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TRAINING YOUTH FOR CHURCH LAY LEADERSHIP
IN UNDERPRIVILEGED AGRICULTURAL AREAS
THROUGH THE LARGER PARISH PLAN

by

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INTRODUCTION

TRAINING YOUTH FOR CHURCH LAY LEADERSHIP
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INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject

1. The Subject Stated.

Much has been written in recent years about the rural Church and the problems of rural America. Volumes have been written on youth work, and a great deal has been said about leadership training for the lay person, but very little has been said about how lay leadership training of the youth in the most underprivileged areas could solve many of the pressing problems of the rural church there. Surely the small and inadequate number of ministers and professional religious workers could serve more churches and communities effectively if there were active, well-trained lay leaders in these places. Pastorless churches would not die, and whole areas would not thus be left without any spiritual ministry if we could produce such leaders.

This has been demonstrated in the writer's home church (a rural one), which has been kept alive and

has carried on a vital program for five pastorless years because its lay leadership was effective. So, likewise, a tiny church in the worst mining section in the Kentucky mountains came through the same sort of experience victoriously by the same means. Such examples as these suggest what might be accomplished in the rural church as a whole through such leadership.

There are many real difficulties in the way of training rural lay leadership with which the writer has become acquainted during more than two years as a parish worker in the Kentucky mountains, and a summer in western North Carolina. These difficulties have been further presented in conversation with other workers in the Southern Mountains and the Ozarks. This thesis proposes to face the problems, consider the possible means of solving them, and arrive at a plan for developing potential leadership. A certain type of rural church organization - called the Larger Parish - will be used as the framework for the plan. The Larger Parish may be defined as

"a whole section of towns and country, administered as one unit with a related program. . . a joint organization in which different local groups are represented, and are served by a staff of ministers (and workers) each of whom is responsible for a specialized form of service."¹

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1. Elizabeth Hooker: *Hinterlands of the Church*, p.240.

It strives to be inter-racial and somewhat interdenominational; it must conform to natural geographical boundary lines. The goal should be the setting up of a Christian social order in that area. One pastor is always the director. It makes possible a ministry, a diversified ministry, and a community social and religious strength such as no small church could expect to have otherwise.

2. The Subject Justified

The "hinterlands of the Church" are filled with problems and needs so great that it is impossible for the "outside world" to furnish enough leadership to better conditions sufficiently. How important are these problems? Why should the church at large be concerned?

The leading sociologists of the country are deeply concerned about the rural situation. It is generally accepted that farm people - the land owners, the food producers, and the source of population increase - are the backbone of any nation. The rural

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1. Kenyon L. Butterfield: The Country Church and the Rural Problem, pp. 7-9
T. Lynn Smith: The Sociology of Rural Life, Revised pp. 62-63

population comprises close to half of the national population and acts as a stabilizer upon the rest of the nation. The welfare of the country is of importance to the city dweller, because it is from the country that the city's population gaps are filled and its population increased. What kind of citizens will these country young people, on the move into the city, be? They will largely determine our country, and our church, of tomorrow, both in rural areas and in the city. They must fill the dwindling ranks of the city churches, whose people do not reproduce themselves. Will they come to church? What kind of church members will they be? If they have not had a good church home in the country, can we expect them to seek out a strange city church? The ultimate result of the present rural church situation, if it is not remedied, will be a nationally weakened Protestant Church.

The problem of the Christian training of youth is therefore one of national, as well as spiritual, significance. Country youth of today must be trained for democratic leadership in the Christian spirit and for leadership in their churches that they, in turn, may help the next generation.

Young people from the most backward areas have as much potential ability as those anywhere else in the land and show splendid leadership qualities when given

an equal opportunity. They must be prepared to help their own people.

3. The Subject Delimited.

This thesis deals with three diverse subjects: the rural church, youth work, and leadership training, each one being limited by the other two. However, the rural field is much too wide and diverse to be dealt with in any except a general way in a study of this length. Therefore, this dissertation proposes to deal only with the neediest and geographically most isolated areas, where the Larger Parish on a mission basis is most needed. The Southern Mountain area will be kept in mind, and all direct observations will come from that section of the country, but any conclusions should be applicable to other parts of the country with similar social and economic features. This paper will be concerned with community as well as church problems, for the two are inseparable practically. Furthermore, to include both is to be true to the Christian emphasis on all of life.

B. Method of Procedure

The first step will be to view the general conditions prevailing in rural America, and particularly in these backward areas, out of which the acute

church and community problems arise. These conditions cause church problems, but have also been created to some extent by the past weaknesses and failures of the Church. Since they are also a hindrance to the effective present training of youth for leadership, they must be kept clearly in mind.

Then the areas of community and church need which have resulted from these conditions and with which the Church at large must be vitally concerned will be presented.

The second step will be a review of the present leadership training efforts, both planned and incidental, in such areas. Those outside, as well as those within the church will be studied. The effectiveness of these efforts and the extent of their coverage of the field will be estimated in terms of the leadership they are producing, as measured by present-day leaders.

Lastly, a concrete, year-round program and plan for the training of rural youth for leadership in their churches and communities will be presented. This plan will be practicable under the Larger Parish Organization, and it will have always in mind the educational limitations and environmental difficulties of the remote country youth.

C. Sources of Data

In order to secure first-hand data letters

were written to leaders of youth and directors of parish programs in the Southern mountains and Arkansas. They were asked to give their opinions on the following:

1. the conditions causing the present problems and needs of church and community in their area
2. the extent and success of past and present efforts to train youth in such areas for leadership
3. the ways and means of improving leadership training

The writer will also draw from personal observations and conversations held with mountain youth and their religious and educational leaders during two and a half years of work under the Home Missions Board of the Presbyterian Church in Kentucky.

Secondary sources will include books on rural sociology, rural church, youth work, leadership training, university pamphlets, and articles in rural magazines.

CHAPTER I
PARTICULAR RURAL PROBLEMS
AS RELATED TO THE NEED
FOR LAY LEADERSHIP

CHAPTER I

PARTICULAR RURAL PROBLEMS AS RELATED TO THE NEED FOR LAY LEADERSHIP

A. Introduction

No problem ever exists in a vacuum. The low levels of life and the lack of spiritual, community, and cultural leadership in the underprivileged areas of our country are not without ample cause. The lack of such leadership is in turn responsible for more community and spiritual need, as well as for the continued poverty of the people of these areas, the weakness of their churches, and the continued alarming rate of exodus to the big cities. In this chapter it is proposed that the general situations out of which community and church problems have arisen be stated and explained, and then, that the particular problems with which the rural church must be concerned in each field be examined and stated.

The causes are not mutually exclusive, but rather, overlap and are partially responsible for each other. The most basic causes will be treated first; then those which are more secondary in their roots; and fin-

ally, the resultant spiritual and community needs.

B. Assets of Rural Areas

Before going into the dismal side of the picture, however, it might be well to list the advantages of rural life and of the rural church, for the picture is certainly not all dark, and there are many delightful and wholesome aspects of rural life and the rural church. These will have as much bearing on the program for leadership training of youth as the problems to be listed later. Few of the writers fail to recognize the advantages of rural life. The Christian Mission Among Rural¹ People, for example, sums them up as follows:

- "1) Farmers deal constantly with living things which have a wholesome effect on personality.
- "2) They are constantly aware of the impersonal forces of the natural world which witness to a power beyond them to whose ways they must conform.
- "3) Farmers have a sense of continuity -- they realize their bond with the past and the future.
- "4) Farming is a family occupation.
- "5) The small neighborhood persists in rural life, (especially in the mountains).
- "6) Farming embraces and does not divide the whole of life."

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1. Study prepared by Rural Missions Cooperating Committee of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, p. 16.

"It (rural life) offers the opportunity for quiet and solitude, it means that fresh air is abundant; it is favorable to abundance of natural beauties and to the intimate social relationships in small primary groups which free from psycho-social strain; and it frees the countryman from noise, racket, frictions and nervous strain." 1

The Church is still the third most important institution to the farmer. The rural church is free of the skepticism and criticism so prominent in urban life today, and it is never likely to suffer from insincere money-seeking preachers. Recently many consecrated and capable men have lifted their rural parishes above anything they had ever known. The country is the last stronghold of the family.

Country life is good; the rural church though small is free from corruption and doubt; and people, even in the underprivileged Southern mountain area, have blessings there that they cannot find in any great city, and to which they often return after a bout with the noise and loneliness of the town.

C. Situations out of which Rural Problems Have Arisen

All the letters received from workers on the field stressed the fact that isolation was one of the prime factors responsible for the problem of the ex-

.

1. Smith, op. cit., p. 20.

tremely underprivileged rural areas. The authors of most of the books also mentioned it, although some did not.

1. Isolation

¹
T. Lynn Smith declares that the greatest distinction between country and town is the comparative isolation of each country home. Every house is surrounded by acres of land which separate it from the home of the nearest neighbors. The density of population is very low. This is more true in the west than in the Southern mountain area, however, for there the dwellings tend to congregate close to the creeks while the land stretches behind them up onto the ridges. Yet, the house at the head of the creek or hollow is sometimes so isolated that its children flee in utter terror when a stranger finally approaches. However, the isolation of each little creek community sometimes becomes acute. Some of the roads are still extremely narrow and rough, and at times impassable for any motor vehicle. During the '30s the WPA built many roads. This relieved the situation greatly and made it easy for public servants to get in or out, but the vast majority of the people still do not

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1. Smith: op cit p.20

own cars. The nearest town of any size may be a hundred miles away. High mountains separate them from other little communities nearby. Most of the people can get out if they have to; they have seen at least one big town; they wear up-to-date clothes. But many a man, woman, or child knows no one except the people of his own county, and knows nothing at all of the wonders of science and art. Many a community is still without telephone or electricity. American civilization rolled westward and advanced in all ways, but for years it left untouched the people behind the blue walls of the Appalachian mountains. In recent years they have been rapidly catching up, but their general isolation is still evident in some people, in unsocial attitudes, in extreme timidity with strangers, in a tendency to distrust, and in a natural lack of social ease.

The small population is another side of the isolation problem. Fewer people mean less taxes for public projects and also a smaller number to support any enterprise that might be undertaken. State and federal aid is likely to go to places where larger numbers of people will be benefited.

As a result of their isolation these people have a rugged independence in their ways of acting and thinking. Though admirable in some ways, this tends to

make cooperation difficult. Consequently, rural youth need to be trained to work together and to accept leadership from within the group. Since governments and sometimes churches cannot be expected to send experts to such small groups, they must, to a large extent, be able to furnish their own leadership in projects for community betterment.

Isolation is also a hindrance to regular church attendance and is responsible for the past system of irregular services and seasonal revivals. That pattern persists in many minds, and adds to the irregularity of attendance at regular services.

2. Poverty

Perhaps the greatest difference between the underprivileged home mission areas and the rest of rural America, besides their isolation, is their poverty; and together these two factors are causative of the other deficiencies.

No small farmer is rich, and social studies of rural America reveal that many farmers fail to meet obligations and so lose their land. Income is always dependent upon natural phenomena and upon economic conditions of the land as a whole. Until 1945 every year brought an increase in the number of tenants and a decrease in the number of small, family-held farms. Most

farmers, according to a table in Nelson's Rural Sociology have an annual income of less than \$600.00. Independent mountain farmers, on an average, are much worse off than the average independent American farmer. The mountain farmer generally has one money crop - his tobacco. If anything happens to it or to the market, he can look forward to a bleak year. His other main crop is corn, which he feeds to his livestock, which in turn keep him in meat, milk, and eggs. He may sell one or two hogs. If he has a big farm in a section that has not been "logged out" he may sell his timber, but there is very little good timber left on most farms. He may have a little coal bank in one hillside.

He may put up another of those tiny roadside stores. That is the limit of his money-making possibilities. Markets are too far away and railroad service too poor for him to be able to do dairying or truck gardening. Besides, the land is too steep to admit of much large scale farming, and too poor to raise some products. It has too long been farmed unscientifically. Too many tons of dirt have washed off the hills. Thousands of acres are impossible to reclaim. The good river bottoms are generally owned by one tight-fisted man, who closes out on some farmer every year or so. The U. S. Department of Agriculture has done much to improve farming methods,

but a great deal of damage has already been done.

If the people who own farms are poor, the sharecroppers and tenants are bound to be much poorer. They generally constitute the dirty, lazy class which is so looked down upon by the better people. If any disaster strikes, these people are thrown entirely on the public mercy.

Besides the small outlet for produce and the poor condition of the farms, a third cause of poverty is the extremely high birthrate. According to leaders in that area, Leslie County, Kentucky, has the highest white birthrate of any area in the United States,¹ and counties near it have correspondingly high rates. These same counties are the most poorly equipped in an economic way to care for so many children. Couples are very young when they marry and birth control is practically unknown on the farms. "Only four" is a small family anywhere in the mountains, but most men can ill afford to feed and clothe even that many till the older ones can help at home or go away to get work.

Poverty in itself, if not too extreme, may drive people closer to God, but one of the curses of the

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1. About ten religious and social workers have stated this fact, but none give a source.

rural church is that it is the "victim of economic stringency."¹ People are poor and they are afraid of losing what they have. Money comes hard, and worthwhile people save it. It is hard to spend or give it away. People who can well afford to spend are generally miserly. It takes long training and a lot of grace to make a generous mountaineer. Hard years have made him thrifty. Obviously, this poverty has bad effects in the home, community, and church.

It is reflected in the lack of conveniences in the home and that results in hours of drudgery for the women. There are no books and no paintings; no landscaping or decorating around most homes. The food is all the same and sometimes is lacking in important elements and balance. In the poorest homes there may not be enough warm clothing. The housing itself may be bad from a health standpoint. All these lacks give the child a poor start in life, physically and emotionally. His outlook will be as drab and dull as his home surroundings. He is even deprived of games or entertainment that cost money.

In the community poverty leads to low taxes and few public services. No matter how advantageous a project may be for the general good, if it is going to

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1. A. W. Hewitt: God's Back Pastures, p. 20

cost people money, they cry out against it.

Lack of medical service, good roads, good schools, libraries, and recreational facilities may all be more or less directly traced to poverty, or to the carefulness with money that follows a history of poverty.

In the church, poverty results in small, ugly, ill-kept buildings and in underpaid, inefficient ministers. Worse than that, it results in complete self-centeredness and lack of any desire to give for anything like missions, because it is not of personal benefit.

3. Low Cultural and Educational Levels

The most baffling thing one has to face in attempting to do anything with rural youth in the mountains is the extremely low level of education and culture. How can people be trained for leadership when they cannot read decently? How can they be interested in foreign missions when they don't know the first thing about any foreign country?

The isolation and poverty already discussed are two of the causes of the low cultural level. The utterly inadequate schools are a third.

¹
T. Lynn Smith has listed the things the

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1. Smith, op. cit., p. 386

citizen has a right to expect the public schools to make available:

1. A well-planned program of general education for all children and youth, and also suitable preparation for a particular vocation in accordance with the needs of children and youth.
2. Instruction by carefully selected teachers who are competent and well-prepared, and who are interested in the development of community life.
3. Safe and sanitary school buildings adapted to a modern program of instruction and related services.
4. Suitable school equipment and instructional materials including books and other reading materials adequate for the needs of children.
5. Student aid when necessary to help able students to remain in school at least to the age of eighteen.
6. Suitable opportunity for part-time and adult education.

According to printed tables the Southern mountain states are among the lowest in (1) education of their teachers,¹ (2) number of teen-aged boys and girls attending school,² (3) number of days per school year,³ and (4) in the amount of money spent per child (both on the teacher and the building).⁴

Rural education in America has always been a problem. It has improved immensely in general in recent

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1. Sims & Newell: Elements of Rural Sociology, p. 308
2. Nelson: op.cit. p.393
3. Smith: op.cit. p.398
4. Nelson: op.cit. p.403

years. In 1910 80% of the school buildings were one room. In 1942 only 48.4% were still one room.¹ Forty-two percent of rural teachers in 1935 had less than two years training beyond high school. Now only 16% have less than that.² In 1940 the average rural teacher received \$830 per year, an improvement over 1920, but still the average urban salary was \$1,900.00.³

Why has there always been this disparity? Partly because the country has always had to bear a disproportionate share of the education of the country. In 1940 only 43% of the total population was rural, but more than 50% of the population aged six to sixteen lived in rural areas at that time.⁴ Furthermore, the country is least able financially to bear this burden. The only solution would be some division of the national tax income to provide more equal opportunity.

When one takes Smith's standards, as listed above, and applies them to the country schools of the mountains, the results are discouraging. In the county where the writer worked there was almost no preparation for particular vocations. The desperate search for

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1. Nelson: op.cit., p.394
2. Ibid, p. 399
3. Ibid, p. 397
4. Smith, op.cit., p.390

enough teachers each year makes necessary the hiring of girls just out of high school, and in one case of a man who had never gone beyond the sixth grade. The buildings are firetraps and winter-wind funnels in many cases. There are barely enough books for the ordinary subjects and no other teaching aids, except as the teacher desires and can afford to buy them. There is no student aid and the only adult education is for veterans who want to learn more about farming. There is no beauty in or about most schools.

There are no libraries. In the last census it was found that only three out of seventy-five million urban people were not served by libraries, while thirty-¹two out of fifty-seven rural people were not served.

Most rural people do not take and could not afford daily papers. Everyone has a radio, and tunes it all day long to hillbilly music, cheap religious programs, and soap operas. The county high schools' two annual plays are slap-stick comedy, and the only time good music is ever heard is at Commencement exercises and Baccalaureate services. It is probable that this story could be repeated many times. Is it any wonder that few of these young people go on to college? Much progress has been

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1. Nelsen: op. cit., p. 423

made in education, but most of it has been in a small proportion of the rural communities, namely, those that are the more prosperous.

The lack of beauty, culture, and adequate education causes spiritual deterioration, and cripples the future rural leaders.

4. Migration

One of the outstanding factors to be considered in any study of rural life today, (those interrogated, and every book studied agreed) is the rural-urban migration. Some feel that this is necessary and good to a large extent. Others are deeply concerned for the future welfare of the rural areas of the country and of the nation as a whole. Earl Hitch states it thus in an article in the Kiwanis magazine:

"As city populations expand, family life will become more restricted. The birth rate can be expected to slow-up and by 1975 the United States may be approaching its population peak. By that time we shall have . . . perhaps 25,000,000 living from basic production on the land and over five times that number living from industrial and other occupations."

"Mass working and mass living put pressures on the individual's sense of citizenship responsibility . . . in cities people become indifferent to community and

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1. Earl Hitch: Our Waning Rural Vigor, KIWANIAN, July, 1948, p. 12.

public interest and are more easily swayed¹ by wrong philosophies and systems. Thus the rural-urban migration is a threat to democracy and to population increase, or national vigor.

As Ralph Felton says,

"In 1940-43 4,851,885 people moved into the 469 counties that showed an increase of population. 8,879,105 moved out of the 2,620 counties that showed a decrease (partly due to the calls of the Armed Services)." ²

What kind of people move to the city? Does city or county benefit from this migration? T. Lynn Smith notes the results of an important study:

"Zimmerman . . . came to the conclusion that the city attracts the extremes while the country retains the means. In physical traits, economic and social status, and intelligence, it is probable that the city secures the most desirable as well as the least desirable elements of the population. . . ." ³

What causes this migration? First, the inability of the land to support all the people born there. Second, the attraction of city wages. Third, the attraction of city life as portrayed in the movies and as studied in schools. Rural people today are strongly influenced by urban trends. Fourth, the monotony of country life and

.

1. Ibid. p. 12,42

2. Ralph Felton: Cooperative Churches, p.5

3. Smith: op.cit., p. 188

the difficulty of breaking the accepted pattern, either rising above it or falling below it. (There is also the migration of rural people to other rural places, as share-croppers, tenants, and migrant pickers, but this has little effect in the mountains.)

Migration, then, is, to a certain extent, necessary, and it becomes the duty of a rural Christian worker to prepare his people for living as Christians in the city. Something, however, should be done to keep all the most idealistic, intelligent youth from going to the cities. There they may have a chance to stretch their wings, but their ability and leadership is not nearly so desperately needed, and is practically always lost to mankind. The mountain young person who goes to college hardly ever returns to his narrow, needy little community, where his contribution will be most felt.

D. The Place of the Church in Relation to Rural Problems

1. The Basic Rural Problem.

Missionaries interviewed and all the books studied, even non-Christian ones, agreed that the church has a strong place in rural society and can, therefore, influence conditions. They also agreed that it is much affected by rural problems.

"The rural problem is to maintain upon our land a class of people whose status in our society fairly represents American ideals, industrial, political, social, and ethical." 1

It is an organic part of the question of our national life as a whole and the solution involves socialization, education, organization, religious idealism, and the federation of all four.

2. The Church's Function in Relation to the Rural Situation

The Church is only one in several institutions, ranking second to the home and school, but it has a close relationship to these and to other rural institutions. According to Butterfield:

"The country church is to maintain and enlarge both individual and community ideals, under the inspiration and guidance of the religious motive, to help rural people to incarnate these ideals in personal and family life, in industrial effort and political development and in all social relationships."2

One of the retarding features of rural life is that ideals are so low and so binding. They remain generally at a dead level. In this connection, Butterfield says, the church should bring out the natural poetry and beauty of rural life, provide sympathy, stimulus, and inspiration, and make better men and women, who put religion to work

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1. Butterfield, op.cit., p.30
2. Ibid, p.75

in daily life, politics, and social life. Religion should not be placed in the category of a separate, special interest, but should be a spirit permeating all of life. Nelson gives the following elements of the Church¹ as a social institution:

- a. "It is a system of doctrine . . . with reference to God and the unseen world.
- b. "It is a set of ceremonies and rituals appropriate to these beliefs.
- c. "It is a body of members who have subscribed to the creed.
- d. "It is a pattern of organization involving both lay and professional leaders with specific duties and responsibilities.
- e. "It has physical facilities to carry on its functions."

Its functions are:

- (1) "To teach doctrine.
- (2) "To exhort members to obedience to and practice of its precepts.
- (3) "To provide physical facilities for communal religious activities.
- (4) "To provide welfare and recreational activities.
- (5) "To counsel members on problems.
- (6) "To serve as an agency of social control."²

How well is the church meeting the rural problem ?

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- 1. Nelson, op. cit., p. 342
- 2. Ibid., p. 343

How is it affecting and being affected by these four great rural problems discussed earlier in the chapter ? How is it fulfilling its function as a spiritual and social institution ?

E. Areas of Great Need

1. Spiritual Needs.

First, the situation of the church resulting from the problems of rural America, particularly in the Southern mountains, will be considered. Many needs of rural people were mentioned by missionaries questioned and authors of books read. They can be classified as spiritual and material. T. Lynn Smith lists the following five rural church problems, under which are gathered supplementary data from other books:

a. "The number of rural churches has declined, especially those in the open country, as a result of migration to the city."¹ Figures which are accurate are difficult to find. The Federal Census of 1926 showed 175,000 rural churches. The census of Religious Bodies in 1936 listed 128,000. Smith thinks that is low, that there were probably 200,000 rural churches in that year.²

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1. Smith, op. cit., pp. 428-30
2. Ibid., p. 428

Randolph lists only 175,000 for the year 1945.¹ At any rate, Ohio reported 1,058 abandoned rural churches² in about 1925. Such figures could almost be repeated in many states. In 1916, all Protestant churches in the United States, except the Episcopal, had over half of their members in country churches. In Nelson's book, published in 1948, a table shows that only eleven of thirty-six Protestant denominations had half of their membership in rural churches.³ And yet, the rural church is predominantly Protestant. According to population there are less ministers for the rural-farm people than for any other class -- 1 to 3,064 persons. Mountain states have more preachers serving four or more points than any other territory does and the larger proportion of their ministers serve that many churches. In the open country, two churches die for every one organized. Those in larger towns have the best chances of survival. The killing range of the town church exceeds its drawing range. The dying churches are of the older more conservative type.⁴

b. Church attendance is declining steadily. The loss in attendance is attributable to the church's ina-

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1. Randolph, op. cit., p. 49
2. Sims & Newell, op. cit., p. 345
3. Nelson, op. cit., pp. 351, 357
4. Randolph, op. cit., p. 52

bility to compete with other social attractions; small competing churches staffed by poorly trained ministers are not in a favorable competitive position. Absentee ministers are also responsible for poor attendance, as are the distances to be covered by rural churchgoers.

c. Support for rural churches decreased sharply between 1930-36. TIME magazine, January 3, 1949, states that national giving hit an all-time low in percentage in 1948. It is hardly to be expected that the rural church, more understaffed than ever, rose above the national average.

d. Many rural areas are overchurched, and keen rivalry exists between denominations. Yet close to these competing churches, especially in the South, there will exist dark communities where there is no service at all.

e. Another problem is the low ideal held by most members of the church's function. The Church does not, and is not, expected to meet community and social problems. It is not reaching the unreached, and yet it is satisfied as it is !

The "boss system" is a handicap to the rural church.¹ Because of lack of enough leadership one person or one family may run the whole church.

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1. Butterfield, op. cit., p. 99

¹
Sims gives an overall picture of the mountain region which is still true to a large extent in many places:

"It is plagued by absentee ministry and infrequent services, by meagerly educated and untrained preachers, by extreme individualism and sectarianism. Churches are poor and backward. Missionary aid has been poured in, not always to the greatest benefit."

People have come to expect the missionary to do everything about the church and to give them everything they need, without any giving on their part. In many places the Presbyterian Church is regarded as a sort of overgrown Santa Claus.

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Hewitt has characterized the rural church as being the victim of (1) invincible ignorance, (2) ecclesiastical manslaughter, (3) fatalistic pessimism, (4) pious immorality (malicious uncharity, gossip of small communities), (5) economic stringency, and (6) the "colony" attitude -- each church a little island in the wilderness, not part of the great Church.

In summation, the rural church is in need of:

- (1) Higher ideals and aspirations.
- (2) Realization and action on the relation between God and life.
- (3) A sense of stewardship, resulting in more beauty, better equipment and a better ministry.

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1. Sims, op. cit., p. 350
2. Arthur W. Hewitt: God's Back Pastures, p. 8

- (4) Broader horizons of service and kinship (foreign missions, etc.)
- (5) A more charitable and cooperative spirit towards its neighbors.

These needs, it is evident from the preceding study, grow directly out of its situation.

In addition, its people, like people everywhere, need to know more about God, Christ, the Bible, prayer, and the beauty of the Christian life. Only knowledge of Him and close fellowship with Him can give them the wisdom, courage, selflessness, and motivation to do something about their problems.

2. Community Needs.

As already seen, Southern mountain communities have in addition many social and economic needs with which the Church will be concerned and by which it will be affected.

Missionaries usually stress the educational, recreational, and moral needs. The University of Kentucky literature and bulletins from the Department of Agriculture in Washington emphasize farm and social needs.

- a. There is great need for better schools.
- b. Health conditions must be improved.
- c. Farming methods are far from what they should be.
- d. Better communications would be a great help.
- e. More beauty must be achieved in homes, villages, schools and public buildings.

- f. Recreational opportunities for the young and the old are deplorably lacking.

In many communities the only recreation from one year to the next, if the church does not provide some, is getting on a truck and going to the town movie occasionally or attending the yearly school pie supper. Aside from that, the boys hunt and drink and the girls sew. There may be one square dance during the year and one bean stringing.

- g. Moral standards must be raised.

True, there is not the juvenile delinquency of the great city, but there is plenty of petty thievery, many fatherless babies, some murder, and constant debauchery among the young men. Leisure time, if not filled profitably, will be filled by evil !

To meet these problems every community needs upright, selfless, determined leaders from among its own ranks -- not a few -- but many.

F. Summary

Although there are many advantages to life in rural areas, like the Southern mountains, there are bad conditions which cause the great problems of the church and community. In order to meet and understand the prob-

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1. For the above list, the writer is indebted mainly to R.G. McClure and Sam Vandermeer, missionaries in Kentucky.

lems, as they are related to lay leadership, the conditions out of which they arise were studied.

It was found that the two basic factors are (1) the geographical isolation and the low density of population, and (2) the extreme poverty, caused by distance from markets, lack of industry, and the condition of the land, which causes people to be wary of spending their money even for good causes.

Two factors, in part resulting from these previously named, which are also responsible for rural church problems are (1) the extremely low levels of culture and education caused by poor schools, and (2) the migration of youth to the city. Although the country loses its shiftless element thereby, it also loses its most promising leadership.

Then the position of the church in relation to country life was considered, and it was found that the church has close contact with and is in part responsible for improving all areas of rural life.

In conclusion, the specific needs of the church and community were listed on pages 22-23. To these we would add: a deeper and wiser spiritual life among all its members.

The community needs may be summed up under the

following headings: education, health, economics, communications, aesthetics, recreation, and morality.

CHAPTER II

CURRENT EFFORTS IN LEADERSHIP
TRAINING IN UNDERPRIVILEGED
AGRICULTURAL AREAS

CHAPTER II

CURRENT EFFORTS IN LEADERSHIP TRAINING IN UNDERPRIVILEGED AGRICULTURAL AREAS

A. Introduction

Conditions in the underprivileged rural areas have just been considered, as have the church and community problems growing out of these conditions. In the light of these the training of rural youth for lay leadership takes on added importance.

Since there are so many problems to face, and since lay leadership plays such an important part in meeting them, it is the purpose of this chapter to discover what has been done up to the present time in training such leadership and to evaluate these efforts.

The primary source of information will be the letters received from the home missionaries listed on page 28, in answer to the following question:

What efforts have there been, up to the present time, to train lay leadership in your area, and how successful have these efforts been? (The answer should include non-church efforts.)

Unless otherwise noted, all references will be to these letters and conversations.

Any organization which works with growing persons, giving them wider experience and knowledge and improving their skills, makes some contribution to their leadership ability. However, only those organizations which are large enough to have made a real contribution to the total picture will be considered. These will include church organizations, namely, Sunday School, Daily Vacation Bible Schools, Special Denominational Efforts, and Youth Work; and non-church organizations such as the Farm Bureau and other Agricultural Extension work, 4-H Clubs, Future

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1. Elizabeth McCort, Nashville, Tennessee, Ass't to the Field Representative of the Board of National Missions and Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.
2. Jean Howell, College of the Ozarks, Clarksville, Ark., trains leadership from among college students for local Christian service.
3. Mrs. John Abnett, D.R.E., Marion, Kentucky, widow of life-long home missionary.
4. Rev. Bernard Taylor, Director, Alpine Parish, Alpine Tennessee.
5. Josephine Rupp, D.R.E., Ozone, Tennessee, newly returned to the field after a long absence.
6. Mrs. David Swartz, wife of the Director, Yancy County Larger Parish, Burnsville, North Carolina.
7. L. Dorothy Green, D.R.E., Presbyterian Church, Mena, Arkansas.

Further information is drawn from conversations with R.G. McClure, Sam Vandermeer, Benton Deaton, Boaz Smith and Cramer, all pastors in the mid-mountain sector of Kentucky.

Farmers of America, the Government Plan for helping older youth help themselves, the Grange, Cooperatives, and the national character building organizations for youth.

B. Leadership Training Efforts
of the Church

1. The Sunday School

The first organization to be considered is the Sunday School, the oldest and most widespread of all religious organizations dealing with younger people.

From the fact that every Sunday School book has a chapter on Teacher Training, it is obvious that the Sunday School feels its need for training lay leaders. Sunday School teachers are important lay leaders. Over half of the letters received from home missionaries mentioned teacher-training in the Sunday School as one thing that had been done to train leaders up to the present.

a. The Need for Lay Leadership
in the Rural Sunday School

Rural Sunday Schools, according to McLaughlin, have "a glaring need for more adequate physical equipment, but most important of its many needs is a better grade of lay leadership." H. S. Randolph evaluates the Sunday

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1. Henry W. McLaughlin: Religious Education in the Rural Church, p.28

School thus:

"The Sunday School has frequently stood first in meeting the needs of rural people . . . has drawn people together, eliminating some sectarianism and bigotry . . . and been a powerful democratic social factor. When effectively geared into the church program it is still one of the most important institutions for religious nurture, character building, and leadership training in rural communities." ¹

However, he feels that it has its limitations due to its poor equipment, need of well-trained teachers, and of better adapted subject matter in materials used. ²

In a Kentucky University Bulletin, certain tables show that in most mountain counties 34% of the population belong to the church and only 22% to the Sunday School. In the Cumberland Plateau, central mountain area, however, 16% of the population belong to the Sunday School but only 18% belong to the church. ³ This would indicate that Sunday Schools in that area are doing a better job in comparison to the church than other Sunday Schools in the state. However, when the Sunday Schools serve only 16% of the population they can hardly be called successful. The fault lies partially in the fact that there are no Sunday Schools at all in many communities. If there were lay

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1. H.S. Randolph: The Manual for Town and Country Churches, p. 144
2. Cf. Randolph, loc. cit.
3. Harold Kaufman: Religious Organization in Kentucky, p. 40

leadership there would be Sunday Schools. This fact is illustrated by the following case.

In Ows-Lee Larger Parish a former bootlegger, who had been converted several years previous, was given a class in his home Sunday School. With the realization that he could teach came the vision that there were communities nearby which had no Sunday services, because time did not permit the professional church workers to serve any more than the fourteen neighborhoods they were then reaching. He started a Sunday School in one area, about four miles over the mountains from his home. Soon another community farther away called him. He turned over his home class to a new teacher and thereafter made a round trip of about twenty-six miles a Sunday on horseback, teaching two entire Sunday Schools.

b. The Effectiveness of the Rural
Sunday School in Leadership Training

How many rural people are being reached by present Sunday School programs for leadership training? Are Sunday Schools producing enough lay leaders? If enough people were being reached and turned into leaders by the Sunday School, there would not be such a cry going up for more and better teachers. This expression of need of lay leaders is on the lips of every board secretary, written into every book, and expressed in every letter received from home missionaries.

McLaughlin says that the Sunday School in itself is not designed to train pupils in leadership. This is obvious when one considers the average country Sunday School. Pupils are expected to sit and listen and perhaps answer a few simple questions. Therefore, the production of leadership must be considered a by-product of the main aim of the Sunday School, that of "religious nurture and character building."¹

In its efforts to provide religious nurture and build Christian character the Sunday School does, incidentally, make the largest contribution to leadership training of any organization studied.

The story of the former bootlegger illustrates both the strength and the weakness of the rural Sunday School. It calls leaders into being; it can be started and operated in the most unpretentious way. But the man had never been really trained. He knew nothing about educational methods. It is impossible to believe that he could keep four year-olds and sixty year-olds interested at the same time. If he had been trained and had had at least one trained assistant from each community, attendance, interest, and Christian character building would have been at least doubled.

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1. Randolph, op.cit., p.144

Bernard Taylor lists three things that are being done to train leadership in Alpine Parish. Two of them are: helping in Sunday School classes as substitute teachers, and remaining as assistant teachers under a trained teacher in large Sunday School classes.

Elizabeth McCort, who is an assistant to the field representative of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., in the Synod of Mid-South says, "A few rural pastors are holding regular courses effectively," and it is evident from the context that she means teacher-training courses.

Jean Howell, who is teaching Religious Education in the College of Ozarks, says, "There have been area conferences on the New Curriculum for leaders and for all teachers in their age groups."

From Marion, Kentucky, Mrs. Abnett writes, "There have been some classes for Sunday School teachers at the time new materials were introduced."

Rev. J. F. Harris of Mossy Creek Church, Va., reports carrying whole classes through twelve leadership training units for diplomas.¹ Rev. J. B. Suttle, pastor of four country churches near Shelby, N.C., held classes

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1. McLaughlin, op.cit. p.80

for his laymen over several years. More than 1,000 credits¹ are held by members of his congregations.

Unfortunately, however, teacher training courses have reached far fewer rural teachers than city teachers. As McLaughlin points out, in 1929 ten city teachers to every country teacher had attended a teacher training school, in spite of the fact that rural teachers probably need the courses more. Out of 476 Sunday School teachers in one rural county, only 84 had ever attended a leadership training course. Only twelve of them had Leadership Training² diplomas.

Some of the reasons for the failure of country wide leadership training courses to reach rural Sunday School teachers are listed by McLaughlin:

1. Country people live too far from the town centers where such courses are held.
2. Meetings are at unsuitable times.
3. Rural people are not consulted as to time, place, courses, or instructors.
4. Country people feel socially distant from town people.
5. Rural people are naturally conservative and afraid of new things.³

On the other hand, a completely rural leadership training course is difficult to start because it may not draw enough of a constituency to make it worthwhile. Of

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1. McLaughlin, op.cit., p.80
2. Ibid., p.75
3. Ibid., p.76

this Miss McCort says, "The formal leadership training classes often seem too complicated for them." And Miss Howell states that "There is an indifference among many who should be church leaders which keeps them from seeking or taking training."

By and large, most leaders agree that the greatest contribution of the Sunday School has been informal training. Randolph says,

"Many instances can be cited where a youth without training has been asked to teach a class for whom there was no teacher. He taught the class as best he could. Through his own study to become a more effective teacher he became consecrated to a life of Christian leadership." ¹

Some of the most devout Christian lay leaders the writer has known were self-trained because of such an experience.

The Sunday School is recognized as one of the strongest organizations in the mountains. Says Kaufman, "The Church is the strongest voluntary organization in this area," ² and Sunday School enrollment almost equals church enrollment. ³ Furthermore, the Sunday School, through its need of and creation of teachers has probably done more to provide lay leadership than any other organization. According to the testimony of Christian workers, most actual leadership training has been done in the

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1. Randolph, loc.cit.

2. Harold Kaufman: Three Questions for the Mountain Church in Mountain Life and Work, p.20

3. Kaufman, op.cit., p.25

interest of the Sunday School. However, these workers also testify that such training has been inadequate and scattered, that many Sunday School teachers are completely unfitted for their jobs, and that the Sunday School has failed to furnish leadership for other areas in the life of the church and community.

2. Daily Vacation Bible Schools

Daily Vacation Bible Schools are also considered a great aid in the religious education of children, and, like the Sunday School, they are incidentally a means of training lay leadership. Many a young woman or girl has first become interested in teaching, or first told a story to a group through being asked to help in a Vacation Bible School. Jean Howell writes,

"In summer D.V.B.S. work we often work with local help. It is our aim to use this as much as we can and have the summer workers be trainers and supervisors of these local leaders."

Many ministers to whom Caravaners or summer student service workers are sent use them in the same way. A short course is sometimes held for prospective Bible School teachers, at the beginning of the summer. Warren Wilson College in North Carolina has such a course which¹ both Caravaners and mountain girls attend.

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1. Letter from Mrs. David Swartz
Burnsville, N.C.

Then the girls are sent out by twos - a Warren Wilson girl and a Caravaner. Both learn a great deal.

However, the Bible School reaches so few potential leaders that are not reached by the Sunday Schools that its contribution is not too great.

3. Special Denominational Efforts

One of the outstanding efforts of the Presbyterian Church to train its lay leaders, as well as its ministers, is the School of the Mid-South, held every June at Warren Wilson College. This school is staffed by experts and it draws from all the southern states. Naturally, its enrollment is limited to a small percentage of the church membership of all that area, but it is doing an effective piece of work.

Johnson C. Smith University and Barber-Scotia have organized a two-county parish under the direction of three field workers cooperating with the ministers and college representatives. This project is put at the disposal of lay and theological students who need training.¹

The Methodist Church has done much to train² its ministers for rural leadership but not so much for its laymen. The same thing is true of the Presbyterian

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1. Randolph, op.cit., p. 91

2. McLaughlin, op.cit., p.115

Church.

Randolph tells about an ideal but all too rare program:

"A certain church conducts its training school for its members each year during the winter months. The program for the current year includes five courses. The members of the group eat supper together ... The pastor next leads his church officials in a class in 'Church Building and Equipment.' He is planning a new religious education plant and uses this method of working out the plans. A college graduate trained teacher gives demonstrations at the same period in the various methods of conducting a Sunday School class... all meet together for the assembly period and listen to a half-hour talk on some mission field. During the next session two classes are held: How to Teach Religion in the Home (for young parents), and The Use of Dramatics in Religious Education for teachers. It continues for six Wednesday nights during February and March." 1

Rev. Bernard Taylor mentions the leading of youth meetings as one method of training leaders.

Mrs. David Swartz of Yancy County Larger Parish says,

"The best training has been done in the mission schools - Warren Wilson College and the now extinct Stanley McCormick School here in Burnsville. Those who have attended a mission school have come back with varying degrees of leadership ability."

Mr. Taylor of Alpine, Tennessee, also mentions the work of the Mission schools. Teachers of the school at Alpine gave leadership training for many boys and girls

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1. Randolph, op.cit., p. 150

in school and also supervised their teaching experiences in Daily Vacation Bible schools, thus training many leaders.

Josephine Rupp, of Ozone, Tennessee, finds that church and community leaders everywhere have had training in mission boarding schools.

The College of the Ozarks has been training its students in Religious Education. These youth go out into the surrounding communities and teach Bible, fill pulpits in vacant churches, have community nights, and put on special programs, all under Jean Howell's direction. A Religious Education course, which will draw in many school teachers, will be given during the summer.

According to R. G. McClure, all the leaders in the church at Cow Creek, and one or two in neighboring churches in Owsley County, Kentucky are people who attended a church school formerly held there. Highland School, in Jackson County, Kentucky, a Southern Presbyterian School, has trained many local leaders. The Vandermeers of Morris Fork praised this school highly.

Many of these church schools are closed today, and probably more will be closed in the future, as state educational systems improve. Therefore, something must be done to supplement their work. Even in the past they did not reach enough of the people.

According to Mr. Taylor another sad fact has been that these youth trained in the church schools often never returned to their home communities.

4. Youth Organizations

McLaughlin recognizes the importance of youth organizations when he says that the young people are the hope of the country congregation.

"The task of the rural minister and his church is not to do things for the young people, but to train them to do things for the church and to be pastors' helpers. The young people's organization may be made a mighty factor in training future leaders in the rural church." 1

But there are pitifully few youth organizations in the Southern mountain areas. The letter of Dorothy Green, of Mena, Arkansas, is the only one that tells of a vigorous youth program. Only a very small percentage of the letters mentioned having youth programs, although their importance was acknowledged by most workers. The writer personally knows of only three or four outside of those in the parish where she formerly worked.

Several missionaries mentioned in their letters the valuable training given youth in conferences and camps. They are generally felt to be one of the best means of starting youth toward leadership. As the value of camps

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1. McLaughlin, op.cit., p.147

and conferences is recognized, more and more of them are held, and larger numbers of youth attend them. Church camps rank high in the training of leadership. There are not yet enough of them at a short enough distance and low enough cost to make them available for all the youth who should attend them.¹ Some camps do not fully avail themselves of the leadership-training opportunity they have.

5. The Larger Parish

An outstanding development in the rural church in recent years has been the spread of the Larger Parish type of church organization. Rev. Harlow S. Mills is generally considered to be the originator of the Larger Parish idea. One writer says of him,

"He was convinced that the real object of the church, if it is to fulfill its mission, must be (1) to serve the people, (2) to serve all the people, (3) to serve all the interests of the people, (4) to be responsible for country evangelism, and (5) for the village church to be a "community-serving Church." 2

Rev. Mills started a Larger Parish to accomplish these objects.

The three fundamental ideas in the conception of the Larger Parish are: (1) the idea of linking the churches of a definite sociological community, thus remedy-

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1. Letter of Josephine Rupp, Ozone, Tennessee
2. Mark Rich: The Larger Parish, p.4

ing the situation of the dying open-country church and serving a whole area, (2) the idea of thorough inter-church cooperation, as evidenced by the Larger-Parish Council, made up of representatives from each church in the parish, and (3) the ideas of a specialized ministry in order to carry on the widely varied work of the rural church.¹

A thoughtful consideration of these fundamental objects and ideas reveals that they would lend themselves well to leadership training. First, the best way to serve people is to help them learn to serve themselves. In addition, all the interests of all the people cannot be served by a few professional leaders. Such an aim necessitates the use of laymen in the parish churches. The council, which is the official agency elected to carry out the program of the churches in the parish, is, in itself, a device for training the representatives from each church in leadership. Lastly, the presence of a specialized ministry, which almost invariably includes a Director of Religious Education, demands leadership education. For, as Sanderson says, "Leadership training is the peculiar function of a professional leader."²

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1. Rich, op. cit., pp. 4-6.

2. Dwight Sanderson: Leadership for Rural Life, p. 85.

In addition, the Larger Parish is especially fitted to break down the comparative isolation of some mountain communities and the sectarian attitude which is the cause of much trouble. It is also able to lift levels of culture and education because a parish can secure better equipment to serve cooperative churches than one church could ever acquire, and because it can attract better outside speakers. Furthermore, it can exert a stronger influence on all of life in a county because of its greater size and its policy of cooperation with community agencies.¹

The Larger Parish can be made to embody all the aforementioned church efforts toward leadership training. It has Sunday Schools in each church, and should have teacher-training courses, although many parishes have not had any such course as yet. It has Daily Vacation Bible Schools and could easily have preliminary training courses for potential local teachers from all churches in the parish. It certainly should have a youth program, and often has a youth council. Ows-Lee Larger Parish has a parish youth camp each year, a project which Mark Rich recommends in his pamphlet on the Larger Parish. Such camps can be so reasonable in price that young people from the poorest homes are able to go. Often they may

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1. Rich, op. cit., p. 11

pay their way with produce.¹ In general, the youth of Larger Parishes, in some localities, have carried on many activities, but those in the underprivileged areas have far to go as yet. It is an unfortunate fact that there are, as yet, few Larger Parishes in such localities as the Southern mountain area.

Mr. Rich sums up the way in which the Larger Parish plan develops leadership thus:

"It seeks to remedy this condition, (of lack of lay leadership in the rural church) by providing more opportunities for lay leadership. This is done by increasing the number of activities and thus increasing the need for leadership and by providing more formal and informal leadership training.

"The larger parish also appeals to more capable lay leadership because of the better results and because of the wider recognition of work well done. The re-defined purpose of the churches working through the larger parish is a stimulus to the enlistment of new leadership. The improved morale in group activities is also conducive to an emotional element in meetings and parish work which stimulates lay leadership to assume responsibility." 2

From the foregoing, it can be seen that the Larger Parish in itself trains lay leadership, and that it embodies all the other efforts toward educating lay leadership mentioned in the letters from missionaries except that of the church-supported school, which is admittedly becoming a thing of the past.

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1. Cf. Rich, op.cit., p.13

2. Ibid., p.20

The Larger Parish Plan, then, is the best current effort in the production of lay leadership, but it is not widespread enough, and often individual parishes do not make full use of the opportunities provided by this type of organization.

C. Leadership Training Efforts of Non-Church Organizations

Only two letters from home missionaries mentioned the work of any non-church organization in leadership training, although the question included such organizations. Therefore, it seems safe to assume that little has been accomplished by them.

1. The Farm Bureau

Miss McCort spoke of the work done by the Farm Bureau in training local leaders for the meetings they are to conduct. It is fostered by the Federal Government, and has spread rapidly. According to Sims it is "a local association of farm families which devotes itself to all the aspects of the farm problem."¹ It is sometimes organized on the township basis, sometimes on the county basis and is united to the State Bureau through delegates. It sponsors meetings which the farmers themselves conduct,

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1. Sims, op.cit., p.666

in which there is both recreation and educational information. In some areas it has become almost entirely a co-operative marketing association and thus is narrowed in its extent of service to the farmer. The Farm Bureau is active in the mountain region.

2. 4-H Clubs

Boys and Girls 4-H Clubs are developments of the Extension service provided for in the same act that provided money for the Farm Bureau. In her letter Miss Green of Arkansas says that the 4-H Clubs are doing a fine piece of work in training the young folks for leadership. They are also active in Kentucky, and probably in other mountain states as well. These clubs, for youth aged 10-20, aim to educate children and youth through doing. They provide recreation and increase the skills necessary for rural life in these boys and girls. Dr. Randolph also feels that the 4-H Clubs are making a splendid contribution to the development of rural young people and to the retention of their interest in rural life. Then he quotes Richard Comfort who says that the "heart" part of the 4-H program is often neglected, and that the minister can be¹ of real help here.

Besides training the youth the Club is often

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1. Cf. Randolph, op.cit., p. 69

leadership training for the adult who sponsors a Club in¹
a local community. In 1926 there were 41,000 4-H Clubs.
Since then the movement has grown enormously. The only
drawback is that sometimes the winning of a prize is²
emphasized to such an extent that other values are lost.

3. Future Farmers of America

Another organization that helps youth to keep
this interest in rural life is the Future Farmers of
America, high school clubs of boys who are taking the vo-
cational agriculture course. Besides helping the boys to
make a start toward prosperous farming during their school
days, it has regular meetings at which business is con-
ducted, an educational program presented, and a social and
recreational period is provided. All kinds of other³
broadening activities are carried on also.

4. Other Agricultural Extension Work

In addition to providing for the Farm Bureau and
4-H Clubs, government funds also make possible university
extension work. Furthermore, Agricultural Extension
offices are not limited to counties that have the Farm
Bureau, but carry on their educational activities in 2,400⁴
or the 2,880 agricultural counties of the country. The

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1. Sims, op.cit., p.667
2. Ibid, loc. cit.
3. Cf. Randolph, op.cit., p.70
4. McLaughlin, op.cit., p.56

success of the work generally depends on the agent heading up the office in each county. The work of these agents has done a great deal to improve standards of living in the mountains, but they have done little to train people in methods of leadership.

In a pamphlet called "Working with Rural Youth" Edmund Brunner tells of a program set up during the depression years to minister to the hordes of older youth who were forced to remain idle in the country. The program was carried on through existing national agencies, like the NYA, Agricultural Extension Bureau, and Home Economics and Agricultural divisions of the National Educational Association. It operated on the democratic principle. The youth themselves decided what they wanted to do and how they would do it. The process was excellent leadership-training and it proved the benefit of organizations for youth in the following way. Communities which had had youth organizations before attacked the program much better when it was initiated.

The effort touched only a fragment of the rural population needing such a program, but it demonstrated effectively the abilities and social hungers of the youth.

The operation of the plan in Georgia centered around the state university, where the college youth themselves held a ten-day leadership training institute

and then went out to start sub-groups in needy surrounding areas. Some of these college youth spent all of the following summer starting programs in barren communities. Eventually delegations of these youth even went to other states to help start similar programs. Brunner drew the following conclusions from his study of the program:

1. Older youth are in greater need of special attention, since they are out of school and feel too old for the high school age activities.
2. Youth need coordination. They have ability and desire. The item lacking is coordinating, unobtrusive supervision by some trained leader.
3. Any good program requires youth participation and community integration.
4. Youth is an untapped resource.
5. Youth can do much for youth. 1

5. The Grange

Although the Grange is a strong national farmers organization, it is relatively unknown in the mountains, and therefore makes no contribution.

6. Cooperatives

Other cooperatives besides the Farm Bureau, which is in part government sponsored, have also helped to train farmers in leadership through the conduct of business meetings, and through working cooperatively. Their contribution to the total church and community leadership, however, is bound to be negligible, since their primary

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1. These conclusions are elaborated in Edmund Brunner's Working with Rural Youth, pp.101-108

aim is purely economic.

7. Miscellaneous Youth Organizations

Last will be considered the work of national organizations whose aim is to build character in youth - the YMCA, YWCA, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Camp Fire Girls. All these organizations claim to have rural work.

¹ According to Sims the YMCA reaches a few rural communities and the YWCA rarely gets outside a good-sized town. Locals of Girls Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Camp Fire Girls are found in rural villages but make only a limited appeal to open country boys and girls. Paul Douglass states that the Boy Scouts have the greatest number of organizations in small unincorporated places.² This would correspond with the writer's knowledge of the mountain area and the organizations at work in them. "It (Scouting) is particularly strong on the side of civic usefulness and in fitting the future citizen for his responsibilities."³

The YMCA and the YWCA have made a large enough contribution to merit a summary of their good and bad aspects in Douglas' book. Girl Scouts and Camp Fire Girls were left out of this summary. Of the YMCA, YWCA, and Boy Scouts it is said,

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1. Sims, op.cit., pp. 668,669

2. Paul Douglass: How Shall Country Youth be Served? p.46

3. Ibid., p. 160

"While admitting that the rural work of the agencies has not yet reached any very impressive dimensions and while finding in it many traits which should be changed, the study concludes that it constitutes a considerable service to a number of communities." 1

Most of these communities were in non-mountain areas. At the time this study was made the agencies served only one-fortieth of the nation's rural youth and that mostly around large centers of population -- not an impressive showing. Therefore, their contribution in leadership training is bound to be negligible.

D. Summary

This study has revealed that, in spite of its faults and weaknesses, the Sunday School of the South has done more to produce and train leaders in the underprivileged areas than any other organization. According to the combined testimony of present church leaders in these fields, the church boarding schools have made a valuable contribution in training leadership in the past. Nothing has been found to take their place since state schools have largely displaced church schools.

Supervised local help and pre-school training courses have been the means of training some leadership through Daily Vacation Bible Schools.

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1. Douglass, op. cit., p. 164

A few institutes for training adults in all phases of church work have been held with varying success.

Youth work is recommended as a leadership-training measure, but only a few complete youth programs are carried on by the churches. Summer camps and conferences have often helped youth catch a new vision and exercise new skills.

The most outstanding recent development in the rural church, the Larger Parish, has great leadership training possibilities due to the nature of its organization and program, as well as its adaptability to the underprivileged rural area. It can embody in its program all the types of church activity recommended in the letters of the missionaries. There should be more such parishes, and they should take better advantage of the opportunities which the organization affords.

The church has at least been trying, and although much is yet to be accomplished, it has managed to produce a large percent of whatever local leadership there is in most mountain communities. However, the church is constantly suffering from its lack of sufficient lay leadership.

Outside of the church the only organizations that have penetrated mountain communities with any degree of success are government-backed agencies. Agricultural

Extension agencies have been doing a good piece of work in raising the standard of living and Farm Bureaus have given farmers leadership training in their meetings. 4-H Clubs and Future Farmers of America are helping rural boys and girls to stand on their own feet and do their work well. State University Extension work has worked hand in hand with Federal Government agencies at these tasks.

National Societies for youth have failed to make even a slight impression on the mountain youth, with the possible exception of the Boy Scouts.

In the secular field, altogether, little has been done to train local leadership, although government agencies have used church-trained men to help them lift the level of daily life.

This survey leaves one with the conviction that something must be done to fit the youth now growing up for a leadership that will lift their churches and communities to new high levels of well-rounded living.

Too few leaders are being produced, and those that are produced are lacking in sufficient training in all fields. All the letters but two stressed the gravity of the problem and Mission Board Secretaries are deeply concerned over it.

CHAPTER III
TRAINING YOUTH FOR LAY LEADERSHIP
MAKING USE
OF THE LARGER PARISH PLAN

CHAPTER III

TRAINING YOUTH FOR LAY LEADERSHIP, MAKING USE OF THE LARGER PARISH PLAN

A. Introduction

In the first chapter it was found that there are certain great spiritual and community needs growing out of the poverty, isolation, low levels of culture and education, and cityward migration of the underprivileged agricultural areas. It was also noted that the church is in need of higher ideals and aspirations, action commensurate with its faith, better stewardship, broader horizons, and a more cooperative spirit. These needs were seen to have caused the rural church in general to decline in numbers and attendance. Community needs were discovered to be in the field of education, health, economics, communications, aesthetics, recreation, and morality. Because of these needs, too, it was evident, the church suffers and requires a lay leadership that is adequate to meet them. In the second chapter it was discovered there is a definite lack of lay leadership -- that the church has made sporadic efforts to train such leadership, that various missionaries

report successful methods of leadership training, but that not nearly enough is being done to solve the problem. It was found, moreover, that secular organizations have done even less in many cases than the church, although government agencies have been working steadily in all areas to improve the standard of living. A study of the Larger Parish Plan revealed that it is peculiarly well-fitted for the task of training lay leadership because of its specialized ministry, size, and vigorous program. But it was also obvious that these advantages are not being fully utilized in the areas where the need for leadership is greatest. Therefore, in the light of the needs, this chapter proposes to state the principles that should underlie a Larger Parish Leadership Training Program in such areas and to apply them to a suggested leadership training program for youth.

In the program suggestions at the close of the chapter the letters from home missionaries will again be utilized for their recommendations concerning youth leadership training.¹ Other information has been gained from books on leadership education and on youth work, supplemented by generally accepted procedures in the field of youth work.

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1. Ante, p. 28.

In order to keep the suggestions concrete and applicable to real life situations the writer will have in mind the Ows-Lee Larger Parish in which she worked in Kentucky. There youth work was carried on in the seven of the fourteen parish churches which had the most young people.

Although the director of a parish youth program will generally be a woman, it may sometimes be a man, and therefore, in accordance with common usage, will be referred to as "he".

B. Basic Principles that Should Underlie
a Program for the Training of Youth
for Lay Leadership

1. Any Program that Aims to Train People for Leadership in an Underprivileged Area Should Aim to Enrich All of Life for All the People.

From the listing of church and community needs above and from the survey of organizations serving outlying country districts it is obvious that many of these young people have narrow, hemmed-in lives, and that their education needs to be supplemented. As previously indicated, many of them are not served by any organization; their recreational life is sadly neglected; they have no chance to learn at first hand many of the things that city youth take for granted; and in many cases their lives are made barren by poverty. The church must broad-

en their horizons and equip them for the best leadership by helping them to develop well-rounded personalities. In so doing, the program provides for richer lives for the next generation and the elimination of these lacks. The program, then, must stimulate and enrich the mental, physical, social, and spiritual life of these youth. In order to do so it must follow the Larger Parish principle of cooperating with all existing beneficial agencies in the area.

2. Since the Professional Leader's Most Important Task Is to Create Leadership,¹ Youth Must Be Encouraged to Take Responsibility, and the Leader Must Take Time for Personal Contacts to that End.

He will constantly come to grips with the problem created by the before-mentioned indiscriminate missionary aid in the past. Local people must be helped to overcome the idea that the professional leader is the only one who can do things well. Realizing the priority of creating leadership will also help the director to take time from the busy program for visiting with individuals from each group. Nothing will take the place of this personal touch, both in finding the leaders and en-
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listing them, and in creating the group sentiment and

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1. Cf. Sanderson, Dwight: Leadership for Rural Life, p. 68.
2. Cf. Milhouse, Paul: Enlisting and Developing Church Leaders, p. 28.

and pressure which drafts local leaders.¹

3. In Order to Train for Leadership, a Program Must Stimulate Spiritual Life.

It is not enough merely to try to enrich and round out the lives of these young people with a full program. One of the primary needs in rural life as has been stated before, is for higher ideals and aspirations. Only a close relationship with God and a realization of the impact He should make on daily life can produce that. Furthermore, it is only as they are moved by His Spirit that young people, or anyone, for that matter, will make the effort to bring about the desired changes in these conservative communities. Leadership is apt to be criticized in such neighborhoods.² All the authors agree that true leadership always grows out of a realization of need and that "People assume responsibilities of leadership because of some dynamic drive, some appeal to the emotions."³ Mere desire for glory or action will not produce the kind of leadership that will help the rural church or community. Therefore an effective program must lead to deep personal consecration if it is to train Christian leadership.⁴ Mrs. Swartz of North Carolina writes, "The

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1. Cf. Sanderson, op. cit., p. 28.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 68.
3. Ibid., p. 85.
4. Milhouse, op. cit., p. 22.

making of Christians should be paramount." Then when youth become aware of a need there will be in them a God-implanted desire to meet it through unselfish service.

4. Leadership Training Should be Based on the Sound Educational Principles of "Purposeful Activities and Practice under Skilled Guidance."²

One of the two main means of training leadership mentioned by Sanderson is experience.² Dorothy Green of Mena, Arkansas, casts her vote for "any program in which the young people grow in leadership; . . . the practical application of the principles by the young people in group work seems to me most effective." In other words, young people will learn to do things by doing, to lead by leading; and therefore any leadership training program must give them much responsibility as soon as possible. "To obtain maximum membership and participation in various organized groups is to furnish the seed-bed in which leadership may germinate."³

5. As the Director of Youth Formulates the Program and Proceeds to Put It into Operation, One of the Cardinal Points to Remember is That He Must Go Slowly.

All rural people need time to think things over before doing them.⁴ The writer has seen groups turn against

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1. Forrest Knapp: Leadership Education in the Church, p. 68.
2. Sanderson, loc. cit.
3. Ibid., p. 68.
4. Ibid., p. 33.

a leader and his excellent program for them because that leader tried to rush things. Furthermore, potential leaders need the "satisfaction of success."¹ If they are given more to do than they can possibly accomplish in one instance they will be afraid to try anything again. Their skills and their self-confidence must be built up slowly. Group desire to accomplish the difficult things will rise slowly. "A little at a time" should be the rule. The whole program should never be put into effect at the same time.

6. No Director of Youth Work Should Undertake More Than He or She Can Easily Handle or Can Secure Good Assistants to Handle.

It might be better to have no work in some areas than to ruin the work of the whole parish by having too little time to do it effectively or by using poor assistants. Bernard Taylor in his letter bears this out when he says that there should be "Sunday School classes and youth groups in which youth grow up -- well taught and effectively led -- so that youth can have observed effective Christian work being done and so will have an idea as to what good leadership is like." Poor leadership of such classes and youth groups would weaken the work.

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1. Knapp, op. cit., p. 68.

7. The Youth Program Must be Closely Integrated With the Total Larger Parish Organization and the Local Church Programs.

If this is not done the young people will drift away from the church when they are no longer young. They must be made to realize that the youth program is only a very small, though important part of the program of the church as a whole, and that it is of paramount importance that they be an integral part of the great body of Christ.¹

C. The Importance of Personal Contacts of the Leader with the Youth

The importance of the personal touch in creating leaders has already been noted.

The most important thing in the leadership of a rural group is for the people to like the leader.² It takes time for country people really to come to know an outsider. If they feel that the professional leader does not like them enough to visit them or take time to talk, they will never follow his ideas enthusiastically. Therefore, it behooves a parish worker to take time to visit in the homes of the young people, and to take time to talk to them on every possible occasion. Besides gaining their liking and confidence, this policy is invaluable

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1. Cf. Issac K. Beckes: Young Leaders in Action, pp.205-6.
2. Cf. Sanderson, op.cit., pp.38,39

in discovering hidden talent in the group, and in encouraging individuals to participate actively for the first time in the local youth group.

No director who hopes to be used to deepen the spiritual lives of the young people can overlook the opportunities afforded by visits in the home. The writer remembers the tough, cynical young man who exclaimed during a conversation in his home kitchen: "Gosh, I wish I had the guts to be a real Christian. It must be awful hard," and the conversation that followed. She recalls a girl with whom she was sleeping one night who wanted to talk about being a missionary some day.

Personal contact is also invaluable in encouraging promising youth to go to college, and in planting the desire to return to their home communities afterward that they may serve there, rather than going from college to the cities that need them so much less.

It was found that local leadership is often best produced by pressure from the group which has realized its needs or caught fire with a new idea. The seeds of desire must be sown quietly by the leader in many a heart. When ideas come from some local person they are accepted much more enthusiastically than they are when presented by a leader from outside.¹

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1. Cf. Sanderson, op.cit., p.107

Here again, many personal talks with young people are necessary. In such conversations hints can be dropped as to who would make a good officer in a coming election; or the pulse of the group can be felt as to whom it will really support.

Finally, when the director wishes to enlist a particular youth for an important leadership job he should see the young person individually at a convenient time and place, tell him what the job is like, what he can accomplish, and why he is suited for it, and then get his reaction. He should not be pressed for a decision, for leadership should be voluntary, but he should be made to feel how much he is wanted and needed.¹

D. A. Suggested Parish-Wide Youth Program

A total youth program provides the framework for the individual society program. It calls them into being, overcomes the isolation of the community mentioned in the first chapter as a retarding factor, defeats the feeling of smallness and helplessness, and has access to funds making more advantages possible, thus helping overcome bad effects of poverty and providing wider fields in which to exercise leadership. In addition, many more activities

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1. Cf. Rich, op.cit., p. 5

are possible with a large number of closely related groups than in any one of itself. In some cases young people from two small parish churches may unite to increase their effectiveness and cut down on the leader's work.

The parish program as a whole should include a Parish Youth Council, quarterly youth rallies, a parish bulletin, a parish athletic league, a leadership training school for prospective teachers, a parish youth camp, and attendance at state and national conferences. These will be discussed in turn.

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1. A Parish Youth Council

Made up of the usual presiding officers or two from each group in a parish, the Parish Youth Council should be connected with some national body -- either denominational or Christian Endeavor. It should elect representatives to the Adult Parish Council, thus leading youth to share responsibility for the total program. It should eventually work out the total parish youth program with the Director of Youth Work. Such a council will furnish excellent training in democratic leadership. However, it must arise from the local societies, or it will be powerless, as has been noted in the principles stated above.

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1. Cf. Rich, op.cit., p. 5

2. Quarterly Youth Rallies

Youth Rallies which can eventually be planned and executed by the youth themselves should be held quarterly. In some northern parishes these have been week-end conferences.¹ In Ows-Lee Larger Parish they consisted of afternoon and evening meetings. These rallies should include worship, educational activities, recreation and business. Some leadership training can be given in classes at these rallies. Good speakers can be brought in, and parish visual aids used. Service projects can often be launched by the youth themselves in these meetings. The best leadership material from among the parish youth from the very first should be coached to lead devotions and other activities on such occasions.² Then slower, more timid groups can gain courage to try things themselves.

3. A Parish Bulletin

Each week a young person from a different society should help the parish staff to put out the Parish Bulletin. They would be expected to contribute news from their own church and society and then help with the mechanics of mimeographing. Thus the ties of many youth with the total program would be strengthened and certain skills increased.

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1. Cf. Rich, op.cit., p.13

2. Bernard Taylor in his letter advises, "more coached leaders of youth meetings."

4. A Parish Athletic League

Sports competition between parish youth groups would arouse interest, help meet the present recreational problem, and might help solve it in the future. It would also offer opportunities for enlarging and strengthening ties between various small groups.

5. Leadership Training School for Prospective Teachers

Both Jean Howell and Mrs. Swartz say in their letters that part of their leadership training program will consist of classes for local Bible School teachers before the Bible School season opens. Dorothy Green says, "the training of our young people to help in Daily Vacation Bible Schools is a most practical field of service." Such a leadership training school would be a good thing for any parish, and young people should make up a large part of the class. Many of the girls love to work with little children. A few of the boys who would have free time might make excellent teachers for the boys classes. Graduate students during summer service work can be utilized as teachers in such a school. Otherwise it would be taught by the Parish staff members and perhaps an outside leader. Miss McCort in her letter highly recommended the laboratory method of teaching. It might thus be well to take the whole group on a trip to the nearest city and let them

observe the best Sunday School or Vacation Bible School teachers of the city at work. Demonstration classes could also be held by the Director of Religious Education with local children. Experience would come with the teaching in the home Bible School later. Members of the class could also experiment with each other. These classes could lead into Sunday School teacher-training classes.

6. A Parish Youth Camp.¹

Josephine Rupp says that more young people should go to summer conferences, which are now so expensive and often so far as to make attendance difficult, if not impossible. But there are enough youth in most larger parishes to make a camp for that parish alone successful. Youth can pay their expenses with produce, and transportation is a negligible factor. All the leaders from whom letters were received felt that camps and conferences were among the best aids in creating leadership. A camp should be organized as democratically as possible,² and its program should include leadership training classes. It is in camps that young people often catch fire with new ideas and desires to serve. Having the camp in the parish makes an ideal situation for local follow-up. Campers should be given

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1. Cf. Rich, op. cit., p. 13.
2. See methods and success of the experiment described by Brunner in op. cit.

something to do when they go home.

7. Attendance at State and
National Conferences

Bernard Taylor stresses the importance of "more delegates, carefully selected for potential leadership qualities ... sent to ... conferences annually." The parish as a whole should approve the selection of delegates and perhaps provide the money, so that the best young people can go to these conferences, see what other youth are doing, come into contact with nationally known leaders, and bring their enthusiasm and new ideas home.

E. A Suggested Program for
Individual Societies

The four areas of youth work dealt with in all books on youth work are worship, education, recreation, and service or outreach. When a director of youth work and his assistant (if he has one) are serving many widely separated youth groups in a parish it is best to include the first three elements, and perhaps the fourth, in the regular evening youth meeting. Certainly plans concerning service should be included. For the sake of convenience the program suggestions here given are centered in these four areas.

1. Worship

It was found that church leadership cannot be

created without being motivated spiritually, that one of the outstanding needs of the mountain area is for higher ideals and aspirations and for a vital connection between their faith in God through Jesus Christ and their daily lives. It is mainly through worship that this need can be met.

The youth director must be filled with the knowledge of Christ and the joy and peace of the Christian life. As the young people come into living relationship with Him, through the help of their leader or pastor, they will want to pass their joy on to others. Worship, then, is the foundation stone in the training of youth for lay leadership in the church.

However, dilapidated sanctuaries, a background of unworshipful native revival services, difficulty in reading, and the presence of people who only want some place to go, all raise serious obstacles to worship. Therefore, steps must be taken to improve these conditions.

The atmosphere of worship must be created. This can be done by beautifying the sanctuary, providing a worship center, setting a special place apart for worship, use of quiet music for prelude, and smoothing out the actual worship program. Gathering the most consecrated young people together for prayer before the meeting may help more than anything else.

Gift of Author

The worship program can be smoothed out by being planned a week in advance and checked over before the meeting; and by careful coaching of each person taking part. No young person should ever be asked to read something with which he is unfamiliar and which means nothing to him personally.

Special committees should be appointed about every two months to help the director plan an impressive worship service, which will be mimeographed for the group. In this planning acquaintance with fine devotional materials will be gained, as will the method of planning worship services. Eventually, young people will be able to plan good services entirely alone.

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In worship services use may be made or prepared youth programs, good books of prayers, poems, litanies, the Bible, and all kinds of music, and parish-owned visual aids. These materials should be selected on the basis of the vital needs of young people.

2. Education

In order to become leaders people must learn to think and must know more about things than the people of their group. Therefore, the program of the youth society must supplement the poor educational institutions of the area and impart information and widen horizons. Information may be presented by the director herself, an

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outside speaker, or by the use of slides, film strips or movies.

Discussion is always considered a good educational method, but it is difficult to use in retarded communities. After the program has been going on for some time it will be easier to use. Discussion should always follow the presentation of information.

3. Recreation

It has been noted that recreation is one of the great needs of the youth in underprivileged agricultural communities. One of the above principles of training leadership is that all of the life of the youth should be enriched and a good recreational program will help to enrich them both socially and physically. In addition, it will fit them to lead the next generation in recreation. Some elements of the recreational program will make contributions to the educational, worship, and service programs, or help fit the youth for leadership in these fields. Various good forms of recreation follow:

1. Circle games, easy to teach, easy for the youth themselves to lead, and tend to draw in the entire group.
2. Folk games increase physical grace and social ease.
3. Athletics build up sportsmanship and improve health.

4. Camp fires and hikes provide opportunity for sensitizing youth to beauty, and informal worship.
5. Dramatics build self-confidence, strengthen imagination, may contribute to worship, education, and service, and lead to the discovery and use of hidden talent.
6. Music deepens appreciation of beauty, develops a sense of fellowship, increases skill, may be used on any occasion, and is a source of service opportunities and an aid to worship.
7. Paper and pencil games may stimulate thinking.

Many other excellent games for youth groups could be listed which do not fall into any of these classifications.

4. Service

If the worship aspect of a youth program has been effective it will have brought the youth face to face with God and lead them to put Him at the center of their lives. If, along with this, the educational efforts have opened their eyes to needs close at hand and far away, then, with some guidance and suggestions, service will be the natural result. When the demand for action rises from the group, it has been seen in the underlying principles, the program is much more apt to call leaders into being and is consequently more likely to succeed. Therefore, the group must want to "do something" before any big project is attempted. In service projects a real opportunity is provided for "learning by doing." Here

the young people have a chance to experience the satisfaction at having done something worthwhile. Recognition¹ of their work and appreciation should be expressed not only by the director of youth work, but also by the pastor. If they learn to enjoy doing things for the church, community, and far-flung Christian battlefronts, young people are likely to become leaders in service in their later years.

Since it is best to begin with the needs on one's doorstep, and with simple tasks, perhaps the first service undertaken could be cleaning the church and preparing a worship center, or providing flowers for the youth meeting. If there is no church janitor the young people may take turns cleaning the church for Sunday worship.

One of the spring floods, or the burning down of a neighbor's house might provide the occasion for their beginning to reach out in community service. Sewing, cleaning, and carpentry for an unfortunate family, would take in the whole youth group, would be fun as done in a group, and would be a real Christian testimony. Another neighborhood service might be that of visits by the young people to the old and sick. Those who sing or play some instrument should be especially urged to help in this

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1. Cf. Milhouse, op.cit., p.32

service.

Dorothy Green, in her letter, indicates that her young people help to work out plans for a weekly Open House for the entire community, and have thus developed real leadership ability.

In the Church and Church School youth may help with a choir, a program, or play for special days, with their giving of time and money, and the most mature and spiritually minded can serve on visitation teams at the time of the yearly effort to win new people to Christ and the Church.

If the need is great, the group is older, and enthusiasm is high, they can undertake to redecorate the church or even add a room for the use of the Church School and their own group.

In guiding their outreach "into all the world" the leader should choose concrete projects from which the young people can expect letters of appreciation. Since they have little money of their own, some such project as the Lord's Acre Plan should be used to earn money. According to this Plan someone donates a plot of ground and the group gives seed and labor, and the money gained from the year's work is given to the Lord. Food and clothing could be sent to European refugees, and bandages might be rolled by the girls for the Red Cross. It is possible to

have fairs, charge admission to plays, or have pie suppers in order to raise money, but it is better to encourage the real giving of either time or money.

F. A Suggested Local Church
Program for Youth

In addition to its indirect service of helping to support the Larger Parish and its furnishing the youth with a place of meeting, the local church should serve the young people in other ways. Thus the ties that are being made between youth and church by their service for the church will be strengthened. Traditionally, the Church has a special duty toward its youth as part of its educational program.

In the Church School there should be a good class for young people. Bernard Taylor emphasized this need in his letter. In addition, he felt that an excellent leadership training method was the use of assistant or apprentice church school teachers. By this means younger people serve under an experienced teacher in large classes. Thus the new generation of leaders learn how to teach.

Mrs. Swartz recommended that prospective church members (most of whom are generally young people) be trained in Christian Beliefs, Bible, and Church Polity.

Lastly, Sunday services should be kept alive

and interesting to youth, and they should be made to feel a part of all that goes on in the church.

G. Summary

Keeping the needs of church and community in underprivileged areas in mind, and realizing the lack of sufficient leadership training at present, the writer in this chapter, has outlined a program for leadership training of youth, using the Larger Parish Plan because of its excellent possibilities for adaptation to such a program.

As a guide in planning such a program the following principles were set forth: (1) all of life for all of the people should be enriched, (2) spiritual life must be stimulated, (3) people should learn leadership through purposeful activities practiced under skilled guidance, (4) since the professional leader's most important task is to create leadership, youth must be encouraged to take responsibility, and the leader must take time for personal contacts to that end, (5) the full program must be put into effect slowly to avoid antagonizing people against new things or plans and in order to insure the satisfaction of success, (6) the director of the program must not attempt too much, and (7) the youth program must be closely integrated to the Parish Program and the individual church life.

Suggestions for the Parish-Wide Youth Program included (1) a representative Parish Youth Council which has a voice in the adult council (2) Youth rallies with a devotional, educational, and recreational emphasis, (3) Weekly youth assistance in the editing of the Parish Bulletin (4) a Parish Athletic League (5) A Training School for Daily Vacation Bible School teachers and later for Sunday School teachers (6) a Parish youth camp, and (7) the sending of delegates to state and national youth conferences.

The Director of the youth program, it was emphasized, should have much personal contact with his young people in order to gain their liking and confidence, discover hidden talents, encourage participation, help meet spiritual needs, encourage college education, and discourage city-ward migration, plant ideas he wishes the group to make its own, and enlist real leadership.

The suggested program for individual societies provided for training, action, acquiring skills, and deepening of the spiritual life. It included worship, educational activities, recreation, and service to the church, community, and the world.

The local church's program should include good church school classes, utilization of the apprenticeship plan in teaching, the organization of

classes for new church members, provision of stimulating worship services, and a striving to make the youth feel a part of the whole program.

GENERAL SUMMARY

GENERAL SUMMARY

The purpose of this study has been to discover better ways of training young people from underprivileged agricultural areas for lay leadership in the Church.

In the first Chapter a study was made of the causal factors of the problems of church and community in these backward areas. This was necessary because any program for training youth in leadership will be affected by such factors and must help to overcome their evil effects. Isolation(although it is being broken down at present) and poverty were found to be the basic conditions which have started the vicious circle. From these spring the low levels of culture and education, and the great city-ward migration of the best as well as the worst elements of the population. These four factors together, it was seen, have left the rural church dwindling in size and numbers, spiritually and materially impoverished, narrow in outlook, selfish in action, and satisfied as it is. The community in which the church is located was discovered to be suffering from the lack of good schools, modern farming methods, sufficient communication in some areas, beauty in homes, towns, and public buildings, adequate recreational opportunities, and moral standards. It was obvious that the

Church has been affected by these community needs and therefore has a double responsibility to improve conditions.

In the second Chapter, with letters of home missionaries in such areas as a primary source of information, a survey was made of the efforts of church organizations to produce the lay leadership necessary to solve church problems and to raise community standards. It was found that the rural Sunday School, in spite of its faults and weaknesses, has done more to produce and train lay leaders in underprivileged areas of the rural South than any other organization. This training has often been merely incidental. Church-supported schools have made a great contribution in the past, but many of them are being closed. Courses for Bible School teachers and the supervision of local help by trained leaders, it was discovered, have contributed toward the training of leaders in some areas. Youth work was highly recommended for leadership training, but, except in a few cases, it has not been fully utilized. Summer camps and conferences - especially for youth - were said to be of great help in preparing them for leadership, but often these are prohibitive in cost and distance. A few leadership training courses have been held, but not too successfully. The Larger Parish Plan was found to have great leadership

training possibilities, as yet untried in most places. It can embody all the helpful methods discovered. Outside of the Church the organizations found helping to solve the problem at all have been government aided ones. These were seen to have succeeded to some extent in training leaders in their practical efforts to improve the condition of the people. To sum it up, this study revealed that there existed a great deal of concern about the problem, some successful efforts to train leadership, wide gaps in the program in most places, and scarcely any training at all in many areas.

In the third Chapter suggestions were made for setting up an effective leadership training program in a Larger Parish. The Larger Parish Plan was selected for the program because of its aforementioned advantages.

First of all, the underlying principles for such a program were set up. These grew out of the problems of the southern mountain area, the suggestions of the church leaders from whom letters were received, and the democratic idea of what leadership is. The following principles were listed: (1) a youth program intended to train leaders should attempt to enrich all the lives of the people, (2) the professional leader's most important task is to train local leadership, (3) before church leadership can arise, a real spiritual life must

be stimulated, (4) People learn by doing, (5) the full program must be put into effect slowly, (6) it is better to attempt less and do it well than to do more in an ineffective way, and (7) the youth program must be a part of the total parish program and of the local church.

As a vital factor in any program, the importance of personal contacts was stressed. Unless the Director of parish youth work spends much time with his young people in visits and informal conversations, his leading may be a dictatorship and he may miss rare opportunities for spiritual leadership, and vocational guidance.

A parish-wide youth program was then outlined which provided: (1) a representative Parish Youth Council which sponsors (2) Parish Youth Rallies, (3) a chance for youth to help put out the parish bulletin (4) an athletic league (5) a training school for Daily Vacation Bible School teachers, many of whom will be youth who may later become members of a Sunday School teacher training class, (6) a Parish youth camp which will include leadership training classes and activities, and (7) the sending of delegates to distant youth conferences.

Next followed a suggested program for individual societies. In this plan emphasis was placed upon real worship by providing the proper atmosphere, coaching the participants, and training the young people to select

relevant and beautiful worship materials. The use of visual aids, outside speakers, talks by the Director or pastors, and discussions following these stimulations to thought were included.

Finally, a full and varied recreational program was recommended, and means of having the young people serve their church, community, and world were suggested.

If such a program were carried out in some parish in the Southern mountain area there should some day be less ignorance, better schools, less separation from the rest of the world, less slavery to such poverty as remains, more beauty, less migration to cities of vigorous and ambitious youth, less immorality, and higher spiritual ideals. With the provision of better Christian leadership in the church and community, the mountain community, with the virtues and advantages which it already has, would be a wonderful place to live.

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