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Reaching the Unsaved through the Sunday School

Robert S. Bowers

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REACHING THE UNSAVED THROUGH THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

by

Robert S. Bowers

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the

Western Evangelical Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of Problem

The problem was to present a study of the nature, purposes, values and operation of Evangelism in the Sunday School. It was the writer's purpose to present a picture of Sunday School Evangelism and its necessity as a regular procedure along with its relation to the church and the Sunday School. The purpose is stated: To find and present the necessary steps before evangelism and show the absolute necessity of the inclusion of evangelism in the Sunday school organization.

B. Justification for the Study

This study was important because the Sunday school has failed to win and hold the pupils enrolled, for Christ and the church. This was occasioned by the many who leave the Sunday school and have no further connection with the church. A large number of church members come up through the Sunday school and if they are not won by the Sunday school they are lost to the church. Therefore a vital program of Sunday school evangelism is a proved necessity.

C. Purposes and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to show the need for evangelism in the Sunday school. The objectives of this study were: (1) to provide a plan to find the lost, (2) to show how the lost

may be enlisted in the Sunday school, (3) to show ways to encourage regular attendance of all scholars, and (4) to win the lost in the Sunday school sessions or prepare them through Bible study and encourage church attendance so they may be won through other channels of the church.

D. Limitation of Study

The methods of enlistment were limited to the survey and visitation. Because there were many methods which could be used with success, just the basic methods, the survey and visitation, were used. Other methods could be used with these as a basis from which to start. Methods to hold the scholars were just mentioned with a few comments because of the abundance of such methods. This would be an area of further study.

E. Methods of Procedure

The research method was used to gather materials on the subject of Sunday school evangelism. The representative literature studied in this field was found to be similar in its approach. This made possible a general basic plan of procedure. From the writer's research has come a basic plan that can be carried out for evangelization in the Sunday school.

F. Definition of Terms

A definition of the following terms will give a better understanding of this thesis.

Survey. The securing of desired information from all those living within a defined district is a survey.

Visitation. Visitation is that method of reaching people by a personal call to each individual.

Visitor. A visitor is one who makes personal calls through visitation.

Lost or Unsaved. The lost or unsaved are those who have not accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Evangelism. Evangelism is the process of bringing each person into a unique, individual experience of accepting, by faith, Jesus Christ as Lord and Personal Saviour.

Decision. Decision is that time when a person either rejects or accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Scripture passages used in this thesis are quoted from the American Standard Version.

G. Organization

In the first chapter the reader was made acquainted with the nature of the study. The second chapter suggested the means of securing prospects for the Sunday school through the use of the Survey.

The third chapter dealt with follow-up visitation of the prospects obtained through the Survey or any other method. It also showed the importance of visitation to others such as absentees, sick, etc.

Methods to hold the attendance of Sunday school scholars were discussed in the fourth chapter.

The fifth chapter presented the need for evangelization in

the Sunday school. It showed the necessity of an evangelistic program, in the class rooms and out, throughout the entire school year in which all twelve months are included.

CHAPTER II

DISCOVERY THROUGH SURVEY

A. Introduction

In order to proceed with the purpose of evangelism in the Sunday school it is necessary to build attendance figures. There are many methods employed in recruiting the membership of organized classes. Some classes that have built up a large membership have used contests while others, equally successful, have repudiated the contest method. Some claim their success was because of active committees while others have depended upon superior teaching. The point is this: There are many diversified methods that are used and each with success. If this is true, there is no one method successful above all others. A method that has proved highly successful in one situation may not be adapted to another. Where one method is used and fails, others should be tried. It must be remembered in order to have a successful plan under any condition it must be worked.

No plan works itself. The trouble with a lot of us in this work is found in the fact that we are too lazy to work after we have found out about the conditions around our door. I make the assertion that there are enough people out of Sunday school about the average church, who could be gotten if we would go after them, to fill any church.¹

¹ John Hanson, "Achieving Sunday School Successes," Sunday School Digest, April, 1948, vol. IV, no. 7, p. 16.

The method used must have the backing of those who are using it. No method will work, no matter how successful it has been said to be, if the spirit and purpose are lacking. To secure the response of the group the method must have back of it intense conviction, enthusiasm, genuineness, and persistence.¹

In order to work any method it is necessary to know who you are trying to reach. The plan used will depend upon knowing their background and interests. One good way to secure this information is by a community survey.

Know the field.--A primary essential for any thorough campaign of recruiting is a community survey. In recent years the survey has become standardized both as a method of obtaining complete information concerning a community and as an instrument for measuring the effectiveness of institutions and policies and in securing their improvement.²

A census for soul-winning will provide a church with information that cannot be secured in any other way. There are many churches today that are reaping an abundant harvest of souls because of their confidence, and use of this method of locating the lost in their church community.³ A house to house census is a successful and systematic method in reaching people outside the church. The purpose of such a census is to learn who and where the people are; what have been their church affiliations, if any; and what is

¹ Wade Crawford Barclay, Organization and Administration of the Adult Department (The Carlton Press, 1926), p. 59.

² Ibid.

³ Jesse Daniel, "A Census for Soul-Winning," The Sunday School Builder, February, 1955, vol. XXXVI, no. 2, p. 2.

the religious and social status of the community.¹ The church may utilize the Sunday school not only to secure and make available the needed information, but also to reach out in ministry to those for whom the church is responsible. The information gained in taking the census by the Sunday School organization is used primarily to build the Sunday school. At the same time the information may be used by the church and pastor in serving a much wider purpose.

It is a common mistake, particularly in smaller communities, to believe that the church is so well known that a house-to-house survey could reveal little new information. In such communities a number of good prospects have been discovered, greatly to the surprise of the workers.

One pastor told a Sunday-school convention this story: "My superintendent kept urging that a survey be made of a new section of town. I had been over there and kept insisting that there were no prospects for us. However, upon urging, I went along with my superintendent and to my amazement we found twenty new people who attended our Sunday school the following Sunday."

Another pastor led his church one Sunday afternoon in a survey of 1,053 homes close to their church which revealed 369 families as definite prospects.²

Development in Sunday school growth is not confined to any particular locality or section of the country or to any special types of Sunday schools. Rural churches, town churches, and city churches can experience an increase in enrolment and in

¹ George Whitefield Mead, Modern Methods in Church Work (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1897), p. 30.

² E. G. Benson, Ideas for Sunday School Growth (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1954), pp. 26-27.

attendance when right methods of Sunday school building are employed.¹

Note a few examples: A Sunday school in a country community had for years maintained an attendance of about sixty. It was graded and organized and at once began to grow and in a few months had a regular attendance of about three hundred.

A Sunday school in a large city had had for twenty-five years an attendance of around four hundred. Some simple, up-to-date methods were employed and within eighteen months the school was having a regular attendance of 1,500.²

A census will secure the name, address, age and church affiliation of each individual. Such information is essential in order that a church may know the evangelistic responsibilities in the community.

The use of a religious census for the purpose of securing certain definite information about the people residing in the community is an absolute necessity, if the church would minister to all the people.³ However, churches sometimes take a religious census and receive very little benefit from it. Often the fault lies in the manner in which the census was taken. Sometimes failure comes because the information was not properly prepared for use.

¹ Arthur Flake, Building a Standard Sunday School (Nashville, Tennessee: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1950), p. 27.

² Ibid., pp. 27-28.

³ Arthur Flake, The True Functions of the Sunday School (Nashville, Tennessee: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1951), p. 62.

Still more often, the church fails to follow up the census, so the information is laid aside and never used. A census correctly taken, properly prepared for use, and vigorously followed up will produce large benefits and bring untold blessings to many lives.

Because a census of a community is so important in the life of the Sunday school and church, for the purpose of evangelism, this chapter has discussed the essential organization of a census. The main items considered are: Preparation for Census and Information from Census. Preparation was broken down as follows: Who is in charge; territory defined; workers enlisted; materials provided; time selected; and territory assigned. Information was divided into two categories, namely, information gathered and information used.

B. Preparation for Census

Who is in Charge. If everyone left the job for the next person to do, it would never get done. There must be a leader! Usually the pastor or the general superintendent of the Sunday school will take charge of the census. Sometimes a special person is appointed to lead the census. Whoever is responsible for its direction, however, should work together with the pastor and the general superintendent.

Either the pastor or the general superintendent should take charge and act as general director of the census, or some definite individual should be selected and enlisted for this work.¹

¹ Arthur Flake, Building a Standard Sunday School (Nashville, Tennessee: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1950), p. 30.

Territory Defined. The size of the territory the Sunday school is going to recognize as the area for the census should not be larger than its organization can handle efficiently. It would be better to cover a small territory well than a large territory haphazardly.

The size of this field . . . should not exceed working power of the church. For instance, a church of one hundred members might feel that it could not cover more than one hundred blocks efficiently. At all events, the field should not be so large as to preclude the possibility of securing information regarding every individual living within its boundaries. When this information is completed the Sunday School has listed its constituency and taken the most important step toward enrolling it.¹

It is better to survey a small area than to attempt a large area in a single afternoon. Workers become exhausted in planning and executing a survey of a territory that is too large. When this happens the necessary follow-up cannot be accomplished.²

The territory for which the church is responsible should be decided upon by the superintendent and pastor and any other persons they wish to consult. A specific definition of this territory will need to be given for the census. In cities, maps may be used and certain boundary streets or natural divisions can be found. In rural communities, roads will serve.

The territory should be divided into districts, using natural

¹ Clarence H. Benson, The Sunday School in Action (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953), p. 112.

² E. G. Benson, Ideas for Sunday School Growth (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1954), p. 28.

or assigned dividing lines. Each of the districts should be subdivided into blocks or sections small enough to be canvassed by one or two workers. The number of small divisions will determine the number of census takers needed to do the job.¹ Usually about fifteen homes are assigned to one worker.

One pastor tells of this successful plan: I proposed to the church school board and the church board that I teach the course, 'First Steps in Visitation Evangelism,' during prayer meeting hour for six weeks, and that all officers and all departments be requested to enroll and get credit. A 'lot-and-block' map about three by five feet in size was secured and mounted. The church was in the center of this large map. We took crayons and colored thirty separate block areas of four or five blocks each. Thus each area contrasted in color to the adjoining areas. Numbered thumb-tacks were used to label the areas from one to thirty. Thus we outlined our community within a mile radius of our church, so that thirty visitors could easily contact the four thousand families nearest to our door. When our visitation survey was completed, we found one thousand new people in three hundred new families that were friendly enough to give us their names and addresses."²

Workers Enlisted. A thorough census calls for the use of a large number of people. Preparation for enlisting workers should begin many weeks in advance of the census. Plans for the census should be presented to the people by the pastor and the superintendent. If possible every member of the church should be enlisted for this service. All that is desired at this time is information and every church member should be capable of doing this job. The

¹ Daniel, loc. cit.

² E. G. Benson, op. cit., p. 27.

more difficult work of enrolling will be assigned to a more select group.¹

The pastor will lay the important matter of a census upon the hearts of the people from the pulpit. The superintendent will do the same during the Sunday school hour. However, the task of enlisting the census takers to do the canvassing must be done by personal contact. Do not be afraid to ask people to help with the census. There can be joy in service. A burden for the lost might be created because of what they found in taking the census.²

Every worker should be provided with the proper materials to conduct the census. They should be instructed how to fill out each form properly. Their efforts will be useless unless the desired information is obtained. A card should be used for each individual. The workers should get the information firsthand and fill in each blank on each card. It should be seen that initials and names are correct.³

Materials Provided. The mistake of sending out canvassers without proper materials must not be made. Many times the taking of a census is handicapped because of insufficient materials with which to work.

(1). Information cards: These are the blanks which contain

¹ Clarence H. Benson, op. cit., pp. 113-114.

² Daniel, loc. cit.

³ J. N. Barnette, A Church Using its Sunday School (Nashville, Tennessee: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1951), p. 20.

the necessary information regarding each individual. Enough cards should be obtained to correspond to the estimated population. It is better to order an extra number of these to be sure there is a sufficient supply. These cards can be secured from Sunday school supply houses, and it is not necessary to have them especially printed for this purpose.¹

The following are examples of this type of card:

Information Card for Canvassing				
Name _____		Sex: Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>		
Number _____		Street _____		
Age (Exact Age Up to 20) _____		20+ <input type="checkbox"/>	30+ <input type="checkbox"/>	40+ <input type="checkbox"/> 50+ <input type="checkbox"/>
		(Check Age)		
Church Member? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		(Check Which)		
Out of City? <input type="checkbox"/> In City <input type="checkbox"/>		(Check Which)		
Attend Sunday School? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Where? _____		
Prefers Which Denomination? _____		(If No Preference, Write "None")		
Prefers Which Local Church? _____		(If No Preference, Write "None")		
(Use a Card for Each Individual)				
Be Sure to Fill in Every Blank or the Information Will Not Be Effective				
Scripture Press, Chicago 5		Printed in U.S.A. Form 6478		

¹ Clarence H. Benson, op. cit., p. 113.

use a card for each individual	
Name	_____
Address	_____
Age	_____
Church Member? (Yes or No)	Where? _____
Member Sunday School	Where? _____
Extension Dept. Prospect	Why? _____
Denomination Preference?	_____
Local Church Preference?	_____
(if each blank is not filled in the information is incomplete)	

1

(2). Instruction cards. It has been found that the best results are realized when each worker has a list of instructions as a reminder of the details of his task. Where there are so many workers there will be mistakes unless the instructions have not only been plainly given but also plainly printed for each worker. A map of the district where the worker is assigned can be drawn on the back of the card so there will be no mistakes of overlapping of any of the work.²

(3). Other materials. Other materials to be provided include pencils with erasers, rubber bands and envelopes to carry other materials.

Time Selected. Every church will find it profitable to take a census at least once each year, provided that the information

¹ J. N. Barnette, The Place of the Sunday School in Evangelism (Nashville, Tennessee: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1945), p. 115.

² Clarence H. Benson, loc. cit.

furnished by the census is used. In areas where there is a constant change of population, it is often valuable to take more than one census per year.

A religious census should be taken at least annually in every community; in growing centers and communities, twice each year; and in mill and factory districts, with shifting, changing populations, a canvass should be made every three months. The purpose of the census is to get information to be used in building the Sunday school. At the same time, it is a good way and worth while to let the people know that the Sunday school is at work and anxious to help in every way possible.¹

(1). Third Sunday in September. This Sunday is appropriate because it immediately precedes Rally Day, which in turn prepares for the opening of the school year. In this way Rally Day will exhibit the evidences of the canvass. It will also give old and new scholars a chance to be there to start in at the beginning of the new year.²

(2). Before a revival meeting. A census taken two months before a revival meeting will provide evangelistic prospects. The leaders should be given time to get the information completed, tabulated, and then placed in the hands of the workers that they may make a determined effort to lead the lost to an acceptance of Christ.³

Sunday afternoons have generally been found best for the

¹ Flake, Building a Standard Sunday School, p. 29.

² Clarence H. Benson, op. cit., p. 116.

³ Daniel, loc. cit.

canvass. Workers are more free at this time than during the week and usually a larger percentage of families will be found at home during this time.¹ This is the Lord's work and each member should feel that it is in its place, just as important as the ministry of preaching and teaching.

Any season of the year is suitable for taking a census. The best season is determined by the community and its activities. The census should be taken when the most information can be gathered.

Territory Assigned. At the appointed hour the census takers should be gathered for a period of devotion and general instruction. This meeting for general instructions ought not to occupy more than fifteen minutes. Three things need to be emphasized at this meeting. First, it should be understood that the workers must get information about every home. Second, a card should be made out for each individual in the home. Third, that every blank on the card is to be filled. If any question is not answered the card may become useless.²

The meeting should then break up into sections which should be presided over by the district leaders. It is in this part of the meeting that the assignments are made. No territory should be assigned previous to this meeting. Uninformed workers for the most part secure useless information.³

¹ David J. Fant and Addie Marie French, All About the Sunday School (New York: Christian Publications Inc., 1947), p. 173.

² Flake, Building A Standard Sunday School, p. 32.

³ Ibid., p. 33.

The next step is to assign each worker to a district. A good map of the locality will be necessary for this. In a city, a ward map may be used, while in the country, geological survey maps, which can be secured from the government for a small sum, are of great assistance.¹

Each captain should have a secretary to list the workers as they are assigned their territory and to see that each one is provided with a pencil and a liberal supply of census cards. Also each captain should have enough automobiles to send his workers out to their territory. Instruct them to bring all the cards back to the church as soon as their work is completed.²

It is most helpful for the pastor at the Sunday evening preaching service to give a few minutes for verbal reports from the workers. Many helpful experiences will be recounted in their testimonies.

C. Information from Census

Information Gathered. The door to any home can usually be opened by courtesy and tact. If for any reason it is denied, the best possible information should be secured from the next door neighbor.

The purpose of the visit should be stated immediately and courteously. Argument should be avoided as this will lead to nothing but resentment. Get the required information and then

¹ Clarence H. Benson, op. cit., p. 114.

² Flake, loc. cit.

leave.

If a member of the household comes to the door, the purpose of the visit should be immediately and courteously stated, as, "I am calling in the interests of the Sunday School. Would you tell me if there are any members of this home who are not now regularly attending some Sunday school?" Such a question will be an introduction, and will prepare the way for others to follow, providing the person is willing to engage in conversation. Since people generally resent proselyting, it will be necessary to show tact and avoid argument. It is best to obtain the desired information, extend an invitation, and leave the results with God.

To make the most of the opportunity, it is wise to leave not only an invitation but a gospel tract, so that those missed by the visitor may yet receive the silent word. Those who do not at once accept the invitation may at some later date become interested in some special occasion, as an evangelistic campaign, or the observance of Rally Day, Christmas, and Children's Day.¹

Absence will make it necessary for the worker to return and pick up as soon as possible, the information that was not obtainable on the first visit. The census is not over until information regarding all the names has been secured.²

Some authors believe it best to omit the question concerning church preference because in many cases this means nothing except sentimental value for a church.

It is better to omit a request for church preference since this, in most cases, results in a statement of sentimental preference rather than actual church affiliation. The in-

¹ Fant and French, op. cit., p. 174.

² Clarence H. Benson, op. cit., p. 115.

formation really needed is whether or not the individual is now attending Sunday school and church regularly.¹

It is to be remembered in this canvass that people will frequently claim church relations and will theoretically have them, when practically they sustain no definite church relationship. Because they were married in, or many years ago the grandmother was a member of, a certain church, they have come to regard that church, in an indefinite way, as theirs. Or it may be that the children recurrently with holiday times attend the Sunday-school, and so the parents will make claim to a church home. Dr. Paden, of the Hollond Memorial Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, said that in a house-to-house canvass of a considerable district about his church, hardly ten percent of the people visited were, from their own accounts, without a church home, while practically he believed that a much larger percent were of the non-church-going classes.²

Information Used. A survey is of no value unless its data are used. No time should be lost in making use of the material obtained from the census.

It has sometimes happened that a valuable survey has been made at expense of time and effort and the results permitted to remain unused. It is necessary not only to organize to make a survey, but also necessary to organize to make use of the information secured. It is the responsibility of the superintendent to plan for enlisting the prospects with this information in hand.³

¹ E. G. Benson, op. cit., p. 28.

² Mead, op. cit., p. 33.

³ Wade Crawford Barclay, Organization and Administration of the Adult Department (The Caxton Press, 1926), p. 60.

(1). Information sorted. The information as it comes from the census takers is not by any means ready to be used. First of all the cards should be sorted. Cards of pupils attending other Sunday schools and those having a preference for other schools should be sent to the respective superintendents or pastors. After these cards are omitted, the rest belong to the school which has taken the census.¹

All the remaining information should be carefully checked against the church and Sunday school rolls so that all duplications can be eliminated.

(2). Information graded. The next step is to grade all the information according to department or age group basis. As far as it is possible, enough classes ought to be arranged to take care of all those not enrolled in the Sunday school, as well as for those already enrolled.²

The next step is to grade all the information gained from the church roll and the census. This should be done on the department or age group basis, as follows:

Cradle Roll and Nursery—birth through 3
 Beginners—4,5
 Primaries—6,7,8
 Juniors—9,10,11,12
 Intermediates—13,14,15,16
 Young People—17 through 24
 Adults—25 and above

All above eight years of age should be graded by sex as well as by age. Where the possibilities for a Sunday school are large, the information will have to be graded closely.

¹ Clarence H. Benson, op. cit., p. 116.

² J. N. Barnette, A Church Using Its Sunday School, p. 21.

Often provision will have to be made for a class for each age in the Beginner department, and a class for each age of boys and each age of girls in the Primary, Junior, and Intermediate departments; and in many situations there will be need for more than one class to each age. In such schools there should, of course, be several classes for Young People and several for Adults. Separate classes and departments should be provided for married young people. The information would determine how many classes there ought to be in each department. The classes for Beginners, Primaries, Juniors, and Intermediates should be kept small, not more than ten to each class, and even smaller.¹

Clarence H. Benson in The Sunday School in Action states that all prospective pupils should be enrolled in the proper departments. Then it is the duty of the department superintendent to secure the attendance of all those assigned to his teachers. The department superintendent then assigns these pupils to specific teachers within his department. The department and all classes are reorganized to make room for all prospective students.

b. New pupils assigned to departments.

Having enrolled the prospective pupils, the registrar now classifies them according to age and assigns them to the various department superintendents. The names of the babies, for instance, will go to the Cradle Roll superintendent, those of children four and five to the Beginners superintendent, and so on.

The department superintendent now assumes obligation for securing the attendance of all the prospective pupils that have been assigned to her group of teachers. Later she will be called upon to report what per cent of this new material has been brought into actual attendance. As a matter of fact, the general superintendent will continue to call for these reports for several months after the canvass,

¹ Flake, Building a Standard Sunday School, p. 34.

until he can be reasonably sure that every effort has been put forth to make the prospective pupil a regular attendant. Much of the success of following up the results of the canvass lies with the department superintendent, so it will be seen at a glance the importance of full department organization in every Sunday School that anticipates a canvass.

c. New pupils assigned to classes.

Each department superintendent now carefully investigates the new material in her possession and assigns it to classes. In this she will be guided by the age of the prospective pupil as well as the size of the class. Here again it will be seen how futile it is to hope for a successful conservation of the results unless an adequate corps of teachers has previously been prepared or provided. With the coming in of new teachers and new scholars it may be necessary for the superintendent completely to reorganize her department. This will be especially true if there is any likelihood that the new material will equal or exceed the present enrollment of the department.

In reorganizing her department, and in making the assignment of new pupils, the superintendent should see that both the old and the new teachers have prospective as well as present pupils in their classes. The prospective pupils are practically assured as enrolled, provided they can be sufficiently distributed so that each teacher will bear the responsibility of bringing them to Sunday School. After all, the success of a growing Sunday School lies with the individual teacher, which once more suggests a perennial teacher training class as an imperative requisite for a successful school.¹

(3). Information tabulated. The next step after grading the information, is to tabulate it. This information should be typewritten and the rough census cards should be discarded. It is best to have at least five copies made; one for the pastor, superinten-

¹ Clarence H. Benson, op. cit., pp. 117-119.

dent, department superintendents, teachers, and one to be filed for future reference. In this way it is easier to keep a permanent record for the school.¹

The real work of the canvass is next. It is one thing to locate the scholars and it is quite another thing to bring them to Sunday school. However, if the plans have been followed, the prospective pupil will very likely become an actual attendant. If the canvass has revealed a family of six who are not attending Sunday school there will be a procession of visitors to the home. The teacher of the men's class has the name of the father, the teacher of the women's class the name of the mother, a teacher from the Senior department has the name of the older girl, one from the Intermediate department has the name of the older boy, a teacher in the Junior department the name of the younger girl, and a Primary teacher the name of the younger boy. This should surely create an interest in the Sunday school.²

Men and women who have participated in a canvass can testify of the great joy they experienced in this service, especially when it has been a systematic and simultaneous movement. Every church will be repaid in this undertaking even if it has done nothing more than provide some practical employment for its members.³

¹ Flake, Building a Standard Sunday School, p. 35.

² Clarence H. Benson, op. cit., p. 120.

³ Ibid., p. 116.

CHAPTER III

ENLISTMENT THROUGH VISITATION

A. Visitor Preparation

Why Visit. In order to reach prospects for evangelism they have to be found. This was discussed in the latter chapter. However, they still cannot be reached unless they come. It was the purpose of this chapter to discover a method to get them to come.

A growing Sunday school is an effective way of reaching people with the gospel message. In order that growth might be experienced in the Sunday school it is necessary to have a planned program of visitation.

Visitation is the chief factor in Sunday school growth. It is the final step in actually reaching people. A Sunday school may have adequate space properly arranged, a sufficient number of classes, excellent teaching, attractive worship programs--and how vital they are; but without visitation all these things will be at least a partial failure.¹

(1). Scriptural basis for visitation. Visitation is the method Jesus used. "For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Jesus commanded his followers to use this method. "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21b). It was the method of Paul. ". . . how I

¹ J. N. Barnette, A Church Using its Sunday School (Nashville, Tennessee: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1951), p. 25.

shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). The fifteenth chapter of Luke tells of the shepherd who left the ninety-nine to search for the one that was lost. The woman who lost the coin had to search to find it. The "Great Commission" in Matthew does not say they will come but rather, "Go ye therefore . . ."1

(2). Spiritual motives for visitation. The condition of the lost soul should keep Sunday school officers and teachers going continuously after people. The condition of the lost soul brought Christ to this earth. It was this motive that sent Paul to the Gentiles, Carey to India, Livingstone to Africa, and other consecrated Christians to live for Christ. The value placed on life is a motive to reach each individual. The visitor is privileged to help shape human powers and capacities to a life in Christ. The opportunity of service is provided by visitation. This alone should inspire each individual to be a visitor.²

(3). Benefits of visitation. Visitation provides the teacher with personal information. It brings the visitor in contact with the needs of the people. It will help the teacher in preparing for the class on Sunday morning. Visitation will win the confidence and respect of the people which will make the teaching more effective.³

1 Matthew 28:19a

2 Barnette, op. cit., p. 26.

3 Ibid., p. 27.

Who is Responsible? No program will succeed unless the leaders promote it. The two people responsible for getting this done are the pastor and the general superintendent. Unless they do it, it will not be done. If they do not do it themselves they should carefully appoint someone in the church to look after this phase of the work. The point is this: Visitation has to be organized or it very likely will not succeed.

Dr. A. S. London insists: "To be effective, visitation must be properly guided. The worn-out statement that we have heard since childhood days, 'Everyone go out and bring one,' will not build a school. One superintendent said that so often that a man in the audience remarked to a friend sitting by that he might just as well have said, 'Everybody go out and get a pumpkin.'"

One pastor said, "We have a director of visitation who organized our work, directs the activities of our callers, and reports the results to me."

A noted pastor of one of the largest schools in the nation says that 95 per cent of his school is built by laymen out visiting; but a capable director guides this visitation program and has for more than ten years.¹

Two or three people in any school can be the nucleus around which the plans for visitation may be organized. A teacher can see that these plans are carried out in the class. A superintendent and pastor can see that they are carried out in and through the school.²

It is not considered the job of the leader to do all the

¹ E. G. Benson, Ideas for Sunday School Growth (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1954), p. 33.

² "Guaranteed Growth," Sunday School Digest, December, 1947, vol. IV, no. 3, p. 38.

work himself. It is his duty to see that visitors in the church are secured to help with this job. Visiting was the responsibility of all Christians in the New Testament times and it must be now if the multitudes are going to be won for Christ.¹

Every officer, teacher, scholar, and parent should consider himself a committee to speak to others about the school, and to invite his friends and acquaintances to attend it. The little children should ask their playmates, boys and girls in school their classmates, young men their shopmates, young women their associates. No printed paper can have a tenth of the power possessed by the living voice and a hearty handshake. It is assumed that the invitation is given only to those who are not already attached to any church or school. All possible care should be taken to maintain a fraternal spirit, and not to build up our own wall by pulling down another.²

Of course, the heart of the teacher should be possessed with a compassionate spirit and an interest for the multitudes.

Training the Visitors. Everyone who has a compassion for souls is considered eligible to be a visitor. However, in most churches the habit of visiting has not been formed by the majority of the officers and teachers. Weeks and months of training are required to get all of them to visit every week. This can be done by the pastor and general superintendent. They can participate in

¹ Arthur Flake, The True Functions of the Sunday School (Nashville, Tennessee: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1951), p. 71.

² Jessie Lyman Hurlbut, Organizing and Building Up a Sunday School (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1910), p. 127.

visits with the workers, emphasize from the platform and show them by example. However, it is just as important to train them how to visit as it is to train them to visit. This can be done in the officers' and teachers' meetings.¹

All the class officers, together with the ablest members of each class should be enlisted for this work. The church is represented by the attitude the visitors have. The visitors should be well informed concerning the total program of the church. They should know what program the church provides for the men, women, young adults, young people and children. They should know the work of the various departments, projects that are being worked on, and plans for future development. They should be acquainted with the talking points and appeals the church can make to them.²

It is considered best to have two visitors work together while visiting. An unexperienced visitor should be paired with an experienced one. This is one method whereby a new visitor may be trained.³

Visitors should be taught to avoid spasmodic calling. The purpose of the whole plan can be destroyed if the enthusiasm is allowed to die. On the average, seven visits need to be made before the prospect is interested and twelve visits before he is enrolled.⁴

¹ Barnette, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

² E. G. Benson, op. cit., p. 32.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

That means some will have to be called on many more times to make up for those who are enrolled after the first or second time.

Time for Visitation. It is important for visitation to be emphasized on a particular night of the week. Many would-be callers never seem to find time to make calls unless a special night is designated for this work. A night should be selected that is suitable to most of the workers. This night will vary with different churches. Monday or Tuesday night is favored by some because more people are found at home early in the week. This gives opportunity for the results to be reported at the mid-week prayer service. Friday night visitation may be unprofitable because so many social and school functions are usually scheduled. Saturday visitation makes possible a last-minute reminder for those already invited. While different times for visitation are used by various churches, the important thing is to find a time that is most suitable to those involved in the visiting.¹

Whatever time is chosen, the visitors should be in good mental, physical and spiritual condition. No visit should be attempted unless much time has been spent in prayer.

Who Should be Visited. Most of the prospects' names will be drawn from the following sources:

1. The membership of the church, every member being either on the membership roll or the prospect list of some church-school class.
2. The responsibility roll of prospective members which the church has assembled.
3. Names secured in the friendly com-

¹ E. G. Benson, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

munity survey.

4. Names of parents whose children and young people are members of the church school.

5. Neighbors and friends of church-school members of all ages.

6. New comers who have recently moved into the community.

7. Public-school enrollment lists, which are sometimes available. These must be carefully checked to avoid proselytizing.

Some church schools have done this task so thoroughly that the number of their prospects approaches that of their membership.¹

B. Visitation Plans

It has been found that in order to reach the individual one must go where the individual lives. However, in order to have results from visitation there must be some specific visitation plans. Haphazard results are reaped by haphazard procedure.

A Sunday-school superintendent glanced at the attendance report for the day and addressed his school with the usual speech: "We're down again today, folk. It's time we do something. Let's get busy. Why don't you get busy and invite your neighbors to Sunday school? If everybody would bring one person next Sunday, we'd double our school in a week!"

The next Sunday saw another decline in attendance and another speech after the same order with the same result.

In another Sunday school nothing has been said about attendance publicly, unless it is to show appreciation. Yet this school has had a steady increase from year to year. There is no spectacular increase but gains are made and held.

What makes the difference?

The difference is in what is done be-

¹ Weldon Crossland, How to Build Up Your Church School (New York: Abingdon Press, 1948), pp. 115-116.

tween sessions. The first school has had no visitation program; the second has had a regular program of growth through visitation.¹

Assignments Made. Before starting out from the church each worker should know just how many absentees or prospects are to be visited. Assignments make the visitation personal. Every person will be contacted by a worker for a definite purpose.²

An assignment slip should be filled out for each person to be visited. The church visitation chairman should have a duplicate record of these names and to whom they are assigned. Then, if the caller has failed to report the results, the visitation chairman can trace the call. Those to be called on include church and Sunday school guests, potential members, and Sunday school absentees. The non-transient guests should be called on the following week. The frequency of the calls to the potential member is carefully considered by the visitation chairman. A minimum of one call is made every two months. In some cases potential members should be called upon every week. Absentees should also be called on the week following their absence.³

Calls Reported. A complete report of all calls should be made on the back of the assignment slips and they should be returned to the visitation chairman not later than the following Sunday. The reports should contain the date of the call, the names

¹ E. G. Benson, op. cit., p. 23.

² Barnette, op. cit., p. 29.

³ E. G. Benson, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

of the callers, and the results of the call. What attitudes church and Sunday school guests have toward the church should be discerned. The spiritual condition, religious background, marriage status, and the type of work in which they are engaged should also be obtained. Any additional information which might help in future contacts should be obtained from the potential members. The reason for the absentee's absence should be included in the report.¹

Results of Reports. The reports obtained from the church and Sunday school visitors are returned to the visitation chairman. Whether the person is dropped from the files or is listed in the potential member file is then decided. All potential members should be on the church and Sunday school mailing list. These prospects are then assigned to a class. Full responsibility is assumed by the class visitation chairman for assigning future calls on these potential members. The results of the report on the potential members is put with the original visitors card and the information is used in making future assignments. A reason for sending flowers or making special calls might be found from the absentees' report.²

Visitation Records. Each class visitation chairman should organize an indexed card file for members, potential members, and visitors. The church secretary should have a duplicate card from every class visitation chairman. As members or potential members are dropped, the visitation chairman should remove all of their cards

¹ Ibid., pp. 42-43.

² Ibid., p. 43.

and reports and notify the church secretary so that he may do likewise.¹

Leadership of Visitation. Each leader should work together with the others as a team and not try to do all the work himself.

(1). Church visitation chairman. This person is responsible for the general organization and operation of the entire program.

(2). Class visitation chairman. It is his responsibility to see that his class members are directed. Adequate records on all those for whom the class is responsible is maintained by the class visitation chairman. Assignments are made to members of his class by him.

(3). Church secretary. A record of all regular members and potential members are kept by the church secretary. Letters are sent to all Sunday school and church transient guests by the church secretary.

(4). Sunday school teacher. The visitation program within the class is encouraged and participated in by the class teacher. The teacher should be interested in seeing that the visitation program is carried out.

(5). Pastor. The vision of visitation evangelism must be kept before the people by the pastor. Enthusiasm for the program is expected to be maintained by the pastor. The pastor may also

¹ Ibid., p. 44.

supply needed instruction to new workers.¹

Visitation Rules. Rules are a must to proceed in an orderly and systematic manner.

1. Arm yourself with prayer--as you approach the house and as you face the occupants. It will amaze you how God will come to your aid, put words in your mouth, and bring ways and means to your attention.

2. Do not go too early or too late. Morning hours are seldom suitable--there is too little time between getting the house straightened and starting lunch. Neither should a call be made too late in the afternoon or evening. In the evening, be reasonably sure the dishes are done, that there are no guests, and that they are not a family that retires early. Let them know that you do not want to interfere with any of their plans.

3. Always ask for the privilege of a few minutes of their time, then be careful that it doesn't become hours, unless they especially detain you and you see that the time is profitably spent.

4. State clearly who you are, what you represent, and why you are calling. Representatives of some religious sects fail to distinguish their organizations, which is unfair and confusing. Honesty in religious matters is imperative and expected.

5. If possible, ask no favors, and few questions. Never probe, never run down any other denomination or religious group. Don't be beguiled into a religious argument. Avoid reference to religious fallacies. If any real difficulty is presented for clarification, tell them you will have your pastor visit them. Then be sure he gets the information and makes the call.

6. If there are children, show a special interest in them, and in the young people, too. Their hearts are often open to the Gospel story. Most parents appreciate having their children's welfare sought. Many a family can be won through the children.

¹ Ibid., pp. 45-46.

7. Don't be afraid to say, "I do not know." You may not often have occasion to say it, but when you do it will at least show them that even happy Christians do not have all the answers. That puts them on the same footing with you in that particular and they will appreciate it.

8. Don't try to win them by marginal matters. It is true that one makes his best friends in church, and that we do have good times at church, etc., but keep the spiritual uppermost. We go to church because it is God's house, and His people meet there, and His Word is proclaimed there, and we unite there with others in worship, praise, prayer, giving, serving, sharing, and fellowship. These are the high privileges of church attendance.

9. Don't be discouraged if you get no immediate results. It may take years. Let God water the seed sown. He will watch over His Word to perform it.

10. Be sure you love people. Love is the winner. You may have to spend some time in prayer over this point. Remember that Christ died for every one of them, because He loved them. Let something of that love be your constraining motive. People sense when they are loved.

11. Look for opportunities to do something for them--either yourself or through the church. Perhaps having the boy's class teacher call on "Their boy" will do the trick. Or having one of the saints who has recently gone through bereavement call on this mourning family may prove beneficial. Any number of instances may be presented for rendering some touching and winning service. But do it for Christ, and not for numbers.

12. Try to leave some helpful literature. This will say what you couldn't, and will continue to speak after you have left. Good Sunday-school papers, church bulletins, tracts, etc., or a portion of Scripture in case they have no Bible, may be left with profit.

13. Tell prospects that you will be looking for them at the church. Then be sure to locate yourself so as to be able to find and greet them. If you think it necessary, offer to call for them for their first visit to the services. Don't make a practice of

calling for them, however, unless physically necessary.¹

Sample Night Visitation Plan. The workers should meet at a designated place at 7:00 p. m. The first half hour should be spent in prayer and teaming workers. The prospect lists have been prepared and are ready for the workers when they arrive. The names should be grouped according to streets and sections of territory to save time and energy. Eight to ten names are received by each team. Everyone leaves the meeting place at 7:30 p. m. and calls until 9:00 p. m. This leaves a full hour and a half for calling. When the allotted time is up the workers should return to the place of meeting with the information they have received. This time can be used to gain inspiration from one another and create a desire to come back the next week for more work. Those who are unable to do the necessary footwork required in calling can take care of the children while the parents join the calling group.²

Sample Class Visitation Plan. This plan is similar to the preceeding plan except that it is carried on by just one Sunday school class. A special night should be chosen and used only for visitation. The class meets at 7:00 p. m., receive their assignments, have prayer and depart by 7:15 p. m. All callers should return by 9:00 p. m. for exchange of reports and light refreshments if desired. In this meeting couples who have made unsuccessful calls receive en-

¹ Mina Wiarda, "How to Reach and Win Others for Christ," Christian Digest, May, 1955, vol. XX, no. 5, pp. 6-8.

² E. G. Benson., op. cit., pp. 46-47.

couragement by listening to the reports of others.¹

Sample All Day Visitation Plan. This plan was designed to meet the needs of the visitors. The day is begun at nine o'clock in the morning and is continued until nine o'clock at night. Prospect cards are provided at the church for the visitors. Their visits will also be recorded and registered at the church. Some people cannot find time to visit during the day and others at night but everyone should have some free time during the time allotted.²

Assignment Method.

Assignments of absentees or prospects are handed out at the Sunday school during the class period, between Sunday school and church, after church, or before the Sunday evening service. The workers call on their assigned names at their own convenience. The cards, with notations, are returned by mail during the week or turned in on the following Sunday. In schools where most of the members are employed all week, this may be the best plan.³

The difference in the results of Sunday school visitation plans is not so much the method that is used but how the method is used. Halfhearted results are created by halfhearted methods.

Visitation Appeals. The prospect's attention and interest should be secured. A story might be told to gain his interest.

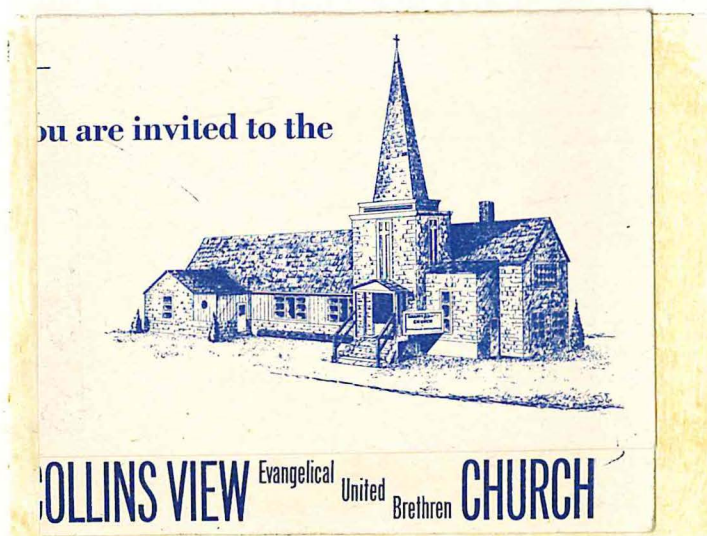
¹ Ibid., p. 49.

² D. M. Renick, "Adopt a Plan of Weekly Visitation," The Sunday School Builder, September, 1953, vol. XXXV, no. 9, p. 8.

³ E. G. Benson, op. cit., p. 30.

An interesting project the Sunday school has undertaken might be a way to gain his interest. His desire to attend should be aroused. The educational, fellowship, community appeals etc. can be brought out but the spiritual should be kept uppermost. The thing desired from this meeting is to get the prospect to come to Sunday school. Shaking hands on the promise to come to Sunday school is one good way to cinch the call.¹

Church Publicity Card. A publicity card should be prepared to be placed in the hands of each prospect interviewed by the visitors. "A few dollars invested in the printing of an attractive colored folder will pay handsome dividends in new members whose offerings will far more than cover the cost."² This not only informs the prospect of the church activities but also serves as a reminder of the visit made. The following are examples:

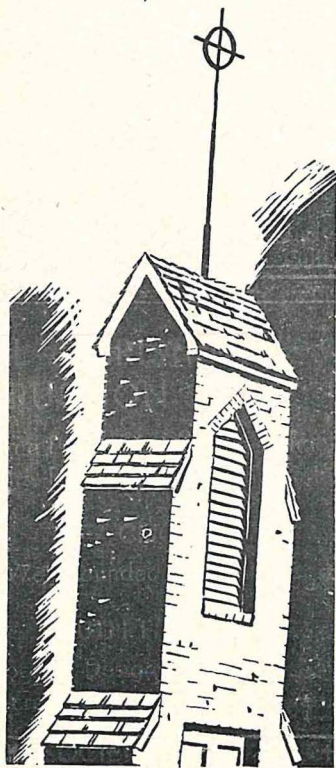


¹ E. Morris Fergusson, How to Run a Little Sunday School (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co. 1916), pp. 58-59.

² Crossland, op. cit., p. 119.

FRIENDS ARE WAITING
TO WELCOME YOU AT

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"The FRIENDLY Church with the Singing Tower"

Results. The Sunday school will grow in numbers. The officers and teachers of the Sunday school come into personal touch with the pupils in their homes and the needs can thus be more intelligently planned for. Valuable information is gained for the pastor by the visitors. Teachers have the opportunity to enlist their pupils in definite service. The Sunday school will be supplied with new material for building the school.¹

The importance of visitation is further emphasized by J. R. Erp when he relates his experience in a revival in Springfield, Illinois, in which some twenty churches co-operated. One night there were nearly two thousand people present. He says: "the day preceding, a full page ad was placed in the newspaper and several spot announcements were made over the radio inviting folks to the meeting. That evening the minister in charge asked the question, 'How many are here because you saw the ad in the paper?' Two hands went up. 'How many are here because you heard the spot announcements over the radio?' Five hands went up. The next question was, 'How many are here because someone invited you?' To our amazement nearly one hundred hands went up!" That means 2 per cent attended because of the ad in the newspaper, 5 per cent attended because of the announcement over the radio, and 93 per cent attended for the first time because someone gave them a personal invitation to attend. This was visitation that paid off.

We must blaze a trail to the homes so the family will follow it back to Sunday school and church!²

¹ Arthur Flake, Building a Standard Sunday School (Nashville, Tennessee: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1950), pp. 46-47.

² E. G. Benson, op. cit., p. 24.

CHAPTER IV

METHODS TO CONSERVE SUNDAY SCHOOL GAINS

Sunday school enlargement is more than just reaching new members. The attendance of new members must be maintained or there will be no enlargement. It is essential to hold those who have already been reached to have Sunday school enlargement.

A. Discover the Leaks

The facts must be faced. There is a leak and it must be found.

Eighty-five per cent of the Sunday school world are lost to the church. Out of the fifteen per cent held come eighty-five per cent of our church membership.¹

The reason why any student leaves the school should be discovered. The superintendent should know why any student has withdrawn. This information should be shared with the members of the Sunday school council.²

The classes that have the greatest leakage year by year should be found and the teacher should be placed elsewhere or be dropped from the teaching staff.³

A number of years ago I discovered that the main leakage in our school was centered

¹ A. S. London, "Cut Down on Sunday School Losses," Sunday School Digest, November, 1946, vol. III, no. 1, p. 13.

² A. C. Archibald, "Stopping the Leaks," Sunday School Digest, March, 1947, vol. III, no. 5, p. 9.

³ Ibid.

in the classes of three teachers, and that year after year when classes were promoted into their classes the same falling away was in evidence. The school officers were at first inclined to doubt my conclusion, but the statistics gathered finally convinced them. Immediate adjustments were made in the teaching staff, one being quietly asked to resign, and two transferred to another department. The situation was at once remedied.

Yet for the lack of a close study and the definite placing of responsibility, it was estimated that that school in five years had lost 34 youths out of the classes of those three teachers.¹

B. Prevent the Leaks

When a leakage is found the reason for its occurrence must be discovered and stopped at once.

Teacher. The revealed Word of God must faithfully be taught with the pupils' growth and development in mind. This should be a teacher's great concern.² The teacher must be consecrated to the task. Unless the teacher is consecrated to a life in Christ she will not be able to convince the pupils to give their lives to Christ.

Just as a man of great physical strength can hold one of lesser strength, so may one of great moral and spiritual strength hope to hold those who have not as much. Sunday school leaders must be more than merely good people.³

¹ Ibid., pp. 9-10.

² John T. Sisemore, The Ministry of Visitation (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1954), p. 73.

³ O. C. Herbrecht, "What Keeps up Attendance," Sunday School Digest, January, 1947, vol. III, no. 4, p. 38.

A teacher must be prepared both mentally and spiritually. The lesson must be prepared, the Bible daily read, time spent in prayer, and a life of example lived before a person should begin to teach.¹

The home contact should not be neglected by the teacher. The teacher should know the home situation in order to be able to meet the needs of the pupil. This necessitates a program of visitation which was discussed in the previous chapter.

Effort must be made for results to be obtained. Sunday school attendance will not grow without effort. Not only must new scholars be reached and brought into the school, but an attractive program must be maintained to hold them.²

The Sunday school lesson can be made interesting so the pupils will desire to return.

"The class must be held together by the content of the lesson, not by class organization or other external bonds. The lesson itself must be made worth while and the interest in subject matter must be made such that pupils will return from Sunday to Sunday because they get value received for their time and energy within the class. The chief incentive for class attendance must be a lesson well taught."
--Athearn.³

The teacher should possess a personal interest in each

¹ A. S. London, Our Sunday School Task (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1944), p. 13.

² David J. Fant and Addie Marie French, All About the Sunday School (New York: Christian Publications, Inc., 1947), p. 177.

³ Charles Staebler, Manual for Sunday School Workers' Conference (Cleveland, Ohio: C. Hauser, 1916), p. 32.

member of her class. If the pupil is to be won to Christ the leaders must be sincerely interested in him. The teacher must win the pupil to herself before he will believe what she teaches. A member of the class should never be permitted to carry a burden of loss or grief or disappointment alone. An ill member should always be considered no matter how slight the illness.¹

The members of the class should be treated as friends when met on the streets during the week. Even if the teacher is busy, she should take time to speak to her members when she meets them. If there is no time for conversation the teacher should at least greet the pupil with his name.²

If we could but gather them, records would show that classes whose teachers maintain a close friendship with their pupils enjoy a better and more consistent attendance. Sharing weekday time, becoming a partner in interests, achieving a genuine comradeship does take time, and even though we are tremendously "busy" at all sorts of things, the leaders who are truly concerned about this matter of attendance will find a way to form the bond without which their holding power on the pupil will always lack grip.³

An important factor in developing the loyalty of a member would be his interest in a specific task which had been intrusted to him. This task should be worth while and suited to the abilities

¹ Wade Crawford Barclay, Organization and Administration of the Adult Department (The Caxton Press, 1926), pp. 68-69.

² A. S. London, "Cut Down on Sunday School Losses," Sunday School Digest, November, 1946, vol. III, no. 1, p. 13.

³ Herbrecht, op. cit., p. 39.

of the one to whom it is given.¹

Promotion. The success of a Sunday school will serve as its best advertisement. The most effective advertisements which can be produced by the school are energetic and enthusiastic members. However, a program of publicity is still necessary. The purpose of all publicity is to prepare the way for personal contact.²

Sunday school publicity is not as dependent upon money as upon time, thought and actual accomplishments. The postal service, telephone and automobile have great possibilities in them for keeping up the class interest, when they are freely used.³

Letters can be used not only to encourage class attendance but also to urge the teacher to go after non-attenders.

Dear Mrs. Barnard:

I am asking you and every other teacher of our church school to make every possible effort to reclaim every absentee member and to encourage them and all other members of your class to every-Sunday church-school attendance.

For your convenience in doing this important follow-up work, I have listed below the names and addresses of the few members of your class who have not yet attended this autumn, according to the record of your class attendance book.

Will you please do your utmost to get in touch with them before this coming Sunday?

¹ Catherine Atkinson Miller, The Successful Young People's Society (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1929), p. 94.

² Clarence H. Benson, Techniques of a Working Church (Chicago: Moody Press, 1946), pp. 174-175.

³ Clarence H. Benson, The Sunday School in Action (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953), p. 192.

Call on them personally if you possibly can and have some faithful member of your class call also.

I am going to take the liberty of placing in your hands a revised list of these absentees on the third, fifth, and seventh Sundays of the crusade as part of our intensive effort to reclaim all nonattending members of your class.

Your own teaching of the lesson and your friendly spirit rank highest, I feel, among the factors that win and hold the members of your class.

All the best of success to you as you help Christ and your church in the great and growing work of our church school.

Cordially yours,

Miss Mary Jones, 45 Dartmouth Street
Miss Ruth Henderson, 766 East Main Street
Miss Harriet Smith, 279 Culver Street
Miss Jane Downey, 199 Locust Avenue
Miss Doris Paine, 59 Cambridge Boulevard
Miss Marion Pease, 466 Chili Avenue
Miss Millicent Day, 477 Brooks Avenue¹

There are several areas where publicity can be used, such as: radio, television, weekly newsletter, pencils with dates or names on them, tags, buttons, fliers, bumper tags, newspapers, sign boards, announcements, posters, flags, loud speakers, pictures, photographs, class slogans and posters.²

Every case of non-attendance for which transportation might be responsible should be investigated. Often there are neighbors who would be glad to take others along with them to Sunday school. Some would be willing to go a short distance out of their way in

¹ Weldon Crossland, How to Build Up Your Church School (New York: Abingdon Press, 1948), p. 104.

² L. Jack Fix and Leonard F. Kaiser, Building the Church Through the Sunday School, p. 6.

order to bring those who might otherwise not attend.¹

Awards may be used to hold Sunday school attendance. They should be referred to as awards rather than prizes. Goals should be established and awards purchased before this type of program is begun. Then the awards should be distributed according to the goals only. The teacher and the class should have some say about the goals that are established.²

Class room atmosphere has much to do with holding attendance. The school should be attractive as well as efficient. The room should be cheerful and airy with simple but suitable furniture. The class should not be placed in a dark, damp, dingy corner.³ It is suprising what a little paint can do. Fixing up a class room could even be made into a class project.

A right atmosphere can also be created by a proper spirit in the class session. "Worship and instruction are the great interests during the class period, but good fellowship, fraternal service, and community welfare have an important place in the life of the class, and ought to be recognized in the session of the class."⁴

¹ "The Transportation Problem," Sunday School Digest, September, 1948, vol. IV, no. 12, p. 12.

² Fix and Kaiser, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

³ Jessie Lyman Hurlbut, Organizing and Building Up a Sunday School (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1910), p. 124.

⁴ William Sherman Bovard, Adults in the Sunday School (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1920), p. 71.

Class parties and activities should be planned to strengthen friendship and help the class members to become better acquainted with each other.

Some of the summer "casualties" are caused by children getting out of the habit of going to Sunday school during their summer vacations. Summer vacations should not be stopped but the pupils should be encouraged to attend Sunday school somewhere during their absence from home. Before his vacation begins the class member should be given a vacation or visiting report card. These cards may contain the picture of their Sunday school building, as well as blank spaces in which can be entered the date and the signature of the superintendents of the various Sunday schools attended. By doing this, other schools will be strengthened and encouraged, while the member's interest is maintained. Members presenting these vacation cards at the end of the summer should receive just as much credit for attendance as if they had been present at the home school.¹

Organization. A poorly conducted, unorganized, disorderly school constitutes a tremendous hole through which much leakage occurs. An organization is needed that can be increased in advance of the growth of attendance. A good record system planned to accomplish results should be used. A weekly or at least monthly workers' meeting is needed. Teachers and officers of the Sunday school should get together to go over plans, study reports, plan

¹ Clarence H. Benson, The Sunday School in Action (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953), p. 314.

for visitation, study the lesson to be taught the following Sunday, and many other things that are necessary to run an efficient organization. For this to succeed, a spirit of unselfish co-operation must be prevalent. The program must be well understood by every person so each one may co-operate by doing his part.¹

Each class session should have some order and organization to it. This does not mean that variety is forbidden. New and different methods should be tried. The Sunday school class session should always begin and end on time. The teacher should be properly prepared and ready to start at the beginning of the session.²

Evangelism. A main source of leakage in the Sunday school is occasioned by failing to win its members to Christ. Up to ninety per cent of those won stay in the Sunday school. The school that is not evangelistic in its spirit and mood has prepared the way for its own weakness. The backbone of Sunday schools are those members who have been won to Christ and the Church.³

Evangelism is the main objective of the Sunday school. Any school that does not evangelize its pupils will lose them. There must be a change of heart within the individual if the pupil is to remain long with the school.⁴

¹ Louis Entzminger, "Essentials in Building," Sunday School Digest, November, 1947, vol. IV, no. 2, p. 11.

² Vera Weightman, "10 Ways to Kill the Sunday School," Sunday School Digest, November, 1946, vol. III, no. 2, p. 16.

³ A. C. Archibald, "Stopping the Leaks," Sunday School Digest, March, 1947, vol. III, no. 6, p. 11.

⁴ Entzminger, op. cit., p. 15.

A Sunday school teacher has an excellent opportunity to win the lost to Christ.

Soul winning must characterize the workers throughout the school. Those workers dealing with little children have a most excellent opportunity to win the lost parents of the children. Those who are dealing with older ones have the unparalleled opportunity of winning their pupils to Christ, and to reach out to their friends, and the circle in which they mingle. As the Apostle who said: "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved." (Romans 10:1).

Where this spirit in a small measure characterizes the teachers and officers of a Sunday School, people will be saved constantly and continuously. A spiritual revival will be perpetuated, and the hearts of all filled with joy from week to week through the year.¹

¹ Ibid., pp. 12-13.

CHAPTER V

THE IMPORTANCE OF EVANGELISM

A. Introduction

Pupils led to Christ prove to be the Sunday schools greatest accomplishments. Without this the work is incomplete.

After a careful analysis we find that 82 per cent of all church members come from the Sunday School. It is therefore a tragedy that we permit 85 per cent of our Sunday School pupils to slip through our hands without identifying them with the church. If we could save the loss of that 85 per cent, we could increase our church membership 467 per cent.¹

It is high time that an evangelistic program be presented in the Sunday school.

A sane, year-round, well-sustained emphasis on evangelism is the ideal program for the successful Sunday school. Along with this continuous effort there should be times during the year when the whole school should be directed to this one thing. The Bible says: "He that winneth souls is wise." (Proverbs 11:30). We also have the testimony of others who have believed with their whole heart in Christian education as a major evangelistic process.²

Harry Monroe, the great City Rescue Mission worker of America, when dying, said, "Aim to train up and take care of the young people and children so that such work as I have been

¹ Clarence H. Benson, The Sunday School in Action (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953), p. 177.

² Charles W. Brewbaker, "A Major Harvest Field," Sunday School Digest, August, 1947, vol. III, no. 11, p. 16.

doing will not be necessary." Mr. Frank L. Brown puts it rightly when he says that "Evangelism and Education are twin forces with one purpose--to establish right relations to God and others." That "Our work is not primarily to rebuild lives, but to build souls into Christ from their earliest years." He further says, "The aim of Sunday-school Evangelism is to bring the scholar at the earliest possible moment into a conscious and intimate relationship to God as Father, to Christ as Saviour, and Friend, and to the spirit of truth, and the church, and guide the life into channels of happy and fruitful service."¹

"... the Sunday school is the agency for reaching the lost, teaching the Bible, and preparing the hearts of the people for the new birth."²

B. The Sunday School as an Evangelistic Agency

The Lost Are To Be Found in the Sunday School. The Sunday school should be an agency of outreach. Its business is to bring into its membership both those who are saved and those who are lost.

Statistics gathered in the interest of the Sunday schools in the South during the past fourteen years, as a result of religious surveys, show that more than three-fourths of the boys and girls nine to twelve years of age are not Christians; that more than half of those thirteen to sixteen years of age are not Christians; and that a little less than half of the young people, seventeen to twenty,

¹ Charles W. Brewbaker, The Sunday School in Action (Dayton, Ohio: The Otterbein Press, 1921), p. 166.

² J. N. Barnette, The Place of the Sunday School in Evangelism (Nashville, Tennessee: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1945), p. 11.

do not claim to be Christians. Above the age of twenty the proportion of those claiming to be Christians is much larger. These figures vary a little according to locality but the averages above are substantially correct. These lost people in all localities are either already in the Sunday school or else they can easily be won to the Sunday school by pursuing the proper methods. In most communities, however, the people to be won to Christ are largely in the Sunday school in large numbers.¹

According to these figures it is seen that there are many unsaved who are enrolled in the Sunday school. The opportunity is provided in these unsaved members to bring the message of salvation to the lost in the Sunday school.

The Sunday School is Organized for Evangelism. The Sunday school is formed and operated for the purpose of winning the lost. Individual attention can be given to each member of the class because the Sunday school can be graded and the pupils classified. The teachers are also selected for soul-winning and the Bible is presented in the lessons. The Sunday school should reach all the people for whom the church is responsible, teach the Bible to all the people, and win the lost to Christ.²

Why the Sunday School is an Evangelistic Agency. As has already been shown, the lost are enrolled in the Sunday school. The opportunity is provided. The Sunday school is composed largely of children and young people who are most susceptible to the gospel message.

¹ Arthur Flake, Building a Standard Sunday School (Nashville, Tennessee: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1950), pp. 107-108.

² Barnette, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

They are not yet bound by sin habits.¹

The members of the churches who are regular at the business of winning souls belong to the Sunday school. For winning the lost, officers, teachers, and saved pupils can be relied upon as no other members of the church.

In Old Hickory Baptist Church in the Nashville Association in Tennessee, the pastor asked for a company of people who would agree to speak to at least one lost person each week. Eighty persons responded. Seventy-five of them were Sunday school officers and teachers. Take it any way you will, the soul-winners of a church are Sunday school officers and teachers. They may not do all that is desired, or all they could, but in most churches they do more soul-winning than any other group.²

The Sunday school has the Bible as the text book. The Sunday school is built upon the foundation of the Bible. If this foundation is removed the Sunday school will fall. If the Bible is kept as the foundation, the Sunday school will continue to grow. Many promises for the lost are contained in the Bible.³ "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

¹ Flake, op. cit., p. 108.

² Barnette, op. cit., p. 30.

³ J. N. Barnette, A Church Using Its Sunday School (Nashville, Tennessee: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1951), p. 41.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.¹

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.²

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). These are only a few of the many promises to the lost.

There should be a well planned program of Bible study. The lessons should not be selected haphazardly but should follow well-arranged cycles of Scripture material. Sometimes the scholars can be taken through a whole book while at other times a special subject can be pursued. Any Bible subject can lead to a presentation of redemption in Christ.³

¹ Isaiah 53:4-6

² Romans 10:9-11

³ H. Leo Eddleman, "Evangelism Most Effective Through the Sunday School," The Sunday School Builder, December, 1954, vol. XXXV, no. 12, p. 10.

Another advantage of the Sunday school in winning the lost is that it can be graded to meet the needs of each age group. Included in this are the lessons, pupils, and buildings. This adaptation contributes to evangelism.¹

What May Be Expected of the Departments. More and more winning is being done by departments. In each department the teaching and appeal needed is offered.

(1). The Cradle Roll. The first impressions of the world around the child, of God and Jesus and heaven are being made at this time. Therefore, this period is very meaningful in the development of the spiritual life of the child. A child understands more of these impressions than we often give him credit for understanding. An indirect ministry can often be made while the workers are caring for those on the cradle roll. Parents can be reached through their children.²

While in the pastorate, the author had the pleasure of welcoming into church membership a young business man and his wife. On the Monday following he was with the man in his office, and ventured to ask him about the influences which brought him to a decision. "It was very simple," the man replied; "some of your workers came over to my house and asked for the name of our baby for something which they called a Cradle Roll. My wife had never heard of such a thing, but she was greatly pleased with the interest shown in the baby and with the promise of the women that they would pray for the baby each day. I went home one day and my wife met me with tears on her

¹ Barnette, The Place of the Sunday School in Evangelism, pp. 33-34.

² P. E. Burroughs, How to Win to Christ (Nashville, Tennessee: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1944), pp. 68-69.

cheeks, saying that the Cradle Roll women had been there and had led her to accept the Saviour. She took my hand and led me into the room where the baby lay asleep, and said to me, 'For the baby's sake and for my sake, I want you to give yourself to the Lord.' I knelt down with my wife beside the sleeping babe and surrendered my heart to God." Both the Cradle Roll and the Extension departments will offer to watchful workers many opportunities to lead souls into the light.¹

(2). *Beginners and Primaries.* During this period of life the foundation of character is largely laid. These children can be taught to love, revere and obey their Heavenly Father just as they do their earthly father. Whether Juniors and Intermediates will accept Christ is determined in a large measure by the impressions formed by the instruction given them while they were *Beginners and Primaries*.²

A company of rescue mission workers conducted a religious service at the midnight hour on one of the streets of the downtown section of Atlanta. A sinful woman sat in a window far above the street. She heard hymns which had a wonderfully familiar sound. She listened to messages which stirred sacred memories long buried deep in her heart. When the songs had died away and the pleading words of the Christian workers had vanished, the woman felt a strange tugging at her heart and was conscious of an unutterable longing for a better life. Long years before the woman as a little child had lived in a Christian home and had attended a neighborhood Sunday school. Her teacher had given her a Bible and had left in her child heart the appeal of the Lord Jesus. When the mission workers had gone she sought in her trunk for that neglected Bible and went down on her knees to find the Saviour of whom

¹ Ibid., pp. 68-69.

² Ibid., p. 69.

her teacher had told her in the long-past days.

Now, let us ask. Who won that woman to the Lord Jesus? Did that company of mission workers win her? Or was she won by that other company of Sunday school workers who left with her a Bible and some knowledge of the love and atoning death of Jesus?¹

(3). Juniors. During the Junior years there is a marked rise in the numbers of conversions. It has been said that the time to help the difficult teen-age best is before the teen-age is reached. Much effort should be put forth to bring boys and girls to Christ and get them anchored in the church before they leave the Junior department.²

(4). Intermediates. The most fruitful season for the winning of souls seems to be around the twelfth year of life. During this period more boys and girls look toward God.

A second, and the most fruitful of all the seasons of the soul, seems to be around the 12th year of life. With girls it usually comes around the 11th year, and with boys around the 13th year, making the median age at 12. Apparently when boys and girls are approaching or are just about to cross the line that brings them into that unparalleled period of life called adolescence, they make their greatest outreach after God. Their hands may be weak and their arms short, but according to the strength of their hands and the length of their arms, they reach up toward God. As was manifest in Jesus, this is just as God intended it to be. No boy or girl should fail or be failed at this crucial period of life. What Jesus did in the Temple at Jerusalem at the age of 12, is God's idea of what every boy and girl at the median age

¹ Ibid., pp. 69-70.

² Ibid., pp. 70-71.

of 12 should do.¹

(5). Seniors. This has proved to be the second most fruitful season of the soul. Boys and girls should not be failed during this time of life. The most opportune times to reach people for Christ will have passed with the close of this period. The chance for winning them now becomes less and less each day. Pastors and teachers should become disturbed over this and put forth every effort to lay hold of the opportunities that still remain.²

(6). Young People. The periods of largest conversion are past but a goodly number of young people can still be reached to give their lives to Christ. This is the most critical of all the periods of life. The philosophy that will to a very large extent govern the remaining years of life is shaped and adopted at this time. A philosophy of life is very seldom changed after the age of twenty-four. This is the period when most marriages take place. If Christ is not included in these newly formed homes it is very probable that He never will be included.³

(7). Adults. With the further advance of years the winning task becomes even more difficult. Yet, tactful effort, persistently made, will bear abundant fruit among adult men and women.⁴

¹ E. W. Praetorius, Seasons of the Soul (Dayton 2, Ohio: The Otterbein Press), p. 8.

² Ibid., pp. 9-10.

³ Ibid., pp. 10-11.

⁴ Burroughs, op. cit., p. 71.

Even though the best years are past these are still lost people. Every effort must still be made to win them.

The rich seasons for soul-winning are now past. Only two small peaks remain and they are found in early adulthood, one around the 25th year and a second one somewhere between the 30th and 35th years. Those converted at this time are what Paul called himself, "children untimely born." (I Cor. 15:8.) Only 5 out of a hundred that come to Christ, one after they are 24 years of age, one in a thousand after he is 30, and one in ten thousand after he is 50. Those that come after 60 are as brands plucked from the burning. It is not that God cannot save, but because men will not be saved. God has opened His door toward us in Christ, and He will not close it. Him that cometh unto Christ, He will in no wise cast out. But we may let our door remain closed under certain circumstances so long that the lock and the hinges rust and corrode, and we cannot get our door open. Men and women can get caught in the trap of their own habit and not be able to get out. They can say "no" so often and so long that they lose the power to change their speech. "Today, if ye hear his voice, harden not your hearts." "Behold, Now is the acceptable time: behold now is the day of salvation."

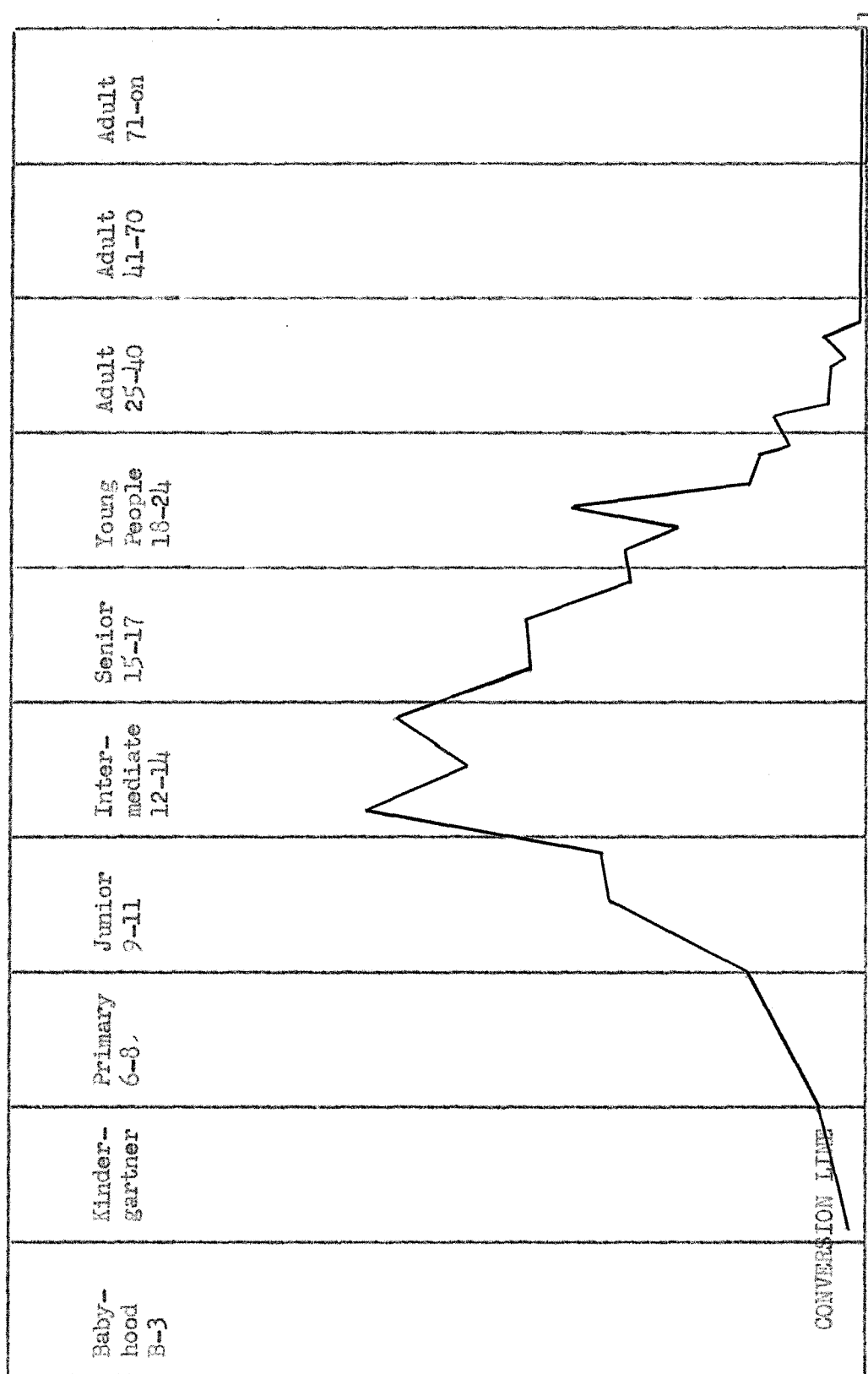
It is quite significant to know that 60% of the workers and office bearers of the Church became Christians before they were 13 years of age, and that 85% of those who do come to Christ after 25 have had careful religious training in childhood.¹

The Pastor's and Superintendent's Part. An evangelistic Sunday school is usually determined by the pastor's personal attitudes. If he has a compassion for the lost it will be contagious but if he is indifferent, the school will hardly be evangelistic.²

The pastor should provide a positive leadership in personal

¹ Praetorius, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

² Eddleman, loc. cit.



1 Praetorius, op. cit., p. 15.

work. He should preach evangelistic sermons and see that the Sunday school workers are taught. The pastor and the superintendent should lead in the selection of the officers and teachers. This is a difficult task because teachers must be carefully selected. First, there should be much prayer. Then, the prospective teacher list should be examined and the ones best fitted for the positions open should be selected. Good Sunday school workers need training and it is the responsibility of the pastor and the superintendent to provide that training. Training may be accomplished in officer's and teacher's meetings, frequent training schools and is aided by a well selected library.¹

The Teacher's Part. Teaching and evangelism go hand in hand. Sometimes teaching has been regarded as distinct from evangelism because the words were too narrowly defined. Teaching is more than just imparting information or compelling the pupils to memorize facts. The real teacher is one who helps to build lives. A teacher's work has failed unless the pupils not only possess information about Christ but accept Him and His standards as their own and regulate their lives accordingly.²

The true teacher is an evangelist. Because the teachers know their pupils best and have time for the interpretation of Christ and the Christian life in class periods, they are the ones

¹ Barnette, The Place of the Sunday School in Evangelism, pp. 48-49, 93-96.

² Harold J. Sheridan and G. C. White, Learning and Teaching (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1918), p. 204.

who can best win them. All their teaching should lead in the direction of decisions.¹

A teacher must be spiritually minded to be a soul winner. The Sunday school teacher who would win his pupils for Christ must be a personal worker. Christ must be presented at the right time and in the right manner.

"For nine- or ten-year old children the best way is to bring them into the warm, loving Christian atmosphere of home and church. Their hearts will open to Christ as naturally as a flower to the sun. For those around the twelfth year the biggest appeal is 'This is the right thing for you to do.' For the fifteen- and sixteen-year old there is the appeal of the social, the emotional, or the ideal. In this age it is comparatively easy to win several young people out of the same class, or through the drawing power of the love of Christ, or through the appeal to their idealism and their desire to service. For the young man and young woman in late high school or college there are two questions which they ask of our religion: Is it reasonable? Is it practical and of service?

"As Sunday school teachers we have the greatest opportunity for real evangelism that is to be found anywhere in the world today. In this church every one of us teachers should have the evangelistic spirit and not be content until every member of our class is a follower of Jesus Christ."²

The soul-winning teacher must work in earnest. The teacher must be prepared and interested in the lesson if the pupils are expected to have similar responses. The lesson must be given clearly

¹ Sidney W. Powell, "Sunday School Evangelism Pays," Sunday School Digest, October, 1946, vol. III, no. 1, p.3.

² Albert H. Gage, Evangelism of Youth (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1922), p. 67.

and plainly so the pupils will know what has been taught. The teacher must learn to apply the right scripture in each case.¹

There are four contacts which the teacher should make in his effort to bring his pupils to a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour. The first contact is in the class room. This is the time when the Word of God is presented. The next contact should be through prayer. Souls are not won without prayer. The teacher should pray for each pupil individually by name. Time should be spent in prayer with each pupil. There is no better way in which a pupil may come to know that his teacher is really concerned about his salvation than to hear her mention him specifically in prayer sometime when they are alone together. The third contact is social. The teacher's interest in the pupil should not be confined to the few moments spent together in the class room on Sunday morning. The sick and the absent should be visited. Recreational activities should also be provided. The teacher gets close to the hearts of the pupils when he participates in their recreational activities. The fourth contact is made by personal letter. In this way the pupil realizes that the teacher is thinking of him other than just on Sunday. It is well for teachers to keep a memorandum of the birthday of each one of their pupils and write them on this day.²

¹ Walter L. Wilson, "Teaching to Win," Sunday School Digest, June, 1947, vol. III, no. 9, pp. 39-40.

² Clarence H. Benson, The Sunday School in Action (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953), pp. 184-187.

Some Prerequisites of a Soul-Winner. A personal assurance of salvation is an absolute necessity. There must be a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. A personal worker must be aware of man's sinful nature and of the results of sin. The Bible teaches that man is lost without Christ. The teacher must recognize this and have a desire for the salvation of the lost. Christ is the only Saviour of man. This must be accepted by the soul-winner. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Paul said, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galations 6:14). Every soul-winner must have the regular habit of prayer. He must also be dependent upon the Holy Spirit for results. The Holy Spirit convinces and convicts of sin.¹

A soul-winner must have a working knowledge of the Bible. "Charles H. Spurgeon once said, 'He will succeed best who sticks closest to soul-winning truths.'" If no response is obtained after the first attempts, new attempts should be made until there is success.²

The Sunday Morning Program Should Be Evangelistic. An evangelistic spirit should be radiated in the opening program and in the classes on Sunday morning. It should be the normal thing for decisions to be made during the Sunday school hour.

¹ Barnette, The Place of the Sunday School in Evangelism, pp. 86-90.

² Ibid., p. 92.

The teaching of God's Word is basic in preparing for decision for Christ. This will take place in the lesson period. The Word of God is powerful even unto salvation. It shows a person his sins and reveals Christ as the Saviour. The teacher has in the Word power to change lives. Therefore, teach the Word. Hold Christ up before the lost.

.....
 Teachers who are able from experience to present the Word of God to lost people so that they decide for Christ are greatly needed. It is the Word that breaks the heart. It is the Word that is the power of God unto salvation. Therefore, urge teachers to teach the Word. Little children need the Word planted in their hearts and minds.¹

It is often easier for the lost to take the first step in the department or class. However, all who accept Christ should be urged to make public their profession immediately before the entire congregation.²

Decision Day. Decision Day must not be thought of as the only time during the year when decisions are made for Christ. Decisions should be sought after at all times. Decision Day should work hand in hand with this continuous effort.

Decision Day has been an effective evangelistic occasion in our Sunday schools; but in the light of what has just been said, it will readily appear that the opportunity to definitely accept Christ as a personal Saviour should not be confined to any day or date. It is not for teacher or superintendent to say when their pupils should give themselves to Christ. The way is always open.

¹ Ibid., p. 130.

² Arthur Flake, The True Functions of the Sunday School (Nashville, Tennessee; The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1951), p. 106.

Their development in this respect should be neither forced nor retarded. There is great danger lest in waiting for Decision Day we let slip the real climax in the pupil's own experience. There is also danger of securing a decision without adequate preparation and thus robbing the pupil of a very rich experience. It is commonly agreed that a Decision Day that is unprepared for cannot possibly be successful and may easily do more harm than good.¹

Some might be reached by a Decision Day who otherwise would have missed their opportunity. Some are influenced by the evangelistic atmosphere created in a mass movement. Decision Day is when the entire school can work together in a united evangelistic effort. The pastor should have a very definite part in this day. The songs should be carefully selected and should be appropriate for the occasion. There should be special prayer meetings of the officers and teachers several weeks before the day is to take place. The officers and teachers should also meet early on the day chosen for Decision Day for time in prayer. An outside evangelist may be secured to make a short address, but it is generally preferable to have the pastor make the appeal for decision. After Decision Day is over the results must be conserved. Special classes of instruction should be provided for those who have made new decisions.²

Seasons of special effort to win the lost are desirable but they are not adequate to meet the needs of all the lost people of

¹ Sheridan and White, op. cit., pp. 205-206.

² Benson, op. cit., pp. 132-134.

a community. On these occasions many will accept Christ, but a large number will not. These seasons of special evangelistic effort should be but a part of the church's total program for winning the lost to Christ.¹

"Decision Days" in the Sunday school from time to time do not constitute an adequate soul-winning program. The fact is, this is a method fraught with grave danger, and if used at all should be led by the pastor, and he should be sure that he is following the leadership of the Holy Spirit. At best this method is only partial, and even when combined with the annual protracted meeting it is not sufficient as a soul-winning program of a church.

When a church confines its soul-winning operations to special days and annual protracted meetings, it does violence to the souls of lost people, quenches the soul-winning spirit of the members of the churches and limits God's power to save to certain times and occasions, and thus fails to function properly as a divine lighthouse.²

It cannot be said enough that there should be a continuous evangelistic effort throughout the whole year, in the class rooms and out of the class rooms.

Urge Attendance at Preaching Service. The entire Sunday school, from the Junior department on, should attend the morning preaching service. The teaching process can be reinforced by the pastor through the preaching process and another chance can be given for the lost to come to Christ.

¹ Flake, op. cit., p. 98.

² Ibid., pp. 98-99.

Logically, the Sunday morning preaching service is the time and occasion for the pastor to win the lost to Christ. The surroundings and atmosphere are certainly most favorable for timid boys and girls and young men and women to yield to the pastor's invitation to accept Christ. The pupils come fresh from classes where they have been taught by godly teachers. They sit together in the preaching service in classes and departments with their teachers. The appeal of the pastor can easily be reinforced by a sympathetic glance, an earnest word, or a gentle pressure on the hand by a praying teacher or an anxious saved fellow pupil.¹

All members of the Sunday school administrative staff should promote the importance of the preaching service. Teachers and officers should exert their influence in this matter. All teachers should be in the habit of attending the preaching service.²

¹ Arthur Flake, Building A Standard Sunday School (Nashville, Tennessee: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1950), p. 114.

² Flake, The True Functions of the Sunday School, p. 107.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Summary

In order to accomplish the purpose of evangelism in the Sunday school it is necessary to build attendance figures. There are many diversified methods that can be used with success. The local situation will determine the method that is used.

It is necessary to know the habits and functions of a community before any method is used to reach that community for the Sunday school. A community survey will help obtain this information. The Sunday school organization can be used to secure this information. The knowledge gained from the survey will help build the Sunday school and the church.

There must be a leader. Usually the pastor or the general superintendent of the Sunday school will take charge of the census. The territory the survey is to cover should be defined. The size of the territory the Sunday school is going to recognize as the area for the survey should not be larger than its organization can handle efficiently. Workers to take the survey must be enlisted and prepared. This preparation should begin many weeks in advance of the survey.

Proper materials that are necessary in taking a survey need to be provided. The time selected for taking the survey should fit the needs of the workers. It should also be a time that will find

those being surveyed at home.

A survey is of no value unless its data are used. It is necessary not only to organize to make a survey but also to organize to make use of the information secured. The information gathered should be both sorted and graded. Then the information should be tabulated. Each Sunday school teacher and class is made responsible for a certain number of prospective members from this tabulated information.

The prospects that are found from the survey cannot be reached unless they come to the Sunday school. In order that growth might be experienced in the Sunday school it is necessary to have a planned program of visitation. Visitation as a method is backed by scripture. The condition of the lost soul should keep Sunday school officers and teachers going continuously after people. Visitation provides the teacher with information that will be helpful in preparing for the class on Sunday morning.

There must be a leader to promote the program of visitation. A teacher can see that visitation plans are carried out in the class. A superintendent and pastor can see that they are carried out in and through the school.

Everyone who has a compassion for souls is considered eligible to be a visitor. Weeks of training are required to get all of them to visit every week. A certain time should be set aside for visitation. Many would-be callers never seem to find time to make calls unless a special time is designated for this work.

In order to have visitation results there must be specific

visitation plans. A church publicity card should be placed in the hands of each prospect interviewed by the visitor. This card not only informs the prospect of the church activities but also serves as a reminder of the visit made. The Sunday school will grow in numbers as a result of a visitation program.

Sunday school enlargement is more than just reaching new members. Holding the attendance of those who have already been reached is essential to Sunday school enlargement. The reasons for any withdrawals from the Sunday school should be discovered and stopped.

A consecrated teacher who applies herself to the task will prevent many withdrawals. A good program of publicity will keep many coming to the Sunday school. Class room atmosphere has much to do with holding attendance. Fixing up a class room could even be made into a class project. A right atmosphere can also be created by a proper spirit in the class session.

An organization that can be increased in advance of the growth of attendance will prevent many leaks. A main source of leakage in the Sunday school is occasioned by its failure to win its members to Christ. Evangelism is the main objective of the Sunday school.

The business of the Sunday school is to bring into its membership both those who are saved and those who are lost. The opportunity is provided in these unsaved members to bring the message of salvation to the lost.

The Sunday school is organized for evangelism. It has the

Bible as the text book. Another advantage of the Sunday school in winning the lost is that it can be graded to meet the needs of each age group.

An evangelistic Sunday school is usually determined by the pastor's and superintendent's attitude. The true teacher is an evangelist. Teaching and evangelism go hand in hand. A soul winning teacher must have a working knowledge of the Bible and a personal assurance of salvation.

An evangelistic spirit should be radiated in the opening program and in the classes on Sunday morning. Provision should be made for a decision day. This day must not be thought of as the only time during the year when decisions are made for Christ. Sunday school members should be urged to attend the morning preaching service.

B. Specific Conclusions

(1). Since it is necessary to build attendance figures to accomplish the purpose of evangelism, a survey should be taken to find Sunday school prospects.

(2). Since prospects that are found from the survey cannot be reached with the gospel message unless they come to the Sunday school, a program of visitation is necessary to build regular attendance.

(3). Since "Eighty-five per cent of the Sunday school world are lost to the church"¹ specific plans need to be made to prevent this loss.

¹ A. S. London, "Cut Down on Sunday School Losses," Sunday School Digest, November, 1946, vol. III, no. 1, p. 13.

(4). The best method to promote regular attendance is to win the Sunday school member to Christ. Therefore, a program of evangelism is necessary in the Sunday school class sessions.

(5). The greatest periods of conversion are during the Intermediate and Senior years. Therefore, it is the duty of the Sunday school to reach them for Christ before these periods are passed.

(6). It is necessary for every person to experience Jesus Christ as personal Saviour. Therefore, every effort should be made to bring this experience about. Evangelism should be stressed from the children's department through the adult department.

(7). Salvation is an individual matter. Sunday school teachers can more easily work with individuals because of the smaller groups within the classes.

(8). The Sunday school can more easily meet the needs of each individual. Materials can be graded to fit the needs of each age group.

(9). Evangelistic results are produced by Bible teaching. Since the Sunday school has the Bible for a text book it is also a place for evangelism.

(10). The Sunday school is allowed to bring within its membership those who are unsaved. Therefore, the Sunday school is a logical place for evangelism.

C. General Conclusions

(1). If the Sunday school is to produce real results in all its work, it has to have a program of teacher training.

(2). Eighty-two per cent of church membership is recruited

from the Sunday school.¹ In view of this fact, it is highly important that the Sunday school receive the best attention on the part of its leaders with a consideration to constant improvement of its methods and efficiency.

(3). For greatest effectiveness, the Sunday school should not be viewed as an end in itself but as one of the important arms of the church. The Sunday school should carry out the church's teaching injunction and cooperate with the church in every effort of soul winning and of building up Christian lives.

(4). No pastor can put forth too much effort in building his Sunday school in view of what it does for his church.

D. Problems for Further Study

Before a program of evangelism can be carried out it is necessary to have trained teachers and officers. It would be well to refer to works on teacher training as a prerequisite for Sunday school evangelism.

The area of holding Sunday school attendance was just touched upon. There is room for more work in this area. Included in this would be publicity, transportation, class activities, etc.

The teacher must be prepared before results can be obtained in the class room. Further study could be made on the preparation a teacher must make before the Sunday school hour on Sunday morning. It could deal with various methods of instruction and how they are used. The climax and application of a lesson could be discussed.

Conservation of the results of Sunday school evangelism is another area of further study. Elements of study to produce Christian growth should be included.

¹ Clarence H. Benson, The Sunday School in Action, p. 177.

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