose of the Sunday school. The teaching, therefore, must not be academic, but practical, and all the

processes to attain their full value must be in harmony with the laws of character development.

**Program for the Rural Sunday School.** If the Sunday school clearly understands its task it will naturally develop a definite program consisting of a few main lines of effort, a program which can be adapted to use under varying conditions, the details of which must be applied by each Sunday school for itself. Such a program would be illustrated by the following outline:

1. The rural Sunday school should have definite courses of instruction, with the Bible as the basis, although not the exclusive material of teaching, supplemented by such helps as will explain religious principles and their application to affairs of individuals and to society.

2. It should seek to include as many individuals as possible, not only the children and the youth, but also the adults; not only the people in the Church, but all in the community who can be induced to come. While the Sunday school is the Church at work in a particular way, it should be considered not merely an appendage of the Church, but a unique means and opportunity for religious education that is otherwise not likely to be provided.

3. It should seek to impress its spirit upon the daily activities of its pupils, and to that end it should develop activities that make it in the minds of its pupils a continuing and pervasive influence and not a separate, single hour of the week with no relationships to daily living and thinking.

## THE RELATIONSHIPS OF THE RURAL SUNDAY SCHOOL

1. **To the Home.** The tendency of the modern home is to shift its responsibilities in a considerable degree to the day school, to the Church, and to various associations and organizations. In a measure this tendency is inevitable, but it is accompanied by serious losses. The Sunday school should consciously seek to enlist the home as its ally; or to put the matter even more strongly, it should consider itself as an ally of the home, and should endeavor to bring the parents of children who are pupils in the Sunday school to aid definitely in the task of training the children in Christian character. A well-regulated home life can perhaps dispense with the Sunday school, although that is doubtful. It is possible that the ideal Sunday school can make up for serious deficiencies in the home life, although that also is doubtful. But it is only when the more formal and definite teachings of the Sunday school can be supplemented by both the teachings and example of the home that we can expect the results we desire.

2. **To the Church.** The most natural outcome of the work of the Sunday school should be cherished—the participation in the work of the Church. The Sunday school should be considered the vestibule to the Church. The transition from prime interest in the Sunday school to prime interest in the Church should be as natural as the growth from youth to manhood and womanhood. This is the ideal relationship.

3. **To Young People's Societies.** There are those who believe that the day of the young people's society has passed and that a well-regulated Sunday school would make such societies unnecessary. However this may be, there ought to be here, too, a close relationship. If the young people's society can be dispensed with, let us not retain it. If it is a reflection on the efficiency of the Sunday school, let us make the Sunday school what it ought to be. If the two institutions really serve useful ends, neither of which can be accomplished by the other, let us keep them both, and let us so weld them together that they may not only not conflict, but may supplement each other.

4. **To the Day School.** There can be no organic connection between the Sunday school and publicly supported day schools, but there ought to be the most intimate spiritual connection between the two. The teaching of the day school cannot be formally directed toward inculcating the Christian motive through study of religious literature, but it should be a means of character building. It should be permeated by the Christian spirit. Its atmosphere should be the atmosphere of love and of devotion to the truth. There should be no hiatus between the teaching of the Sunday school and the daily life of the school.

5. **To Recreative and Social Life.** Of course the Christian spirit should pervade recreation and sociability. To this extent the Sunday school relates itself intimately to these phases of the life of youth. The question is at once raised, however, whether

the Sunday school as an institution shall take over, in part or wholly, the recreative and social activities of youth which are numerous, and which should be carried out in some organized fashion. We believe firmly and enthusiastically that the Sunday school may well take to itself recreative and social functions; that is, it may, through various devices, minister to the normal desires and needs of youth on the recreative and social side. We believe, however, that it is unwise to insist that the Sunday school shall be the only, or even the chief, center of the interest of youth along these lines.

It is easy to magnify the work of a single institution like the Sunday school by arguing that because its motive is the highest possible motive—the development of Christian character—and that because Christian character is made, not by teaching alone, but by the formation of habits amidst the normal activities of life, therefore, the logical outcome of Sunday school work is to take over all the activities of youth in order that youth may have a consistent Christian training. We must recognize the principle of division of labor among institutions. In our opinion organized social and recreative life can best be fostered by organizations framed for that purpose, either through the schools or through public playgrounds, or through specially organized groups.

We recognize that it is possible and desirable to vastly enlarge the function of the Sunday school in ministering to the play instincts of the boys and girls. Our counsel concerning this situation may

be put in a sentence: Make the Sunday school, so far as possible, a natural center around which may gather the recreative and social activities of its members, but do not assume that it can be or should be the only organized institution which is to lead in the recreative life of the community.

**Adults in the Sunday School.** The rural Sunday school probably contains a larger proportion of adults than does the urban Sunday school. The traditional Sunday school is for children. The problem that this commission has set for itself is to determine whether there are not means of keeping youth in the Sunday school. In order to do this it may not be amiss to suggest that the presence of a fair proportion of adults in constant attendance at the Sunday school, not in a perfunctory way or simply as a matter of conscience, but as interested learners in common with the children and youth, is one of the most effective means of maintaining the prestige of the Sunday school. It is just because the elders have relegated the Sunday school to the children that the youth on the verge of manhood and womanhood come to despise the Sunday school.

#### THE ORGANIZATION OF THE RURAL SUNDAY SCHOOL

This question is so thoroughly treated as a specific topic in the report of the sub-commission on this subject that your executive committee desires to make only a few observations of a general character.



1. **Grading.** The rural Sunday school can be less easily graded than the urban Sunday school, and it is a fundamental principle that grading should not be imposed upon the rural Sunday school. The fact that a graded Sunday school works well in the city is no reason why it will work well in the country. The time to grade a rural Sunday school and the method of grading it must be determined by the needs of the school, and not by any official edict, or by any hard and fast plan laid down by outside agencies. Unquestionably some measure of grading should be introduced even in the smaller Sunday schools. There should be an intelligent progression in the work. Hit-or-miss methods should be discarded, simply because they are ineffective. Grading is merely a device based on the fundamental principle that teaching must be adapted to the growing mind of the pupil.

2. **Supervision.** The smaller the school the less the need of machinery, and consequently, the less the need of supervision. On the other hand, the smaller the school, the greater the need of constant, enthusiastic leadership. Possibly the small rural Sunday school can learn more from the advice of experts and the experience of other Sunday schools than is the case in the large urban Sunday school, because the latter is likely to have larger resources of initiative and leadership within its own ranks. Supervision is essential, but supervision may be carried to the extreme of creating dependence. Wise supervision consists in suggestion and stimulus rather than dictation or responsibility.

3. **Committees.** The rural Sunday school is a distinct problem, and on this account, as well as because of the need of the right sort of supervision, we believe that there should be formed as soon as practicable in every state a well-organized Rural Sunday School Committee. Such a Committee, under wise leadership, will not only develop methods specially adapted to the rural Sunday school, but will also create enthusiasm and *esprit de corps* among rural Sunday school workers.

4. **A National Board of Experts.** It is probably impracticable to have in each state a group of experts in rural Sunday school work who can give all their time to rural Sunday schools. But it is not too much to expect that a National Board of Experts (or a Committee of the International Sunday School Association) in Rural Sunday School Work can be maintained who can give their service to the rural Sunday school departments in the several states. In this way there may be developed a closely knit, and yet an elastic, form of supervision and organization of the whole rural Sunday school movement.

#### SOME SPECIFIC PROBLEMS OF THE RURAL SUNDAY SCHOOL

**Religious Teaching, the Primary Work.** We must keep in mind that the building of Christian character is the objective of the Sunday school, and that to a very large degree the use of the Bible is the chief dependence in the Sunday school. There

are certain aspects of the work of the Sunday school growing out of this prime purpose that call for supplementary work. Some of these we now mention.

**Special Rural Sunday School Helps.** Several of the sub-commissions have emphasized—some of them very strongly indeed—that we need specially constructed lesson helps. The principle on which these suggestions are made is the sound pedagogic notion that the most effective teaching is in terms of the environment of the individual learner. The application of this principle to the rural Sunday school means that the teaching will become much more effective and abiding if the illustrative material and the applications of the teaching consist in those things that surround the pupil—that is, rural life.

The point is also made that the Bible, and especially the teachings of Christ, are full of references to rural life, largely, of course, because a considerable proportion of the life of the people that is recorded in the Bible was a rural life. Your committee endorses this principle, but with one caution. We must not allow ourselves to be put in the position of advocating that only that teaching is effective which teaches in terms of the immediate and known environment of the pupil. We desire to swing away from that academic method of teaching which takes the pupil utterly out of relationship to his experience. But there is also a peril in the method of teaching by environment—a narrow horizon and a stifled ambition. Teaching by environment should lead naturally to the enlargement of

“environment,” by imagination, to take in the whole range of human experience.

**The Inculcation of Rural Beauty.** One of the most rewarding opportunities of the rural Sunday school, which is now almost entirely neglected, though it grows immediately out of the teachings of the Bible, and especially the teachings of Jesus, concerns itself with the beauty and poetry of country life. The most religious experience in the farmer's life is attained when the farmer becomes conscious that he is directly in partnership with God himself, and acts upon that consciousness. The farmer's task is nothing less than to serve as the steward of God on behalf of the fundamental work of feeding the human race.

The farmer ought to be the most religious man in the world, because more intimately than any other man does he work day in and day out with those primary forces of nature that the Christian believes to be simply the expressions of God's will and method. So, too, the farmer lives day by day close to the heart of the Eternal. If there be any beauty in the world he should see it and feel it. The possibilities of personal culture, the development of a genuine religious spirit, the attainment of real content are all based very largely upon the realization on the part of the farmer that he is working with God, and that he is in intimate touch with the primary sources of beauty and of poetic and spiritual feeling. Now there is no better place than the rural Sunday school for inculcating this attitude toward rural life. It is eminently religious, and it

is eminently rewarding both for teacher and for pupil.

### SPECIAL ACTIVITIES OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

We have already referred to this phase of the Sunday school problem. It is brought in here simply because it forms one of the specific problems of the revived rural Sunday school. When we discuss the social and recreative activities possible in the rural Sunday school we must also consider the relationships of the Sunday school to the community in general. If there are adults in the Sunday school, why should not the Sunday school become the center from which shall radiate movements for the improvement of the moral and spiritual life of the community? If this ideal is carried out then the social and recreative activities fostered by the Sunday school will soon be supplemented by many community enterprises initiated in behalf of the best life of the community.

It seems to your committee that two or three principles of action may be laid down as a safe guide for developing the social and community side of the Sunday school, without taking the position that it is the only, or perhaps the chief, community activity for these ends.

I. We may safely urge that the rural Sunday school develop, so far as it can, its social and recreative and community activities. It should do this, however, not for the sake of supplanting some other institution, but simply because it believes that

more can be accomplished in this way than in any other for the upbuilding of Christian individuals and a Christian community.

2. Division of labor between the Sunday school and other institutions and activities should be frankly recognized.

3. The cooperation of all the Sunday schools in the same community should be considered as absolutely essential. So long as we have denominations we shall have separate Sunday schools. But the definite cooperation of all the Sunday schools in many common ends should be regarded as a fundamental part of the rural Sunday school program. The federation, or cooperation, of rural Sunday schools should be one of the great objectives of our new campaign on behalf of an enlarged rural Sunday school work.

**Decision Day.** One of the devices commended for making the Sunday school work really effective is Decision Day. This has a two-fold aspect: first, appointing a day on which young people are invited to decide upon permanent and avowed alliance with the Church as an institution, and to establish a personal relationship with God as their Father and with Christ as their Saviour and Leader; second, securing a decision to pursue some definitely religious vocation, such as the ministry, missionary work, or forms of lay religious service. The religious workers of the world must come very largely from the Sunday school, and heretofore a very large proportion of the religious workers of this country

at least have come from the rural Sunday school, which is still an important source of supply.

#### THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS FOR THE RURAL SUNDAY SCHOOL

It is universally conceded that one of the great concerns of the Sunday school is the supply of trained teachers. The Sunday school is probably weaker at this point than at any other. It is dependent on teachers whose services are given intermittently, and on faithful teachers who have insufficient qualifications for the work. In the rural Sunday school the proportion of available teachers, who are as competent as untrained teachers can be, is probably as large as it is in the city, but the difficulty of getting trained teachers is much greater. This condition is sure to change. We find a rapidly increasing number of young men and young women trained in agricultural schools and colleges who are going back to the land. The quality of the day school teachers in country districts will improve. The rural Young Men's Christian Association is rapidly developing leaders. All of these persons realize as never before their function as community-builders, and as soon as they realize that the rural Sunday school is one of the most significant institutions for community building, they may be counted upon to ally themselves enthusiastically with the Sunday school, so that we may expect in the course of time the addition of trained leadership to the rural Sunday school forces. There

are, however, some devices which can be utilized in the country for the development of teachers.

**Conferences.**—Conferences for rural Sunday school teachers are best developed under the leadership of a State Rural Sunday School Committee and in cooperation with a National Board of Rural Sunday School Experts or International Sunday School Association Committee.

**Correspondence Courses.**—These conferences should be followed up by correspondence courses, not too difficult, designed to develop the teaching faculty on the part of those who take the courses.

**Special Institutions.**—As the institutions for the training of rural leaders multiply, they are sure to call attention to the religious side of country life, and it will not be long before we may expect to find in our country communities a good many persons who have had a considerable amount of special training in religious pedagogy.

Probably the time has not come when we can expect people to specialize as rural Sunday school teachers and train themselves in special institutions for this purpose. We must rather look to the means of assisting those who are to live in the country and who believe in the Sunday school as a great agency in rural community building, to take advantage of such devices as can be offered for coming into touch with the most approved methods of Sunday school work.



## PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS

We have already referred to the significance of the home in its relation to the Sunday school. This cannot be emphasized too strongly. The method of bringing about closer cooperation lies, we believe, in the organization of associations of parents and Sunday school teachers. These associations need not be elaborate organizations. They should bring together the teachers and parents of pupils in all the Sunday schools of a given community or in a given group of communities; and the discussion need be not so much of methods and devices, as of the real problems of living that exist in that community and affect the boys and girls. In this way opportunity will be found to place before the parents the real situation and possibly the real dangers that confront their boys and girls, and to secure their intelligent aid in making the Sunday school more effective.

**The Picture of the Ideal Rural Sunday School.**—The rural Sunday school faces a great opportunity. The country life movement is growing apace. We have determined to make rural life all it ought to be. We are determined that the business of agriculture shall flourish. We purpose that it shall be carried on with a high degree of intelligence and in obedience to scientific laws. We purpose also that the life of the countryman shall be a satisfying and full life. We recognize that the hope of the future in the country, as everywhere, lies with its young people. We believe profoundly that we cannot have

a rural civilization of the type that we desire, unless it is suffused with the Christian spirit. We believe that the rural Sunday school, more perhaps than any other single institution, has before it the task of spiritualizing the young life of our country neighborhoods, and consequently of laying the foundations for a Christian rural civilization.

Thus we desire to have in every rural community a Sunday school that, conscious of its opportunity and its task, develops a full program; succeeds in interesting all of the children and youth of the community; makes its teachings so vital and so human that sustained membership is secured; and so connects itself with the lives of the people that its influence permeates all their activities.

#### RECAPITULATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The best approach to the problem of the rural Sunday school is through the gates of appreciation of the importance of building in the United States an adequate rural civilization. If we cannot find a great need for the rural Sunday school we are no longer called upon to discuss it as an institution. Hence we must first of all learn the significance to American national life of the agricultural industry, of the agricultural population, and of the problems that the people of the farms have to face both as workers and as human beings.

We must also appreciate the fact that tremendous forces are at work making for the upbuilding of agriculture on its economic side. We must realize

that in comparison with the activities and efficiency of these forces, those agencies that are designed to emphasize the spiritual or religious element have not yet aroused themselves nor adapted themselves to the new need. Hence we affirm that the country church and its allies is the most important rural institution, and its work the most significant and far-reaching of all the many phases of the rural life movement.

The immediate importance of the Sunday school is based on two or three simple principles: (1) That the years from twelve to twenty are the most impressionable in the life of the individual; (2) That the religious motive, once it dominates a person of this age, is likely to be the greatest single factor in the development of his best life and of his service to the community; (3) So keenly do we feel the possibility of the country Sunday school that we believe it is one of the most powerful agencies in bringing the country church to its normal leadership in the country life movement.

It is questionable whether the rural Sunday school is more deficient than the country church or the rural day school. It is always easy to point out defects, but even the most enthusiastic friend of the Sunday school must admit that it has rather serious defects. These are indicated by a canvass made by the Commission. The lack of leadership; the inadequacy of teaching material and of equipment; sometimes the failure to understand the real work of the Sunday school—these seem to be clearly marked deficiencies in the present rural Sunday

school. On the other hand, in many of the better farming regions the country Sunday schools are as good as our city Sunday schools, and there is no question but the American Sunday school has performed and is to-day performing a work of tremendous value in maintaining a right sort of life in our rural regions.

The Sunday school is the Church at work in a special manner. It is not a separate institution; it is a means by which the Church seeks to accomplish a definite end. Its immediate aim and purpose is to utilize the Bible, which it regards as the supreme religious literature of the race, as the core of the effort to develop Christian character. It would seem obvious that in organizing this work the rural Sunday school must have definite courses of instruction, should seek to include adults as well as children and youth, and, above all, should seek to impress its spirit upon the daily activities of its pupils so that it may become a continuing and pervasive influence.

It is possible that the ideal Sunday school can make up for serious deficiencies in the home life, but it is only when the teachings of the Sunday school are supplemented by both the teachings and the examples of the home that we can expect the results we desire. The Sunday school too must relate itself naturally and closely to the Church, the young people's society, the day school, and to the recreative and social life of its pupils.

The question of organizing the rural Sunday school cannot be settled by methods that have

proved effective in the city. For example, grading is more difficult; and yet some method of grading should be introduced, even in small Sunday schools. Supervision also is essential, but may be carried to an extreme. Wise supervision consists in suggestion and stimulus rather than in direction or dictation.

Undoubtedly specially constructed lesson helps may be used with great advantage in the rural Sunday school, although this should not be carried too far. But certainly the rural pupil should be brought to appreciate the spiritual element in rural beauty, the spiritual meaning of his environment, and the possibilities of his daily life in the country.

The country Sunday school should develop, so far as it can, social and recreative activities, but should do this in a large degree in cooperation with other agencies.

One of the devices recommended for making the Sunday school really effective is Decision Day.

The question of training teachers for the rural Sunday school is a difficult one. We may expect that some time the rural Sunday school will have the benefit of teachers specially trained for this work. For the present such means as conferences, correspondence courses, and self-study must be relied upon to a very large degree. Undoubtedly meetings of both the teachers and parents will help not only in training teachers and making them more alert, but also in bringing the home and Sunday school more closely together.

**\*RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. We recommend the organization of Rural Sunday School Committees of the International Sunday School Association in all states and provinces where it is practicable and where not already organized. It is highly desirable that the rural Sunday school problem be sufficiently differentiated from the urban Sunday school problem so that special attention may be given to it. In order that special attention may be given to it it is almost an imperative condition of efficiency that at least one person in each state, and, if possible, a staff of individuals be constantly employed to study the needs of the rural Sunday school in that state and to take leadership in developing the work along the most effective lines.

2. We question the advisability of compiling a set of lessons specifically intended for use in the rural Sunday schools and entirely apart from the lessons intended for other Sunday schools. It is true that the mind of the rural pupil is affected by his environment. It is true that his environment is different. At the same time there is serious danger of overemphasizing in the use of educational materials these differences between rural and urban. We believe it would be advisable, however, to prepare lesson helps or readings to be used in connection with the regular lessons and which are filled with illustrative material designed to enable the

\*In reading these recommendations, it would be wise to re-read the recommendations of Chapter III.—Editor.

boy and girl in the country Sunday school to understand more completely than he might otherwise do the intimate relationships between the human and natural life, between matter and the problems of character and personal growth, that he must solve for himself.

3. The task of coordinating the rural Sunday school on the one hand with the other agencies of religion, such as the various young people's societies, the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, etc., and, on the other hand, correlating the Sunday school with those normal recreative and social activities that form so large a part of the education of youth, as one of the most important and one of the most difficult problems which the rural Sunday school has to face. We believe firmly that the Sunday school in both city and country must be essentially a school of religion, but it must be pervaded with reality. Its atmosphere must be not that of the cloister, but of life. Its teaching must be vital and not academic.

And in order to be vital the institution itself must not stand apart and separate, but must rather be the nucleus and center about which other agencies and activities may cluster. Moreover, the individual pupils of the rural Sunday school must be made to feel that in the Sunday school they are learning interesting lessons that are not about things foreign and apart, but are learning how to use the ordinary experiences of everyday life as a means of becoming better and stronger and nobler. The Sunday school suffers from institutionalism; it

suffers from separatism. It must be vitalized in terms of country experience and country life.

This need of correlation raises a tremendously difficult question. On the other hand, if the function of the Sunday school is unduly enlarged, it then takes the place of other agencies. If it is unduly minimized, then other agencies rob it of its rightful share in the religious education of youth. We believe that it is not the function of the Sunday school to serve as a means by which all activities of the country youth are concentrated under the banner of one institution. On the other hand, it must not stand apart from these activities so that the youth comes to think of it as having no relationship with his other interests. We say this not merely because from the standpoint of institutional organizations we regard it unwise, but because fundamentally it is thoroughly wrong to give the boy or girl the impression that religion is something different and separate from life itself—life as it is lived on Monday and on Friday, life as it manifests itself in play, in work, in community interests. The real test of Sunday school efficiency, the real problem of the Sunday school, lies in its power to interpret life in terms of God and to interpret God in terms of plain, common, homely, human life.

4. The Sunday school cannot attain its maximum efficiency until the parents of pupils cooperate in some measure. Daily home work for the Sunday school pupil would not only assist in bringing the child into new consciousness of the significance of the Sunday school, but it would make the best



method of approach for the parent's aid. Leaflets intended for pupils could be prepared and distributed among the parents. These leaflets could give the main facts concerning the lessons that the pupil is following, pupil readings and other readings, and indicate how the parent could work with the child in the Sunday school preparation.

5. In some respects the most difficult problem of the rural Sunday school is the problem of the teacher. This, of course, is difficult everywhere, but peculiarly so in the country because of lack of material. It is well enough to suggest the development of trained teachers, but where shall we get the teachers, and how shall we train them? In the better rural communities there are intelligent men and women, perhaps somewhat old-fashioned in their theology and methods, but nevertheless possessing an effective knowledge of the Bible and considerable experience in teaching it. But we expect that the supply of teachers from this group is rapidly decreasing. Are there any to take their places? It is quite evident that the only material available is the material that exists in the country community. It is impossible to employ specialists. It is impossible to bring in people from outside the parish. The teaching must be done by those among the members of the Sunday school, or at least the people of the community. In some way those who are at all competent to teach must be prevailed upon to do so, and some device must be found by which they can be trained. This training, however, cannot be developed to any extent through special

schools. Sunday school institutes, pastors' normal training classes, reading and correspondence courses must be relied upon as the main methods for teacher training.

Of course, we hope the day is dawning when there will come into all our farm communities young men and young women educated in the agricultural schools and colleges, desiring to live their lives in the country, ambitious to be of all the service possible, and trained also to take hold of the problems of the Church as well as the problems of the farm. We believe that so important is it that the number of these should be increased and that they should come back thoroughly imbued with the spirit of service, as well as endowed with the ability to teach, that we wish to urge that the International Sunday School Association, in common with the other agencies of religion, organize a special propaganda among the students of the various schools and colleges, to the end that those who are going back to the country may go back prepared to teach and to lead in church, Sunday school, and in other forms of religious community work.

## CHAPTER XI

### SQUARED FOR WORK

To know the boys and girls of the rural districts, their needs and lives and life surroundings, and to fit to these some kind of adapted work for the development of rural boyhood and girlhood—such is both the warrant and the finding of the Rural Sunday School Commission. To this end the commission has gathered the evidence and has rendered the verdict.

The next thing to do is to go to work along the line of the conclusions.

Three factors must be carefully noted as we meet this task: the individual, rural economic and social conditions, and the rural Sunday school itself. Chapters II, III and VIII should be read together. It is good to know that folks everywhere are pretty nearly the same and that in the rural districts they are at their best; less nervous, slower in thought but steadier in action. We might have known also that folks cannot be understood or helped apart from their surroundings and that all our Sunday school organization must be fitted to rural need just as much as it ever can be graded to the city.

The rural Sunday school's greatest need is leadership, and that, too, is the chief lack in the city. It

likewise has been the compelling need of the world as long as man has lived. Whatever leadership there is is generally found bound up in some church enterprise, and nothing can please us if we cannot be glad that the commission has declared that the Church and Sunday school form the principal factor in the rural community. The task, then, is through training classes and personal discovery to meet the need. The adolescent boy and girl themselves afford the solution. Chapters IV, V and VI deal with this problem.

Life is four-fold in the country as in the city. It is physical, social, mental and religious, wherever it exists in human form. Since it is, it is co-operative with individuality and initiative. The Sunday school must organize to meet all needs in the spirit of the Christ. This means a varied activity with rural background and adaptation, not different from urban activity in itself but in form. The Sunday school must be organized with superintendents, officers, departments, classes and teachers. These must be adapted to the need. Not less organization is needed, only not so much of one kind. Beginners, Primary, Juniors, Boys and Girls (Intermediate or Senior), men and women, are just as distinct in the country as in the city—the number only is smaller in any single school or community. Equipment sometimes is lacking, but equipment is man-made and is produced readily at will. I have seen a farmer effectually separate some tiny pigs, for purposes of feeding, from the larger hogs. A couple of boards, a hammer and a few nails effected

the change. The intelligent grasp of the rural Sunday school problem is the big need. Life's hungers are the same everywhere, and the adolescent seeks steady employment on all sides of his life. There is no more social, mental or religious hunger in the city than in the country. It is only a trifle more feverish in the city. The soul of the rural adolescent needs the universal vision as much as the city life does. Spiritual lessons should be much the same, but the lesson helps and other supplementary material should have rural adaptation. Lessons must be graded as all adolescents progress, and the lesson writer must know the rural life as well as the adolescent and the book. This is a problem of the publishing house, as are most graded lesson difficulties. Chapter VIII deserves much study.

The recommendations of the Commission emphasize the necessity of the rural Sunday school being a steady force in the community instead of a weekly gathering. Its work must be of the seven-day variety and be in constant touch with home and school and community life. Nothing lives unto itself. It must be the social center as well as the spiritual dynamic of the neighborhood. Through it the leaven of Jesus must raise all the community's activities to their highest. The country Sunday school has more opportunity and hope for life-building than its urban sister. Read Chapter IX several times.

Supervision is the greatest need. State and County Sunday School Associations must render greater service to the country schools. Because of

inexperienced officers, it is clearly a matter of providing programs and of affording visual demonstration to these workers. The rural Sunday school officer needs less theory and principle and more efficient, practical methods. Leadership demonstration at county conventions for community-rural activity would benefit the organization.

The ideals for the rural Sunday school are not a whit different from those of the urban school.

### Ideals for the Local School

1. A Teen-Age Superintendent.
2. Every class organized according to International Standard.
3. Two-session classes—Sunday and through-the-week sessions.
4. Through-the-week activities; physical, social, mental and spiritual.
5. Trained Teachers—
  - (a) Men teachers for boys.
  - (b) Women teachers for girls.
  - (c) Older boys and girls as teachers for younger boys and girls.
  - (d) Teachers, graduates of International Standard Training Course.
6. Organized Department—
  - (a) Intermediate and Senior.
  - (b) Teen age for both boys and girls.
  - (c) Boys.
  - (d) Girls.
7. Use of Graded Lessons or Instruction.

8. Standard Equipment—
  - (a) Separate rooms.
  - (b) Blackboards, maps, etc.
  - (c) Reference library for teachers.
9. Annual promotion and public recognition.
10. Missionary, temperance and purity instruction.
11. Definite opportunity afforded every pupil to confess Christ and join His Church.
12. Definite opportunity for Christian service for every boy and girl.

As these ideals will take different form in schools of different size and locality in the city, so must they find their own expression in rural life and rural conditions in order to meet the life needs of the country boy and girl.

To sum up, or, as the preachers say, "Hear the conclusion of the whole matter!" A knowledge of country life is the first essential to adequate rural Sunday school work; the economic and social conditions that define, limit and determine rural life. The individual boy or girl must likewise be studied from the point of view of the rural type. The Commission finds that the differences between the rural and urban boy or girl are determined by surroundings or environment. Hence the importance of knowing the latter. The rural church—therefore the school or Sunday school—is the principal factor in the rural community for the development of rural life. Its relation to adolescence, then, is of prime importance. To live up to the demands that the rural community makes on the Church and the

Church school or Sunday school, these must adapt themselves to become the social center of the community—the word “social” being used in the widest sense as the sum of the needs, physical, social, mental and spiritual, of the whole community life. The organization of the rural Sunday school must adapt itself to meet all such needs. Chapter VIII is the particular, practical suggestion of the Commission for this end. The rural Sunday school problem is the same as that of the city—the meeting of adolescent need in view of its life and environment. It is more acute in the rural districts because the denominational Sunday school boards and publishing houses have been fully occupied with urban problems. Country life leaders now call upon them to give attention to the other part of our Christian heritage. Their adequate solution of this problem offers the best form of conservation-activity and development of denominational-consciousness that has yet appeared on the Sunday school horizon. “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the Kingdom for such a time as this?”



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