

THE WORKERS CONFERENCE
IN THE
LEADERSHIP EDUCATION PROGRAM OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

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To Thelma Bain
Teacher, Friend,
and Christian
Leader

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION.	iv
A. The Subject Defined and Delimited	iv
B. The Significance of the Study	v
C. The Sources of the Study.	vi
D. The Method of Procedure	vi
I. LEADERSHIP EDUCATION IN THE LOCAL CHURCH	1
A. Introduction.	1
B. The Need for Adequate Leadership.	3
1. The Teaching Ministry of the Church	4
2. The Importance of the Lay Leader.	6
3. The Role of Parents as Teachers	6
C. Types of Training for Local Church Leaders.	7
1. Recruiting and Training Prospective Leaders	7
a. Sources	8
b. Motivation.	9
c. Selection and Preparation	10
2. In-Service Training	12
a. Supervision	12
b. Lesson Preview.	13
c. Workers' Conferences.	13
d. Leadership Education Courses	13
e. Workshops	14
3. Leadership Training for Young People.	15

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CHAPTER	PAGE
4. Training Through Inter-Church Functions. . .	17
a. Laboratory Schools.	17
b. Teacher Training Classes.	18
c. Institutes, Conferences and Conventions .	18
D. Summary	19
II. THE WORKERS' CONFERENCE AS THE CORE OF LEADERSHIP EDUCATION.	21
A. Introduction.	21
B. The Nature and Function of the Workers' Conference	22
C. The Advantages and Values of Workers' Conferences	24
D. The Standards for Workers' Conferences.	27
E. Program Elements.	28
1. Fellowship.	29
2. Inspiration	33
3. Information and Instruction	35
F. Types of Procedures	36
1. Buzz Sessions	37
2. Group Discussions	37
3. Panels	38
4. Symposium	38
5. Debates	38
6. Lectures.	39
7. Reports	39
8. Role-Playing.	40
9. Demonstrations, Exhibits.	40
10. Audio-Visual Methods.	40

CHAPTER	PAGE
G. General Considerations.	41
1. Leadership.	41
2. Organization.	43
3. The Time Element.	45
H. Summary	46
III. PROPOSED PLAN FOR ONE YEAR OF WORKERS' CONFERENCES. . .	48
A. Introduction.	48
B. Basic Assumptions	50
C. The September Conference.	51
D. The October Conference.	56
E. The November Conference	58
F. The December Conference	59
G. The January Conference.	60
H. The February Conference	63
I. The March Conference.	65
J. The April Conference.	66
K. The May Conference.	67
L. The June Conference	69
M. The July Conference	69
N. The August Conference.	70
O. Summary.	71
IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.	73
APPENDIX.	77
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	84

INTRODUCTION

THE WORKERS' CONFERENCE
IN THE LEADERSHIP EDUCATION PROGRAM OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject Defined and Delimited

This study is primarily concerned with the process of discovering and training lay leadership in the local church and more specifically with the workers' conference as the agency in the local church through which this process can best be carried out.

The term workers' conference has been used to describe many different kinds of leadership training, from an informal business meeting of the church school teachers to the broader interpretation of a meeting of all the leaders in the educational program of the church. For purposes of this study, the workers' conference will be thought of in the broader sense as a meeting of all the educational workers of the church, not only the officers and teachers of the Sunday School but also leaders of every other character building activity sponsored by the church.¹ The purpose of such a meeting would be to improve the church's educational program.

Limiting the material of this study to the work of the local church is not meant to imply that the church is the only agency of leadership development, for the vital part of the home and community in training leaders cannot be overlooked. On the contrary, the home,

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1. Erwin L. Shaver, The Workers' Conference Manual, p. 19.

the church, and the community work together as a team with each making its contribution to the whole program of leadership education.

B. The Significance of the Study

Protestantism, down through the centuries, has for the most part depended upon lay leadership for its progress. It is of primary importance, therefore, that leaders be skillfully trained and spiritually motivated.¹

A great deal of material has been written on the general subject of leadership education, but comparatively little on the workers' conference alone. It is hoped that the results of this study will be of help to leaders in the church and will contribute to developing more efficiently conducted and more helpful workers' conferences.

The significance of the few hours a week that any teacher has for teaching the important truth of the Gospel of Christ cannot be overestimated. Dr. Hamill states:

Out of a whole week the teacher has thirty golden minutes in which to teach the greatest and hardest of all books, often to boys and girls who never heard of it outside the Sunday-school class. Every minute. . . , every step. . . , is weighty with responsibility.²

What is true of the Sunday School is equally true of all the leaders of the church with educational responsibility.

Since most of the teaching in the local church is done by individual teachers it is of utmost importance that each one be given

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1. Presbyterian Church, U.S., A Program of Leader Development, p. 5. Cf. Price H. Gwynn, Jr., Leadership Education in the Local Church, p. 9.
2. Quoted in Jean P. Howell, Teacher Training in the Small Sunday School, p. 5.

careful instruction for leadership. This is confirmed by a statement of Sensabauch:

The biggest task confronting the Protestant church today is the task of religious education. Many homes are dismally failing as agencies of religious education. In a democracy like ours the public school cannot adequately teach religion. Therefore upon the Church school rests the responsibility of the religious education of the childhood today, and in doing this we are determining what the Church of tomorrow will be. It is a task worthy of our best efforts and the greatest investment of time and talent, and every Christian who can should engage in this great undertaking.

C. The Sources of the Study

The primary sources for this study are the denominational pamphlets and the publications of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. which deal with the subject of leadership education in general and workers' conferences in particular. The material in chapter three is partially a result of inquiries made through correspondence with several Directors of Christian Education in the United States concerning their current plans for workers' conferences. Some of their ideas are incorporated into the monthly plans of chapter three, which also include results of the writer's own research and creativity based upon personal experiences.

D. The Method of Procedure

In order to see a broad general picture of the work of the

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1. Quoted in Howell, op. cit., p. x.

local church regarding leadership education, books and pamphlets concerning various areas of training in the church were consulted. Chapter one is a result of this study. Chapter two is more specific and consists of the results of a survey of materials written on the subject of workers' conferences. Chapter three is an illustration of the principles of the second chapter showing how the workers' conference can be the core of the leadership education program of the local church.

CHAPTER I

LEADERSHIP EDUCATION IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

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LEADERSHIP EDUCATION IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

A. Introduction

God has depended upon human leadership down through history and in this present day still uses men as instruments to carry out the program of Christ. Groups of people often do not know what to do and consequently they need leadership. Without it, there would be no lessons taught, no sermons preached, and especially no Christians trained to do the work of Christ.¹ Therefore, the Christian church must be responsible for the kind of leadership which will lead people to worthy Christian ideals and commitment to Christ. Leadership is not meant to be defined as a highly personal role, with the leader carrying full responsibility for the direction of his followers as it was in the pre-scientific era of leadership development.² Rather, it is in the sense of a set of functions or, as Dr. Frank H. Leavell states,

Leadership has surplus of power in reserve, sufficient unto any occasion, and withal can exercise sagacious tact in the releasing of it. Leadership has superior knowledge, but is skilled in the technique of imparting it, that, like gravitation, silently, the power is felt but the source of the power is unseen.³

Since the church is at present the center of Christian Educa-

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1. Mary Frances Johnson Preston, Christian Leadership, pp. 15-17.
2. Malcolm & Hulda Knowles, How to Develop Better Leaders, pp. 7-8.
3. Quoted in Preston, op. cit., p. 15.

tion and hence of leadership education, one must consider the aim or goal of the leadership educational program which will produce the quality of leadership described by Dr. Leavell.

The Committee on Leadership Education of the Division of Christian Education, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, has set up a list of goals which will serve as a standard for the purposes of this study. The following is a summary of the committee's work:

Christian leadership education seeks to nurture growing persons in the Christian life, to strengthen their faith and their knowledge of the will of God and of the mind of Christ. It seeks to help them to make their attitudes, appreciations, hopes, purposes, and loyalties thoroughly Christian, and to develop ways of sharing this knowledge and experience and faith with other growing persons.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the broad general picture of leadership educational agencies within the church in order to determine the full potential of the program and its relation to the goals which have been set.

A survey of material regarding the church and leadership education revealed that the need for such training was stressed repeatedly. The types of training mentioned were many and varied, and a discussion of these will be included in this chapter. Although the church is central in consideration of this subject, one must certainly be concerned with the influence of the Christian community and its relationship to the Christian education of the lay members of the church. This also will be taken into consideration. The further purpose of the

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1. Gwynn, op. cit., p. 16.

chapter therefore, is to indicate the need of adequate leadership, to view the types of training for leaders in the church, and the contribution of the inter-church program to the training of workers in the local church.

B. The Need for Adequate Leadership

The importance of competency in the leadership of the church is expressed in the statement of Schisler in his book entitled, The Educational Work of the Small Church:

The standard of work in the local church will rise no higher than the earnestness, understanding, and faithfulness of its leaders. Lesson materials may be perfect, buildings and equipment adequate, time ample, and other factors satisfactory, but without competent leaders all these things avail nothing.¹

The question of adequacy is an important consideration. The problem of the church is not so much the lack of leadership, although to a great extent even this is a recognized need, as the finding or training of leaders who are of high quality spiritually and educationally.

This raises the question: what are the qualities to be desired in a leader or teacher of the Gospel of Christ? Although many lists of qualifications of leaders exist, the following summary will suffice to point the need for leaders with quality:

1. A deep and abiding Christian experience.
2. A persistent longing to share that experience with others.
3. A sure knowledge of what the Bible teaches.
4. A fair understanding of how personality develops.
5. Training in the best educational practice afforded by the example and experimentation of those most successful

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1. Howell, op. cit., p. 19

in the field.¹

1. The Teaching Ministry of the Church

James D. Smart in his well known book states that the existence of Christian Education as a distinct area of study and action in the church rests upon the assumption that the church of Jesus Christ has, of necessity, a teaching function.² There appears to be some question in the minds of leaders in the religious education movement concerning the validity of the preceding statement. In the past half century religious education has tended to think of itself related to secular education rather than to the church.³ The Christian educator appears to think that his subject is educational rather than theological.⁴ The implications of this trend have direct bearing upon the developments of the educational program of the church. Schools which train Directors of Religious Education have tended to be strong in educational subjects but weak in Biblical and theological studies. Likewise the teacher training in the church has often been strong on methodology and weak on the theological aspects of the Gospel and the church.⁵ The failure to recognize the importance of the teaching function of the church has resulted in a misconception of the ministry.⁶ Very often the minister is thought of as uniquely a preacher; anything added to this, such as educational responsibility, does not belong to his

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1. Gwynn, op. cit., p. 10. See also N.C.C.C. bulletin No. 507, And Gladly Serve, pp. 15-16.
2. James D. Smart, The Teaching Ministry of the Church, p. 11.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 12.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., pp. 12-13.

office. The minister thinks in terms of delivering sermons and of ministerial visiting and takes on the training of leaders only if he cannot avoid it. Hence there is much uncertainty about the place of education in the local church.¹

One cannot overlook the fact that in Old Testament history the Word by which Israel had its life as the covenant people of God required not just one but two services. It required prophets who would proclaim it ever afresh, calling the nation to repent; and it required teachers in every home and in every street who would not rest until they saw a living faith in their children and in their neighborhood.² Likewise, the New Testament stresses the teaching ministry of Christ. L. J. Sherrill says that altogether sixty-one terms were used to describe Jesus as Teacher.³ He was never referred to as preacher in the Gospels.⁴ On the other hand, one cannot minimize the importance of preaching, for certainly both teaching and preaching are evidenced and intermingled to the point that one cannot be totally separated from the other.

In summary, it may be concluded that in both the Old and New Testaments, the Word of God in which God in Christ reveals Himself as man's salvation, required two services primarily of those who responded to it; first, that they should preach the Word and secondly, that they should teach it. The omission of either ministry is un-

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., p. 15.
3. J. M. Price, Jesus the Teacher, p. 6.
4. Ibid.

faithfulness to God. There must be both preaching and teaching.¹

2. The Importance of the Lay Leader

The key to any educational program is the teacher, and the quality of the program in any school will be determined largely by the quality of the teaching staff.² This statement substantiates the importance of the teacher and likewise is true of any leader in the church program, for the teacher is a leader and the leader is a teacher.³

It would probably be found, if such a survey were possible, that more men and women are in the ministry of the church through the influence of teachers than through the influence of ministers.⁴ The pupil-teacher relationship can be very close and often the teacher is the only person the pupil knows who tries to do anything about his spiritual problems. The teacher may be more important to him than his parents, so far as his inner personal life is concerned.⁵ Therefore, the privilege of leading and teaching, the responsibility of guiding the Christian nurture process, is of tremendous significance to the pupil himself, to the church, and to the community and the world.

3. The Role of Parents

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1. Smart, op. cit., p. 19
2. Ibid., p. 73.
3. Ibid., p. 19. Cf. Gwynn, op. cit., pp. 11-16.
4. Ibid., p. 74.
5. Ibid.

It is necessary that consideration be given to the place of parents as leaders and teachers, for certainly the home ought to be the place of solid teaching and Christian example. Unfortunately, this is not the situation. Too often the church is thought of and assumed by parents to be the only place where children and youth receive their religious nurture.¹ Current trends in religious education indicate the emphasis upon the home and parents working with, not separate from, the church in the Christian educational process.² The church needs the cooperation of the parents in training toward Christian discipleship, and, on the other hand, the church is responsible to the parents to give them help in the matter of leadership and teaching in the home. What is needed is a two-way relationship.³

C. Types of Training for Local Church Leaders

With the place of leadership education in the local church thus established and the importance and need of well qualified and consecrated leaders indicated, a survey of possibilities of training will be made in order to reach a broad perspective of the leadership education in the church program.

1. Recruiting and Training Prospective Leaders

It goes without saying that far too few members of any church

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1. N.C.C.C., Design for Teaching, p. 13.
2. These trends are expressed in the curriculum of the Protestant Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Faith and Life series.
3. N.C.C.C., loc. cit.

take an active part in the program of the church. This fact is illustrated in the statement:

One of the points of major inefficiency in the Christian church is its failure to utilize its magnificent potentialities in human resources--since 23 percent of the membership do all the work.¹

It is commonly understood among educational workers that there is a "folded-arm attitude" among the adult membership of the church, and in order to meet the need for more and better workers something must be done to reach the potential.² The question arises: where are the prospective workers and how can one reach them? Because of the complacent attitude of accepting the privileges and blessings of being a part of the church's fellowship and rendering little in return, many church members become spiritually indifferent and sterile.³ For the sake of the spiritual life of these adults as well as the recognized need for workers, consideration will be given to the sources of leadership potential, the motivation toward service, and the process of enlisting, selecting, and preparing for specific responsibilities.

a. Sources

In general, several facts are noted regarding the sources of leadership. The greater the number of individual church members who are participating even in minor ways in the program of the church, the larger will be the supply of available leaders.⁴ As many persons as possible should be encouraged to assume different kinds of responsi-

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1. Oliver DeWolf Cummings, Christian Education in the Local Church, p. 104.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. N.C.C.C. Bulletin No. 507, op. cit., p. 16.

bilities, and as they carry on their various duties, they may manifest capacities for leadership in other specific fields.¹ One may gather from these statements that the sources are existent within the membership, and one needs only to encourage individuals to participate in the leadership program in minor ways. The important step is to begin.

Since the membership at large is divided into interest and age groups, educational leaders have sought to enlist prospects from classes of adults in the church school, women's societies, business and professional men and women, new members of the church, young couples and older young people.² Other ideas which have been suggested as sources are committees with the responsibility of keeping up-to-date lists of potential church workers based on surveys and written questionnaires, working with the pastor and his knowledge of individual talents and interests, and also through prayer.³

b. Motivation

Lack of adequate motivation is at the heart of much of the church's problem of inadequate leadership.⁴ Basically the motivation ought to be spiritual, in response to God's love and blessing. The love of Christ ought to motivate Christians to service instead of to passive acceptance of the blessing of God. Interest in little children, young people at the crossroads of life, and perplexed adults

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Gwynn, op. cit., pp. 33-44.

4. Cummings, op. cit., p. 105. Cf. Forrest Lamar Knapp, Leadership Education in the Church, pp. 78-97.

in a confused world should cause people to enter into active participation in the church's program.¹ Other sources of motivation might be the desire to express the best in oneself by fruitful service, merited approval of respected friends or a sense of partnership in a great enterprise.² One famous person said, "Nothing succeeds like success."³ If the present staff of workers is convinced of the significance of its task, the high morale will be sensed by others and provide impetus for further enlistment of new workers. All these are worthwhile and valid causes for action. However, according to experienced leaders and authoritative sources, the best motivation for Christian service appears to rest in the individual's own Christian experience.⁴ No incentive can lead to successful activity unless accompanied by genuine faith and the influence of the Spirit of God,⁵ which are the real incentives of Christian service.

Oliver Cummings, in Christian Education in the Local Church, states, "Acceptance of Christ and membership in his church carry the obligation to serve."⁶ He states further, "Service is required of all Christians; it is not an elective in the kingdom of God."⁷ Cummings' statements have serious implications. Many well meaning people enlist for service but do not possess the qualities desired in a teacher or leader. Hence, leaders in the enlistment area of leader-

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1. Cummings, op. cit., p. 106.
2. Ibid.
3. N.C.C.C. Bulletin No. 507, op. cit., p. 20.
4. Ibid.
5. Cummings, op. cit., p. 107.
6. Ibid.
7. Cummings, op. cit., p. 107.

ship education must be tactful and yet careful, lest more emphasis be placed upon quantity than quality, when both are wanted. Many suggestions are given for the actual enlisting of future workers.

Among them are:

1. An annual every member enlistment emphasis.¹
2. An interview with each new member of the church.²
3. Dignifying the call to volunteer leadership.³
4. Inviting interested members to the workers' conferences or teacher training class.⁴
5. Making opportunities for assistants and apprentices in the job of teaching, trainees on Boards.⁵
6. Providing opportunities for observation.⁶

The program of enlistment should be a continuous activity marked by long-time planning and alert aggressiveness.⁷

c. Selection and Preparation

After the prospects have been singled out, the next step is the training process which will be discussed in the following section. The new enlistees will enroll in the various areas of training, as their particular job requires. The placement of the individual in a specific responsibility involves the need of spiritual insight such as Christ Himself showed in the calling of His own disciples.⁸ It is important that the new workers realize their responsibility to God and the church. There should be no attempt to minimize or ignore the duties which are required.⁹

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1. Ibid., p. 108.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. N.C.C.C. Bulletin No. 507, op. cit., pp. 25-28.
6. Ibid.
7. Frank M. McKibben, Guiding Workers in Christian Education, p. 121. Cf. Gwynn, loc. cit.
8. Cummings, op. cit., p. 111.
9. Ibid.

2. In-Service Training

While it is important to provide help for prospective workers, a matter of equal urgency and immediate concern is to aid those persons who are already in service.¹ This is an area very much neglected by the church and leads to stagnancy and lack of progressiveness.

a. Supervision

Supervision is a term used to describe a technique of personal guidance of teaching processes by an experienced leader, followed by a counseling session in which suggestions are made, strong features are noted, and problems discussed.² Supervision measures the teacher's effectiveness and aims at improving the quality of service rendered to the church. It is a process of mutual enterprise in which the opinions of the teacher are respected, and practical help is given to meet specific problems. It is not a type of tyrannical overlordship.³ As Forrest Knapp states, "A good supervisor is a true friend."⁴

The values of this type of in-service are listed as:

1. It is one of the best ways of discovering needs and capacities.
2. It provides help at the points where needed.
3. It provides help when that help is needed.
4. It is a means of measuring growth and of basing further guidance on that growth, thus making growth continuous.
5. Lasting inspiration for service is more certain to come through personal contact with a strong leader than in any other way.
6. It provides the best means for the promotion of the group enterprises⁵ that must be part of a complete program of leadership.

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1. N.C.C.C. Bulletin No. 507, op. cit., p. 28.
2. Ibid., pp. 28-29.
3. Gwynn, op. cit., p. 145.
4. Knapp, Leadership Education in the Church, p. 135.
5. Ibid., pp. 140-143.

b. Lesson Preview

In recent years there has been progressive interest in an effective type of training called the lesson preview or quarterly preview.¹ It aims at more effective handling of the teaching program by gathering the workers together and presenting the curriculum materials in advance. This type of training refers primarily to the teaching staff of the Sunday School and is particularly valid in the use of denominational lessons on a local or on an area basis. Its values lie in the promotion of advance preparation and wider use of resources.²

c. Workers' Conferences

Since the major portion of chapter two will deal primarily with the workers' conference, mention is made only briefly in this section. Education of the leaders themselves is the chief function of the conferences.³ It is usually a monthly meeting of all the educational leaders of the church who meet with the purpose of sharing ideas, fellowship, receiving information and inspiration.⁴ It is a unit in the over-all leadership education program.⁵

d. Leadership Education Courses

Leadership training classes date back to the time of Christ and His guidance of the twelve disciples.⁶ Great leaders like Calvin and Wesley emphasized this method of preparing volunteer leaders in

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1. Philip Henry Lotz, Orientation in Religious Education, p. 396.
2. Ibid.
3. Gwynn, op. cit., p. 47.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

Christian service.¹ Several advantages of such classes are:

1. Courses may be chosen to meet local needs and adapted to individual differences.
2. Leadership classes make an appeal to local pride and group loyalty.
3. The convenience of a small² group with a single purpose simplifies administration.

One of the difficulties with this type of training is the lack of a teacher for the course, but this need can often be met by using the pastor, the D.R.E., a professor from a neighboring college or Bible Institute, a public school teacher, or some qualified lay leader.³

A continuing leadership class is usually held from September through May in the local church and is taught with the view to enrich the lives of leaders and teachers through courses in Bible, personal Christian living, church history, church program, teaching methods and understanding pupils.⁴ It can be set up in such a way so as to meet the needs of both newly enlisted and more experienced teachers.⁵

e. Workshops

A workshop is a concentrated sequence of activities, ranging in length from one evening to several weeks, which is designed to develop specific skills, bodies of information, and other learnings by teachers and trainees working together on particular problems.⁶ The emphasis in this type of leadership development is upon active learning or learning by doing. In the workshop way of learning, the

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1. Ibid., p. 71.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Presbyterian U.S., Program of Leader Development, p. 39.
5. Ibid.
6. Knowles, op. cit., p. 30.

leader-in-training is given a large amount of responsibility for the determination of what and how he himself is to learn.¹ This kind of technique results in a greater amount of active learning and, in addition, what he does learn tends to become a more permanent part of his personal equipment.² Workshop has often been applied loosely to all sorts of conferences, institutes, committee meetings, and various other educational activities.³ However, for use in training church workers, the term refers to a meeting or series of meetings in which there are small discussion groups organized around specific interests; free time for individual work, for conferences and for recreation; and general meetings and individual work in the evenings. A significant consequence of the working plan is that emphasis tends to center on organic relationships in which participants are stimulated to think in terms of the whole child, the whole curriculum, and the total picture in which they work, rather than in the area of narrow specialization.⁴

3. Leadership Training for Young People

Of significance in the strategy of the church is to place more clearly and consistently before young people the opportunity for service in the church.⁵ Too often the youth come through the years of nurture they receive from the church with little or no real training in leadership and with little or no concept of responsibility to the

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Lotz, op. cit., p. 398.
4. Ibid.
5. McKibben, op. cit., p. 118.

church as active leaders and teachers.¹ Perhaps this is one of the reasons why there is such a lack of adult participation, that the church does not begin early enough in the enlistment process.

This leads one to consider what educational leaders can do to begin the training process with young people. For one thing, they can be placed in positions of observation by association with experienced workers.² Further training opportunities will be found in cadet teaching, in classes in summer camps and conferences, in helping in the vacation church school, and in attending sessions of the Board of Christian Education and workers' conferences.³ Another means of helping young people to learn leadership is to plan a Youth Week in the church. This is an effective means of giving the youth of the church an experience of actual participation in the organizational and administrative functions of the church program. The plan usually followed is to assign each young person a particular officer or worker to observe in his specific responsibility. This is carried on for one week. Then the next week the youth are invited to take over the particular office they have observed the previous week. Thus young people are learning by observation, instruction, and participation.⁴ If care is taken to provide opportunity of varied nature to give incentive and preparation in Christian leadership, young people will be an important source of pre-trained leadership.⁵

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. Cadet teaching is similar to apprentice training.
4. Melvin C. Buckingham, "Youth Week 1956 in Arlington, Virginia," The International Journal of Religious Education, Dec. 1956, p. 13.
5. McKibben, op. cit., pp. 118-119.

4. Training Through Inter-church Functions

Community schools of leadership training and opportunities for participation with other churches in the area of teacher training supplement and reinforce the program of the local church in developing effective workers for Christian Education.¹ This type of fellowship encourages appreciation of other people and their problems in the field of teaching and leading, and gives a sense of reality to Protestant co-operation.² Above all, they stir enthusiasm and often provide skilled instruction and guidance by high standards of educational achievements which are not often found in the local church.³ There are two types of community leadership schools: one is represented by a group of churches from a single denomination; the other is a joint enterprise planned on an interdenominational basis.⁴ The kinds of schools under discussion in the succeeding sections could be conducted on a denominational or on an interdenominational basis, depending upon the local situation and need.

a. Laboratory Schools

Laboratory Schools are comparatively new in the field of leadership education but dozens of good laboratory and demonstration schools are now held each year, principally in the summer. A laboratory school consists of a laboratory experience in which student teachers work with children under careful guidance of experienced instructors.⁵

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1. Gwynn, op. cit., p. 84.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Lotz, op. cit., p. 398.

The student teacher participates in the planning of the session and then observes a skilled teacher at work. Actually there are two types of laboratory schools. One is a school in which the student only observes, participating in the planning and evaluation; the other is a school in which the student actually teaches under the guidance of the skilled teacher. Both are extremely effective methods of teacher-training. Success seems to depend upon the following factors:

1. Leadership necessary for both children and adults; therefore, the skilled teacher must be proficient in both.
2. Proper selection and preparation of the student teachers or observers.
3. Full democratic participation of all in planning and in evaluating the process.
4. A strong spiritual motivation, and emphasis upon serious study and thorough preparation.¹

Laboratory experience is still largely confined to the teaching of children, although some experiments have been made with Junior High and High School students.²

b. Teacher Training Classes

Classes of leadership training can be set up in the local church as well as on a community basis.³ The community basis is of great value because of the fellowship of members of different churches. Through such an enterprise a stronger impact is made upon community life than when a church carries on a separate program.⁴

c. Institutes, Conferences, and Conventions

Still another type of inter-church function is that of the

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1. Ibid.
2. N.C.C.C., Laboratory School Manual by Margie McCarty.
3. Ante, pp. 14, 16.
4. N.C.C.C. Bulletin No. 507, op. cit., pp. 38-39.

Institute. Each year, delegates by the thousands attend county or area conventions and institutes which are planned for the training of lay workers in the church and for inspiration.¹ The results usually depend as much on the use which the church makes of these delegates when they return to the local church as on the nature and quality of the training which they received.² The following principles apply to the attendance of institutes, conferences, or conventions:

1. Delegates must become acquainted with the nature of the program before they go, and should agree on the kind of information they are to seek.
2. The same delegates should attend repeatedly. No one expects a few days in college to produce a well-trained person; no more will a single experience in an institute, conference or convention.
3. Well planned meetings should be planned after the delegates return in which they should review their experiences and consider how they can help their church.³

D. Summary

In the foregoing chapter it has been observed that, since Protestantism is dependent upon volunteer workers, the local church is the scene of leadership education and therefore is responsible for the training of its lay leaders.

Since the standard of the work in the local church goes no higher than the quality of its leaders, and because the teaching function of the church requires adequately trained teachers educationally and theologically, the training of the lay worker is of supreme importance in the educational program of the church. Indeed, the non-professional

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

Christian leader is the key to the success and achievement of the program of Christian nurture and the development of Christian philosophy in the life of every individual who participates in the fellowship of the local church. And there lies dormant in each congregation potential leaders who, through careful motivation and training, can make this ideal a reality.

In addition to the importance placed upon the training of lay personnel, it has been pointed out that parents are an essential part of the educational program, working in conjunction with the church in the process of developing Christian character.

Furthermore, it has been noted that there are many avenues of training existent in the field of Christian Education. Possibilities such as a program of supervision, workers' conferences, leadership education courses, workshops, laboratory schools, teacher training classes, institutes, conferences and conventions, it has been seen, can make their contributions to the effective training of lay leadership and consequently can help to lead growing persons to Christian discipleship and mature faith.

CHAPTER II

THE WORKERS' CONFERENCE AS THE CORE OF LEADERSHIP EDUCATION

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A. Introduction

One cannot overlook the strategic importance of cooperation and integration between the educational agencies of the church.¹

Rather than becoming involved in a multitude of contacts and activities in the local church, it appears more logical for the one responsible for leadership education to concentrate upon a small group of leaders, training them to do the educational task and thus integrating the whole educational program. An individual leader grows in good workmanship by closely interwoven experience and knowledge.²

In the introduction of this thesis it has been established that Christian Education is presently in the church and largely carried on by lay leadership.³ The urgent need of adequate, effective leadership indicates the importance of a successful leadership training program. If concentration upon key leaders of the educational program of the church appears logical in the promotion of integration and cooperation between all the agencies, then it also appears that one central, consistent gathering of these leaders for the purpose of instruction, inspiration and fellowship would meet the need of adequate

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1. Nevin C. Harner, *The Educational Work of the Church*, p. 189.
Cf. Heck, *The Workers' Conference*, p. 7.
2. Harner, *op. cit.*, p. 192.
3. Ante, vii-viii. (Intro.)

leadership training.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to indicate how the workers' conference can serve as the core of the leadership education program of the church. This will be accomplished by a survey of the workers' conference in general, its nature, function, value, standards and elements, and by a more specific study of the various types of procedures for organizing and conducting a workers' conference.

The purpose of this study is to reveal the vital relationship of the workers' conference to the whole leadership educational program of the local church.

B. The Nature and Function of Workers' Conferences

It has been stated before that the workers' conference is far more than an informal business meeting of the church school staff, and that it has been called "teachers' meeting," "the staff meeting," the "workers' council," and likewise had many and varied purposes.¹ However, this study will use the definition of Erwin L. Shaver. He states,

A Workers Conference. . . is a meeting of all the educational workers of the church - officers and teachers of the Sunday Church School and leaders of every other character-building activity sponsored by the church as well - held for² the purpose of improving the church's educational program.

Not every meeting of the church workers is a workers' conference.

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1. Ante, p. v. Cf. Shaver, op. cit., p. 19.
2. Ibid.

For a gathering of a few teachers or officers of the Sunday School to discuss problems is hardly within the meaning of the term. Many so-called workers' conferences have been largely "talk fests" which result in little more than a pleasant social gathering and produce¹ no actual improvement in the teaching-learning process.

It is necessary to distinguish between a workers' conference and a meeting of the Board of Christian Education or of the Church School Executive Council.² The functions of these local church organizations differ according to the policies of the denominational bodies, but still they are primarily "business" and planning organizations.³ The board meetings may possibly have characteristics similar to the workers' conference, but, on the whole, board meetings deal largely with matters of organization, administration, financing, equipment, supplies, special days and programs, appointment of teachers and officers, and represent the congregation.⁴ The relationship between the two is very much like that which exists between the public school board and the staff of its schools. The Board confers with the workers' conference on occasion for advice and suggestions, or the conference might discover needs and make suggestions to the Board.⁵ The workers' conference is largely and primarily an educational rather than organizational group. It is organizational only indirectly as

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1. Heck, op. cit., p. 9.
2. Ibid. Cf. Gwynn, op. cit., pp. 46-47.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Gwynn, op. cit., p. 47.

it relates to the educational task of the church.¹ The major concerns of the workers' conference are matters pertaining to the leader or teacher, the pupil, lesson materials, teaching procedure, Christian action projects, problems of supervision, and discipline. All this relates in a vital way to the leadership education of the lay teachers and workers of the local church.

One of the most important considerations in the character of the workers' conference is that of purpose.² One must carefully plan and prepare for it. A purposeful conference should have a pre-determined, definite outcome in terms of change in the quality of leadership. There should come from every conference a specific plan of improvement.³ This does not mean an elaborate "program." It is not the quantity of improvement at any one time that makes progress; it is rather the quality and consistency of little improvement over a span of time.⁴ This improvement begins first in the leaders themselves as they are encouraged, instructed, and challenged, and then carries over into the educational program of the church. It is important, then, that one consider the workers' conference in its broadest sense, including all the leaders, and that its function be thought of as primarily educational.

C. The Advantages and Values of Workers' Conferences

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1. Heck, op. cit., p. 9.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 10.

There are advantages as well as disadvantages in the use of workers' conferences as a tool of leadership education. The purpose of discussing the negative aspect will be to point up areas of weakness in order to raise the quality of the meeting to the highest possible level. Hence, a discussion of pro as well as con is necessary.

In the first place, workers' conferences have a very practical objective: the continuous development of new methods toward a more effective educational program in the church. In contrast to more formal methods, the workers' conference centers in the practical aspect of immediate problems and interests.¹ Secondly, the decisions reached are immediately acted upon and not stored away for some indefinite period of time.² Furthermore, the workers' conference, being a time-honored institution, has the force of history and tradition behind it. It is a familiar type of leadership education and therefore one is building on foundations already laid.³ Still another advantage is the fact that the workers' conference reaches a far larger percentage of workers than other agencies such as conventions, training classes, reading programs or individual guidance.⁴ The fact of the large measure of fellowship, consecration to the teaching task, and high morale resulting from this type of training is not something to be overlooked.⁵ Arthur Heck points out the fact that the most strategic importance of the workers' conference is in the field of

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1. Shaver, op. cit., p. 20.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

cooperative endeavor among workers in the church.¹ He states, "The only right way to work in the Christian enterprise is to work co-operatively."² Even problems of individual leaders are best solved cooperatively, and usually these also have some relationship to others' difficulties and to the whole program. Thus, the workers' conference provides opportunity for fellowship and the sharing of problems on a cooperative basis. Concerning this, Heck states, "The common bond of those united in a common task is greatly strengthened."³ Furthermore, it provides occasion for free expression of individual viewpoints and opinions. This results in mutual understanding, clarification of ideas and situations and releases new ideas on many phases of the work to the profit and inspiration of the entire group of workers.⁴ This prevents the feeling of isolation easily felt by so many workers in the church. Certainly one can gather from these advantages certain positive conclusions that the workers' conference is a most valuable means of improving Christian education in the local church.

In discussing weaknesses as well as points of strength, one must take into account that they are only in part actual and in part potential. That is, the workers' conference can have the characteristics mentioned in the previous paragraph or it may be more like the following description. Potentially it may be either, depending upon other factors which will be discussed in succeeding pages.

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1. Shaver, op. cit., p. 20.
2. Ibid.
3. Heck, op. cit., p. 8.
4. Ibid., p. 9.

A conference may degenerate into a meeting in which all the time is taken with unimportant business details or with pleasant but irrelevant conversation.¹ A meeting may begin with an attempt to look at its program objectively from an educational point of view, but end by having gone around and around and come to a conclusion of negative observation.² Often an excellent speaker may deliver an inspiring address, the only outcome of which might be a vote of appreciation and an inquiry, "Whom can we get to speak to us next month?"³ This kind of situations ~~is~~ to be avoided by purposeful planning and practical objectives. Ultimately one seeks to raise the quality of the workers' conference to its highest possible level.⁴

D. The Standards for Workers' Conferences

Setting a criterion for the success of any enterprise is a difficult undertaking. However, there are a few tests for the vitality of a workers' conference which are realistic and largely objective. The first criterion is the record of attendance. The majority of workers will come regularly if they are actually receiving help from the meetings.⁵ The second is the carry-over or transfer of suggestions from the conference to the administration and teaching of the groups.⁶ Another indication of success is increasing loyalty and consecration on the part of the staff, as evidenced by personal spiritual growth,

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1. Shaver, op. cit., p. 21.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Gwynn, op. cit., p. 55.

6. Ibid.

willingness to do calling, fewer absences, and more time spent in preparation.¹ Furthermore, if a person appears to sense his obligation toward making the conference significant and is willing to participate upon request, this is certainly indicative of growth. As Price H. Gwynn, Jr., states, "People like to have a stake in a going concern."²

For a specific list of standards which might be used as criteria for any workers' conference, Nevin C. Harner has worked out a series of ten questions. They are as follows:

1. Does the school have a workers' conference approximately ten times a year?
2. Do all the workers attend these conferences?
3. Is an educational topic provided as the main feature of the workers' conference?
4. Is this topic, as a rule, concrete and specific?
5. Does the program provide for participation by the workers?
6. Are these programs planned as carefully as a session of a training class?
7. Do the conferences as a rule end in some definite plan of action?
8. Are the substitute or apprentice teachers participants in the conference?
9. Do members of the official board meet at least four times a year in conference on topics relating to their work?
10. Are these programs planned and conducted as carefully as a session of a training class?³

E. Program Elements

The tendency previously indicated of devoting most of the time for business or social matters does not mean that these and

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1. Gwynn, op. cit., p. 55.
2. Ibid.
3. Harner, op. cit., p. 194.
See also Appendix.

other elements are to be excluded.¹ These activities are elements to be desired in most meetings but they have higher and more worthy purposes than heretofore mentioned. For instance, the element of "business" rightly interpreted and selected gives the workers' conference much of its practical objective.² Meetings in which the pre-dominant element is inspiration or securing information from the speaker need to be planned so they do not exclude other valuable means of leadership education. For purposes of this study, the elements of the conference will be discussed individually, but it is to be assumed that each meeting will consist of a well balanced selection of these.

1. Fellowship

Any organization, Christian or otherwise, functions better when individuals of the group become personally acquainted.³ A large proportion of the business concerns of America are conducted on an informal, personal basis.⁴ Many important transactions take place over the dinner table. Jesus Himself often used the table as a source of fellowship and opportunity to teach. He recognized the inherent need of people for pleasant social relations, and it was His own custom to attend weddings and feasts.⁵ If modern business depends upon the informal personal friendship basis for its transactions, and if Jesus Christ is known to have used this kind of relationship for teaching

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1. Shaver, op. cit., p. 22.
2. Ibid.
3. Erwin G. Benson, Planning Church School Workers' Conferences, p. 16.
4. Ibid.
5. Verdia Burke, The Workers' Conference, p. 41. Cf. John 3, 6 and 7.

purposes, then surely educational leaders cannot overlook the values of such fellowship in the program of the workers' conference. Concerning the value of fellowship in business in contrast to the Christian enterprise, Erwin G. Benson states:

How much more important it is, then, that, through the fellowship afforded by good conferences, workers engage in Christian service come to know one another personally for the promotion of "the biggest business in the world" on a basis of mutual confidence and good will.¹

Perhaps one of the most difficult situations in the educational program of any church is the lack of integration between the various departments and character-building agencies. This means that the teachers in one department of the Sunday School may have little or no idea of the problems, ideas, needs and interests of any other group in the total program. The Sunday School often functions as an isolated group, separated in many respects from the youth groups, with little or no real understanding or appreciation of the program carried on by other groups ministering to the very same persons in many cases.² This isolation leads to general lack of unity in the total program and causes much disharmony between workers. In contrast to this, Shaver states:

Where the fellowship spirit is strong between those whose common concern is the Christian character development of all their pupils, there is a greatly increased attitude of loyalty to₃ a common cause. This we need, especially in our times.³

It has been indicated that fellowship, both educational and

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1. Benson, op. cit., p. 16.
2. Shaver, op. cit., p. 22.
3. Ibid., p. 32

social, must be a part of the workers' conference program in order to knit together the individual leaders, promote common understanding and purpose, and unify the total program. However, there are other values equally important. Fellowship not only promotes understanding, but it provides an opportunity to feel the approval of the group and this also is a necessary factor in the development of the Christian leader. Dr. Albert F. Harper states,

The social instinct is not confined to the desire to be with others. It is not enough that folks get together. The individual seeks to be well thought of by others. He seeks to attract attention to himself. One writer has called it 'our deep desire to feel important.' This fundamental desire for approval of others can be an important ally in building Christian character.¹

From this sense of importance comes another value of fellowship in the workers' conference. Understanding and appreciation of fellow workers and oneself results in a sense of comradeship and group solidarity. Good will and confidence are developed. Individual workers are encouraged and strengthened with group approval and support.² Actually these values are like a chain-reaction; one produces another. Fellowship also is a means whereby others may be attracted and enlisted for training and service.³ Even children can sense whether or not their leaders are friendly toward one another.⁴ And so the final results of fellowship are registered in the lives of the pupils. One further value of fellowship as an element in the workers' conference is the high morale brought about by the fact that workers are

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1. Benson, op. cit., pp. 16-17.
2. Burke, op. cit., p. 42.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

enjoying their sociability. This heightened morale makes for better leadership.¹ Workers will approach their tasks with greater enthusiasm and devotion.²

It is apparent that leaders need to be united by personal relationships through the workers' conference and that this fellowship is valuable in terms of development in Christian leadership. This leads to the question of method: how is the need to be met in a practical way? Purposeful meeting together is, of course, a way to promote sociability. When the workers come to their monthly conferences to share, to learn, to give and to receive inspiration, this automatically produces the kind of fellowship which is valuable and needed. Some place in every workers' conference should be provided for fellowship. One might plan a purely social meeting at least once a year.³ It is good to have a dinner meeting at least every three months, if not more often.⁴ A supper meeting makes possible a longer period for informal personal relationships and group fellowship. There are several ways in which one might plan special meetings for sociability, such as an "Appreciation Banquet" planned by the church board for the leaders, or beginning the year with a "fun banquet;" or some groups like to celebrate a special day or season.⁵ During the summer, the workers' conference may be a retreat or some other form of outdoor activity.⁶ These are just a few ways in which this element

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1. Burke, op. cit., p. 42.
2. Ibid., p. 43.
3. Shaver, op. cit., p. 33.
4. Burke, op. cit., p. 45.
5. Ibid., p. 46.
6. Burke, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

of fellowship may be attained in the conference. The cultivation of fellowship among leaders is vital. The planning should be done with care, and the quality of social activities should be attractive and enjoyable to all.¹

2. Inspiration

The element of inspiration does not mean that a particularly long portion of the workers' conference must be set apart specifically to inspire the workers, although a good workers' conference should uplift and strengthen the purposes of each worker.² Nor does it mean that the inspirational objective requires a "program" for the attainment of such a goal.³ It may be that the very way in which the whole meeting is conducted, or the way the materials are used, or the words in a speech, a report, a book review, or a demonstration is presented will furnish the desired uplift which is needed to guide the worker into greater efficiency and deeper commitment to his task.⁴ It goes without saying that the leaders' devotion to the job is contingent upon personal dedication to the Lord, for, after all, Christ is the center of all Christian educational activities and He is the goal for all the endeavor in the educational program of the church. This conviction is illustrated by a statement from the Methodist Discipline:

Christian Education has its roots in the nature of the Christian gospel itself. Jesus is frequently called Master or Teacher, and He is the authority in our church's program of Christian nurture. His Great Commission is to "Go therefore and make

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1. Ibid., p. 46.
2. Shaver, op. cit., p. 36.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

disciples of all nations. . .teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always. . .' The purpose of Christian education is to learn, to teach, and to use His Way by which persons of all ages are related to God as Father and to all men as brothers.¹

A real sense of fellowship with God is basic to every vital Christian life and especially to those who teach others.² Hence, every leader in the educational program of the church should know how to worship God in spirit and in truth.³ This indeed is the source of inspiration for the Christian leader, for worship is needed to strengthen and vitalize him personally and, consequently, the whole conference. Verdia Burke states concerning this, "Through worship experiences can come increased spiritual vision, inspiration to more devoted service and to better Christian living."⁴

Again the question arises concerning method: how is the element of inspiration to be worked into the program of the workers' conference? Every conference should include a brief period of worship, not a mechanical routine, but a time of real awareness of God's love and guidance in which workers sense their privilege of working for Him through teaching and leadership responsibilities.⁵ Certainly it is not easy to lead people to this kind of experience. Attention should be given to suitable leadership, surroundings which are conducive to worship, and a theme in keeping with the subject of the particular conference session. It might be suitable to ask the Sunday

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1. Methodist Publishing House, The Commission on Education and the Workers' Conference, inside cover.
2. Burke, op. cit., p. 34.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 16.
5. Burke, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

School Departmental superintendents to be in charge of the worship periods. The time should not be more than fifteen minutes and should include hymns, Scripture reading, prayer and meditation.¹

Inspiration may come through some means other than worship. Certainly every leader should be refreshed, challenged and strengthened through the elements of the total program of fellowship, worship and instruction.

3. Information and Instruction

The primary purpose of the workers' conference in the local church is educational.² This means that the workers are gathered together to receive information through cooperative study and instruction by means of various methods, which will lead to increased understanding and more effective leadership. The sources for this information are many and varied. Experts or specialists may come as speakers to the workers' conference furnishing information and instruction in various fields. Actual courses of training may well be a part of the workers' conference. This type of course, however, should be taught more often than once a month.³ Pre-quarterly Review may be used as part of the program in which the church school teachers are given instruction in the coming curriculum which they will be teaching. The types of procedure in giving the workers information and instruction are so varied it will be discussed topically in the following section of this study.

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1. Ibid., pp. 31-32.
2. Ibid., p. 6.
3. Shaver, op. cit., pp. 39-40.

F. Types of Procedures

Each method described in the following survey may be adapted in any number of ways, and, as already indicated, there are many possibilities for variety. In general, the procedures either employ a form of individual lecture type or the use of group dynamics.

The value of group study cannot be overlooked, for in recent years sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, personnel specialists, educators, and others have re-discovered "groups" and their importance to individuals.¹ The rapid rise in adult education groups indicates a recognition of the value of the group for the whole process of study and learning.² Those who have studied in the field of group dynamics have concluded that within any group there are forces which vitally influence a person's growth and behavior--the group-climate, the role and status of the person, and the continual interaction among group members.³ These forces play an important part in the way a person learns and the kind of an individual he becomes.⁴ Because of the value of such learning, the workers' conference should employ a great deal of group work in its program. Such methods can be used in various procedures. A summary chart of these procedures appears in the Appendix.

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1. Sara Little, Learning Together in the Christian Fellowship, p. 14.
2. Ibid., p. 16.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Loc. cit.

1. Buzz sessions

This method is characterized by the division of a group into smaller sub-groups for a limited period of time with a specific thing to be done or discussed.¹ It is especially valuable in helping a person enter and become a part of the group.² The groups should not be larger than six or smaller than two. A leader may be chosen by any simple means such as the person who is the tallest or whose last name begins with the first letter of the alphabet.³ Often no plan is needed to start a discussion for the leader emerges from the group.⁴ Each group may study a particular problem in the educational program of the church and suggest a possible solution. Or they may study a particular passage of Scripture for some pre-planned purpose. The subject should be of such a nature as to be of general interest to all the workers.

2. Group Discussion

This type of procedure for the program of the workers' conference is one in which a topic or problem is chosen and the audience is expected to participate. It, too, as with the buzz session, must be chosen on the basis of general interest. Advance announcement of the topic must be made in order to give adequate time for individuals to formulate opinions.⁵ Care must be taken lest one person dominate the whole discussion. Thus the leader of this type of procedure should

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1. Little, op. cit., p. 38.
2. Ibid.
3. Little, loc. cit.
4. Ibid.
5. Benson, op. cit., p. 39.

be well prepared and possess ability in the guidance of group thinking.¹
It is a democratic procedure in which every member may participate
and gives opportunity for the free expression of individual opinions.²

3. Panel

Another form of discussion is the panel, in which from three
to six people informally discuss some subject with one another under
the guidance of a moderator or panel leader who introduces the subject
and helps to keep the discussion relevant.³ The panel may be a group
of experts or a combination of resourceful persons.⁴

4. Symposium

Instead of allowing time for open discussion by the group or
using a few people to informally discuss in front of the group, the
symposium involves several people who prepare more or less formal
speeches in advance and give different views of one subject.⁵ This
is a good method to use for policy-making, with individuals speaking
for or against the subject. However, the danger of lack of prepara-
tion may be one of the weaknesses of this procedure.⁶

5. Debates

Upon occasion a debate may be a part of the conference pro-
gram which would add variety.⁷ Such subjects as, "Resolved, that
'Memory Work' is Not the Best Basis for Promotion;" or, "Resolved, That

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1. Little, op. cit., pp. 40-46.
2. Heck, op. cit., pp. 20-21.
3. Ibid., p. 46.
4. Ibid., p. 47.
5. Benson, op. cit., p. 41. Cf. Little, p. 47.
6. Benson, op. cit., p. 41.
7. Shaver, op. cit., p. 42.

'Contests' Are Not Desirable as Means of Increasing Attendance" might be beneficial.¹ Caution should be exercised and care taken to provide for the spirit of open-minded search for truth rather than mere desire.²

6. Lecture

Although securing a speaker as the main part of the program of a workers' conference is often over-used because it is easy and requires little preparation on the part of the planning committee, a lecture is still an excellent method of giving pertinent information, stimulating interest and pulling segmented parts together into a meaningful whole.³

7. Reports

Persons who have recently attended a convention, institute or conference relating to the Christian Educational work of the church may well share their experience with the workers' conference.⁴ They should be guided in their preparation so that their reports are relevant, easy to follow, and deal only with the most important issues.⁵

Individuals who have been observing teaching in public schools, week-day church schools, or another church, might bring their findings and offer new ideas as a result of their observations.⁶

Reviews of books or articles can be very enriching. Coaching

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1. Shaver, op. cit., p. 42.
2. Ibid.
3. Little, op. cit., p. 48. Cf. Shaver, op. cit., pp. 39-40, and Benson, op. cit., pp. 37-38.
4. Heck, op. cit., p. 22.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid. See also Shaver, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

the person making the report is suggested lest the individual go into too much detail.¹ The gist of the argument, the particular viewpoint, or the enumeration of helpful ideas constitute the main benefits of reviews.²

8. Role Playing

The brief acting out of situations in which groups or individuals identify with other groups or individuals provides a very practical means of developing empathy and adding variety to the conference program.³ Re-enacting scenes from the classroom to create group discussion on a particular discipline problem is one way in which this method can be used.

9. Demonstrations and Exhibits

Often demonstrating a method such as story-telling or the value of creative activities is more interesting and of learning value than simply lecturing upon the subject.⁴ To be effective a demonstration should be held under natural conditions, but often an extra session of a class can be arranged so as to make this possible. Helpful exhibits of pupils' work, educational leaflets, new ideas for creative activities, charts, graphs or posters are suggested so as to enlarge the horizon of teaching content and method for the workers.⁵

10. Audio-visual Methods

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1. For suggestions for reading and reporting on books and articles see Shaver, pp. 44-45.
2. Ibid. Cf. Benson, op. cit., p. 42.
3. Little, op. cit., pp. 50-53. Cf. also Burns, Using Role Playing in Christian Education. Reprinted from National Journal of Religious Education.
4. Shaver, op. cit., pp. 42-43.
5. Ibid.

Filmstrips, slides and sound films also may be used as a major part of the workers' conference. There are leadership training filmstrips with sound recordings available which would be an excellent source of training for the workers.¹ It is suggested that the workers be prepared for the film by being given things to look for as they view it, and then discuss the film afterward.²

These are a few of the procedures which may be used to make the workers' conference an instructive, informative and helpful meeting in the training of the workers in the local church. A well-balanced overall program may include a portion of all of these methods. An analysis of some of these procedures and their values appear in the Appendix.

G. General Considerations

Although discussion has been made of the primary considerations such as the nature, values and elements of the workers' conference as an integral part of the leadership education program of the local church, there are other details of importance which should also be considered.

1. Leadership

First is the matter of leadership: who is responsible for the leadership of the conference?

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1. N.C.C.C. Audio-Visual Resource Guide; N.C.C.C., Leadership Education Audio-Visual Kit; Moody Filmstrips, Teacher Training Series.
2. Presbyterian Church U.S., Department of Leadership Education, Use of Audio-Visuals in Your Church School.

Anyone in the educational program of the church who is sufficiently interested can begin a movement to get workers' conferences started.¹ It could be the superintendent of the church school, the pastor, or, in churches where they have one, the Director of Christian Education.² The latter would be the most logical leader. In some cases a committee or the central board of education may originate the idea and select a qualified lay leader, or the committee itself may take on the responsibility of planning. Regardless of who does the leading or the preparation, the leader or leaders should be the most competent of local leaders from the educational standpoint.³ Many churches lack people who are academically trained leaders, but in almost every group there are those who are "educationally minded," persons of good common sense, well-read, and spiritually mature.⁴ To this type of leader the preparation and planning of workers' conferences ought to be entrusted.⁵

The leader should certainly be familiar with the subject under discussion. He should be alert to current interests in Christian Education in the local church and be thoughtfully inclined toward them.⁶ Furthermore, he should be familiar with the meaning and method of group discussion, for the use of "group work" is very important in the conference.⁷

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1. Burke, op. cit., p. 17.
2. Ibid.
3. Heck, op. cit., p. 11.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 18.
7. Ante, p. 16.

In addition to having information regarding the group method, the leader should be skilled in its use. He should be watchful of the speaking and be able to identify relevant issues and problems as the speaking and questioning proceeds.¹ He should guide the group in logical order and lead them to a definite outcome.² Heck summarizes the leaders' responsibility in the following simple rules:

1. Be thoroughly prepared.
2. Do not talk too much yourself.
3. Do not let one or a few persons monopolize the time.
4. Be alert. Do not allow the meeting to lag.
5. Hold discussion in line with the question and the purpose of the meeting.
6. Do not let minor issues obscure or confuse major ones.
7. Keep a wholesome time schedule. Begin on time and quit before interest has waned.³

2. Organization

Often the planning of the workers' conferences is left to one person, and as has been indicated before, the local Director of Christian Education is the most logical person for this job. However, one cannot overstress the importance of careful preparation and planning. As soon as possible, it is well to get a local committee together to help in this strategic process of determining the needs of the leaders and the type of program which is suitable to the particular group. If such committees can be so established, their responsibilities should be listed. Arthur J. Heck lists ten duties of this committee. They are as follows:

1. Discover the greatest needs of local workers, or the most

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1. Heck, op. cit., p. 18.
2. Ibid., p. 19.
3. Ibid.

- urgent educational problems of your school at the time.
2. Anticipate, if possible, the probable general nature of future problems and needs.
 3. Plan types of meetings with their respective themes for at least six months in advance; better still, for one year in advance.
 4. Be sure to make available, long in advance, adequate resource material for the use of leaders and others.
 5. Select a leader for each conference.
 6. Choose participants as may be called for by the type of program projected.
 7. Fix time and place of the conference.
 8. Secure assent of leaders and participants and be sure to give each his assignment at least one month in advance of the conference.
 9. Properly advertise and boost the conference. Plan to get workers out 100%. A personal enthusiastic approach to all workers by some officer or member of the planning committee, supplementing oral or printed announcement, is almost indispensable in securing good attendance.
 10. Be prepared to "follow-up" with aggressive action the significant decisions or outcomes of the conference.¹

It has already been stated that the participants in the workers' conference are the leaders of all the character-building agencies of the church.² This group includes the teachers, administrators and officers of the Church School or Sunday School, the leaders and possibly the president of all the youth groups, the leaders of boys and girls clubs, recreation program, and junior church, and any others deemed advisable. In this group the prospective and apprentice teachers and workers should be included for they fit into the training program in a very profitable manner. As each new worker is enlisted as a member of the educational staff, he should understand that attendance at the workers' conference is part of his responsibility.³

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1. Heck, op. cit., pp. 13-14. See also Burke, op. cit., pp. 23-24.
2. Ante, p. v. (intro.)
3. Burke, op. cit., p. 53.

3. The Time Element

Generally speaking, most authors agree that there should not be fewer conferences than one each quarter or more than one each month.¹ Some churches have a conference every two months.² The time element should be considered carefully so as to avoid prolonged meetings in which the workers become weary and bored. Seasonal problems and special emphases should be discussed far enough in advance to make good solutions possible.³

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1. Heck, op. cit., p. 12.
2. Ibid.
3. Benson, op. cit., p. 25.

H. Summary

This chapter has indicated that the workers' conference is a most valuable means of carrying on the leadership education program of the local church. This is true, first of all because the conference includes all the leaders of every character-building agency within the church and consequently reaches the majority of workers at a regularly scheduled time. This monthly meeting is primarily educational in function and also acts as an integrating agency for the whole educational program. The workers' conference is practical in its goal and should be of interest to all those present in view of the relevance of the content of the individual conference program to the experience of the workers.

It was found that a balance of three essential elements--fellowship, inspiration and instruction--serves to unite the workers in spiritual unity through worship, oneness of purpose and mutual understanding in the sharing of ideas and problems, and further understanding of and training for their individual tasks. As the workers meet together in this type of regular program, they come to see their individual importance as a vital and integral part of the whole educational task of the church. The result of this uplift, educationally and spiritually, involves greater efficiency in the classroom and consequent increase in the effectiveness of the total program.

Through such methods as buzz sessions, group discussion, panels, symposium, debates, lecture, reports, role-playing, demonstrations and audio-visual methods, the workers can be instructed and given in-

formation which will aid them in their leadership and teaching and increase their skills. These procedures also serve to train those who are prospects or apprentices.

Most likely the Director of Christian Education is responsible for the planning and administration of the workers' conference, although in many cases the responsibility falls upon the pastor or the Sunday School Superintendent. At any rate, the workers conference must be carefully planned by one who is familiar with the subject under discussion and with methods of group procedure.

It may be concluded, then, that a well-planned workers' conference may meet the aims and objectives of the total leadership training program of the local church. This is true on the basis of the fact that it reaches the greater proportion of its leaders, that it utilizes the needed elements of fellowship, inspiration and instruction, and that it employs varied procedures to help the leader and teacher alike improve his own methods and skills. The workers' conference can be, therefore, the core of the leadership education program of the local church if the principles of this study are taken into serious consideration.

CHAPTER III

PROPOSED PLAN FOR ONE YEAR OF WORKERS' CONFERENCES

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PROPOSED PLAN FOR ONE YEAR OF WORKERS' CONFERENCES

A. Introduction

The very nature of the workers' conference, being practical in objective and largely informal in procedure, may not seem to lend itself to advance planning of one year. And rightly so, if the program is planned in conjunction with needs which arise out of immediate situations. Naturalness is the very essence of the conference and regimentation according to some pre-conceived pattern may spoil the very vitality and practicality one seeks to foster in the program.¹ To be sure, the conference can never be exactly the same in any two churches.² This leads one to serious doubt concerning the validity of the work of this chapter.

However, the purpose of this proposed plan is simply to illustrate the principles contained in the previous two chapters and show how they can be applied in a functional manner. The plan does not follow a fixed pattern; it only makes suggestions for the possible procedure and allows for a great deal of adaptability.

It is assumed that this proposal is idealistic in a sense; nevertheless, it should contain ideas and helpful suggestions which could be altered in order to meet the needs of individual conferences

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1. Harner, op. cit., p. 197.
2. Ibid.

in various stages of growth and development.¹

The suggestions which are made in this chapter come from four sources: printed conference programs published by various denominational boards; ideas from letters received from Directors of Christian Education; lists of program suggestions and outlines in leadership education texts; and the writer's own creativity. A survey and tally made of these materials revealed that the subjects fall into ten general headings.² They are:

1. Administration
2. Christian living and evangelism
3. Curriculum
4. Goals
5. Home and family
6. Housing and equipment
7. Methods
8. Organization
9. Reading
10. Worship

The twelve programs are a combination of ideas from these sources and utilize the procedures discussed primarily in chapter two of this study.

From a study of available workers' conference programs, it was found that the first step in outlining the subjects to be used in the meetings, considering the principle of naturalness, was to develop some sort of check list in which the workers choose the subjects they are most interested in. A sample of such a suggestion list appears in the appendix of the thesis.

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1. The Programs are often too long and must be adapted to local needs.
2. Post, pp. 80-81.

The plan of the chapter is, therefore, to suggest certain themes, objectives and procedures for twelve workers' conferences, assuming that there is to be one meeting each month for twelve months.¹

B. Basic Assumptions

The plans for these conference programs are made with no particular local church in mind. It is idealistic in a sense; however, it is hoped that the suggestions will be of such a practical nature that they may be adapted to any situation.

For purposes of this study, it will be assumed that the workers' conference is a comparatively new thing in the educational program. Furthermore, it will be assumed that the leaders present will include the superintendent, teachers and officers of each department in the Sunday School, the officers of the Sunday School in general, the advisers of each character-building agency, including youth groups, boys' and girls' clubs and recreation program, apprentice teachers and prospective teachers, the Director of Christian Education, Youth Director, Pastor, and the Chairman of the Board of Christian Education.

The general plan for each conference will be as follows:

1. Aim or purpose
- ✓ 2. Topic
3. Fellowship supper (possible group singing around the table)²

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1. A compiled list of topics for workers' conference programs appears in the Appendix.
2. Ante, pp. 9, 12.

4. Devotions
5. Program
- ✓ 6. Departmental meetings¹
7. Worship service²

The procedure in each conference will be outlined and not given in detail. Only suggestions for topics will be indicated for departmental meetings and the devotional period. In some cases a longer worship period will take the place of devotions.

The purpose of these outlined plans is to present a brief sketch of the program so as to illustrate the possibilities of the workers' conference as a primary means of leadership education, by utilizing various methods and materials. The sources for materials will be indicated by documentation.

C. The September Conference ✓

The fall conference starts out a new year in the educational program of the church and it is, therefore, supremely important to begin with a challenging and purposeful meeting. This may be the time when a retreat will serve as a motivating force to encourage faithful attendance and secure interest.³ The retreat might be planned in connection with several other churches in the same denomination, or possibly on an interdenominational basis.⁴ Although a retreat is not

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1. These group meetings will include a group for apprentice and prospective teachers, young people's leaders, and administrators unless they are leading a group. The Director of Christian Education and Youth Director may well be acting as instructors during this period.
2. Ante, pp. 13-16.
3. "Why Not Have a Leaders' Fall Retreat?", Presbyterian Action, Sept., 1955, p. 22.
4. Shaver, op. cit., pp. 75-78.

planned for particularly in this September conference, the plans could easily be adapted for such a procedure.

1. Aims

- a. To inspire and challenge each worker with the importance of his responsibility in the educational program, and to deepen his commitment to Jesus Christ as the motivating source of service in the church.
- b. To welcome new workers and help them feel at home in the fellowship of the group.
- c. To enlarge the vision of each worker for the work at hand by establishing some major plans for the strengthening of the educational program.

2. Topic: Our Job as Teachers and Workers

3. Fellowship supper

4. Devotions

The Command--"Go, Teach, Make Disciples"
The Promise--"I will be with you"
(Matthew 28:16-20)

5. Program

a. An Address: The Task of Christian Education¹

This message should be a challenge and serve to direct thinking and unify the purposes of the group.² It should include an emphasis upon vital Christian life by commitment to Christ as the basis for service in the educational program of the church. The speaker selected for this responsibility should be one who can be highly respected for his Christian testimony, his ability as a speaker, and for his understanding and personal convictions

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- 1. DeWitte Campbell Wyckoff, The Task of Christian Education, p. 14.
- 2. Mary Louise Crane, Report of Workers Retreat, Presbyterian Action, May 1956, p. 23.

regarding the importance of Christian Education in the local church.

b. Worship and Dedication Service

Hymn: O Master Let Me Walk With Thee

Poem: The Builders

A builder builded a temple,
He wrought it with grace and skill--
Pillars and groins and arches,
All fashioned to work his will.
Men said as they saw its beauty:
"It shall never know decay;
Great is thy skill, O builder!
Thy fame shall endure for aye."

A teacher builded a temple
With loving and infinite care,
Planning each arch with patience,
Laying each stone with prayer.
None praised his unceasing efforts,
None knew of his wondrous plan,
For the temple the teacher builded
Was unseen by the eyes of man.

Gone is the builder's temple,
Crumbled into the dust;
Low lies each stately pillar,
Food for consuming rust.
But the temple the teacher builded
Will last while the ages roll;
For the beautiful unseen temple
Is a child's immortal soul.¹

Silent prayer meditation (personal self-analysis and dedication)

Musical medley of service and consecration hymns, such as:
O Jesus I Have Promised, Jesus Calls Us, Lord Speak
to Me That I May Speak

Responsive Reading:

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1. Author Unknown. Quoted in Presbyterian Church U.S., op. cit.,
Workers' Conference Program No. 5.

Leader: Let him that teacheth, give himself to his teaching.

Teachers:¹ Oh, let me teach the truth of life
In the most effective way;
And let me live the life I teach
In the presence of God each day.

Leader: Suffer the little children to come unto me, and
forbid them not: for to such belongeth the king-
dom of God.

Teachers: The child heart is so shy a thing;
It opens at love's tender call;
It closes when fear's shadows fall;
The child heart is so shy a thing.

Leader: Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are
honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever
things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely,
whatsoever things are of good report; if there
be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think
on these things.

Teachers: He had thought and felt so much, he had given
so many of the best hours of his life to un-
worldly hopes for some great good to mankind that
it seemed as though he had been talking with the
angels and had imbibed a portion of their wisdom
unawares.

- Hawthorne in The Great Stone Face

Leader: Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman
that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing
the word of truth.

Teachers: To every man there openeth
A Way, and Ways, and a Way,
And the High Soul climbs the High Way,
And the Low Soul gropes the Low,
And in between on the misty flats,
The rest drift to and fro.
But to every man there openeth
A High Way and a Low,
And every man decideth
The Way his soul shall go.
- John Oxenham

Leader: Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations,
. . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever
I commanded you.

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1. The term teachers refers to all workers.

Teachers: "I showed men God," my Lord will say,
"As I traveled along the King's highway.
I eased the troubled doubter's mind;
I helped the blighted to be resigned;
I showed the sky to souls grown blind.
And what did you?" my Lord will say,
As we meet at the end of the King's highway.
- Fred B. Smith

Leader: One thing I do, forgetting the things which are
behind, and stretching forward to the things
which are before, I press on toward the goal unto
the prize of the high calling of God in Christ
Jesus.

Teachers: If Jesus Christ is a man -
And only a man - I say
That of all mankind I cleave to him,
To him will I cleave alway.

If Jesus Christ is a God -
And the only God - I swear
I will follow him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, and the air.
- Richard Watson Gilder¹

Closing Prayer of Dedication

Benediction

A public dedication service before the congregation is often suggested as a means of making the educational program of the church more important in the eyes of the workers as well as the congregation. Suggestions for these programs appear in Erwin L. Shaver's book entitled, The Workers' Conference Manual, and also in a pamphlet published by the N.C.C.C. entitled, And Gladly Serve.²

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1. Quoted in Erwin L. Shaver, A Program for Workers' Conference, a pamphlet published by the Congregational Education Society of the Congregational and Christian Churches.
2. Shaver, The Workers Conference Manual, pp. 91-93. Cf. N.C.C.C., And Gladly Serve, op. cit., pp. 57-60.

D. The October Conference

1. Aims

- a. To orientate all leaders to the total educational program of the church and therefore promote unity and oneness of purpose.¹
- b. To promote understanding of fellow workers.
- c. To stimulate each worker in the establishment of personal and teaching goals.

2. Topic: Taking Stock - Inventory

3. Fellowship Supper

4. Devotions: Co-Workers With God - I Corinthians 3

5. Program

- a. Reports from a leader of each group, and superintendent of each department of the Sunday School, "Our goals for the year." These reports should include a brief resume of current activities, evaluation of the past, and plans for the coming year. The content of these reports will most likely come as a result of a departmental meeting other than the workers' conference. The two-fold purpose of these reports is to help the workers themselves establish goals and observe their work objectively and to help each worker see his own part in the larger whole of the program. The limit of time should be in accordance with the number of speakers. If the program is too long these reports could be continued the following month. In some instances it may be more practical to include a few reports in each monthly conference during the whole year. Such topics

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as "Getting Acquainted with the Nursery Department" might be used.

b. A blackboard diagram illustrating the total education program and how each group fits into the over-all plan.

c. Display of curriculum. Each group should be responsible for the preparation of a display of their materials. The Sunday School departments would use their pupils', teachers' quarterlies, teaching pictures; the youth their current studies and activities. In this regard, it may be advisable for some denominational leader to explain the curriculum to the conference.

6. Departmental Meetings

a. Sunday School Departments - Quarterly preview

b. Apprentices and prospects. "The Great Adventure," a filmstrip about the challenge of teaching and what one might expect as they begin teaching.¹

7. Worship

a. Hymn

b. Prayer

c. Poem

No printed word nor spoken plea
Can teach young hearts what men should be,
Not all the books on all the shelves,
But what the teachers are themselves.
For education is making men!

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1. N.C.C.C. Leadership Education Audio-Visual Kit, op. cit. Cf. ibid., Leads to Leadership.

2. Ibid.

So it is now, so it was when
Mark Hopkins sat on one end of a log,
And James Garfield sat on the other.
--Arthur Guiterman¹

- d. Quiet meditation directed toward the responsibility of molding young lives.
- e. Hymn
- f. Benediction

E. The November Conference

- 1. Aims
 - a. To promote interest and skill in understanding classes as groups of individuals, each person with varying degrees of knowledge, attitudes and skills.
 - b. To motivate workers to use various methods in learning to understand their pupils.
- 2. Topic: Understanding our Pupils²
- 3. Fellowship Supper
- 4. Devotions: The Woman of Samaria - John 4:1-42
(Illustrating Jesus' method in meeting the needs of one woman)
- 5. Program: (The basis for this procedure is Milton A. Haker's book entitled Understanding Our Pupils.)

Procedure: Four panel speakers (prepared)

- a. Methods for understanding pupils.
 - (1) visitation
 - (2) questionnaires
 - (3) informal conversation
 - (4) reading
 - (5) introspection
- b. Illustrations from real life experiences
i.e., How We Helped Mildred Cooperate and Share

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- 1. Quoted in Shaver, A Program for a Workers's Conference, Series B.
- 2. Milton A. Haker, Understanding Our Pupils, Cf. Presbyterian Church U.S., Department of Leadership Education, Workers' Conference Program No. 2.

c. Factors in Individual Differences

- (1) heredity
- (2) environment
- (3) interests - capacities - skills

d. Age group Characteristics¹

In this discussion one might illustrate the different age groups by introducing a child from each large division such as a Kindergarten, Primary, Junior, Junior High and Senior High young person.

6. Departmental Meetings

- a. Discussion centered around helping particular individuals.
- b. Apprentices and Prospects. Filmstrip, No Two Alike.²
- c. Preparation for Christmas

7. Worship Theme: Thanksgiving. (Worship center with horn of plenty and candles.)

F. The December Conference

1. Aims

- a. To increase teaching skills by introducing new methods.
- b. To give opportunity for sharing of resources and ideas. (Giving to enrich others - Christmas theme.)

2. Topic: Techniques of Teaching

3. Fellowship Supper

4. Devotions: Jesus the Teacher³ (Describing various methods Jesus used: parables, objects, question and answer)

5. Program: A series of demonstrations

- a. Story telling. Illustrating the parts of a story, and various ways of telling stories.

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1. Ibid., pp. 52-59.

2. N.C.C.C. Leadership Education Audio-Visual Kit, op. cit.

3. Price, op. cit.

- b. Creative activities. Illustrating various types and their uses.
- c. Role-playing. Illustrating its use and demonstrating with the use of the group.

Other demonstrations may be chosen in addition to these, or selection may be made of other types of procedures which would be suitable for the group one plans for. Each demonstrator should be careful in his presentation to give necessary details in the use of the procedure he is demonstrating.

6. Departmental Meetings

Discussion on the subject "How can we use these methods in our department?"

Planning for Christmas.

Time allotted for sharing of patterns and ideas. Workers should be asked to bring any materials they have found helpful, and encouraged to share with fellow workers.

7. Worship: Christmas theme

Using religious art as a center of worship, suggestions for pictures are:¹

- a. The Visitation - Philippe de Champaigne
- b. Arrival at Bethlehem - Merson
- c. Holy Night - Defregger
- d. The Adoration of the Shepherds - Murillo
- e. The Adoration of the Shepherds - Giorgione

G. The January Conference

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1. Albert E. Bailey and Walter L. Nathan, Pictures from The Upper Room, pp. 18-26. Cf. Cynthia Pearl Maus, Christ and the Fine Arts, pp. 25-55.

1. Aims

- a. To inspire church workers to be growing persons.
- b. To provide means whereby this growth may have its practical effect in the lives of the workers.
- c. To increase awareness of audio-visual methods as teaching techniques.

2. Theme: Seeing is Believing

3. Fellowship Supper

4. Devotions: Growing: Mentally, Physically and Spiritually
Luke 2:41-52

5. Program

The program is centered in the filmstrip entitled, The Growing Teacher from the Leadership Education Audio-Visual kit published by the N.C.C.C. Before this filmstrip is shown, the group should be given the following questions in order to direct their thinking and provide for a group discussion following the showing of the film. The questions are:

- a. In what ways did Helen Blake grow?
- b. What are ways in which all workers can grow?

After the group discussion centered about these questions, a suggestion should be made concerning other types of audio-visual methods which can be used and their particular advantages and procedures.¹

Following this discussion, a display of various non-projected materials may be used to broaden workers' perspective of audio-visual methods.

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- 1. David B. Walthall, Use of Audio-Visuals in Your Church School, Presbyterian Church U.S., Board of Christian Education.

6. Departmental Meetings

Discussion: How can we increase our effectiveness with the use of audio-visual methods? Apprentices and prospective workers taken on a tour of the educational section of the church.

7. Worship - Theme: The Good Shepherd (Use of religious art. The Good Shepherd or some other appropriate painting such as The Lost Sheep by Soord.

a. Hymn: Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us; or, He Leadeth Me

b. Poem: The Good Teacher¹

The Lord is my teacher,
I shall not lose the way.

He leadeth me in the lowly path of learning,
He prepareth a lesson for me every day;
He bringeth me to the clear fountain of instruction,
Little by little he showeth me the beauty of truth.

The world is a great book that he hath written,
He turneth the leaves for me slowly;
They are all inscribed with images and letters,
He poureth light on the pictures and the words.

He takes me by the hand to the hill-top of vision,
And my soul is glad when I perceive his meaning;
In the valley also he walketh beside me,
In the dark places he whispereth to my heart.

Even though my lesson be hard it is not hopeless,
For the Lord is patient with his slow scholar;
He will wait awhile for my weakness.
In the dark places he whispereth to my heart.

--Henry Van Dyke

c. Prayer

d. Quiet meditation, leader suggesting things to look for in the painting and directing thoughts toward the guidance of the Lord and dependence upon Him.

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1. Quoted in Presbyterian Church U.S., Department of Leadership Education, Workers' Conference No. 1.

- e. Hymn: O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee
- f. Poem, with quiet music in the background

The Teacher¹

Lord, who am I to teach the way
To little children day by day,
So prone myself to go astray?

I teach them knowledge, but I know
How faint the flicker and how low
The candles of my knowledge glow.

I teach them power to will and do,
But only now to learn anew
My own great weakness through and through.

I teach them love for all mankind
And all God's creatures, but I find
My love comes lagging far behind.

Lord, if their guide I still must be,
Oh, let the little children see
The teacher leaning hard on Thee.

-- L. P. Hill

- g. Benediction.

H. The February Conference

1. Aims

- a. To increase awareness of the role of home and family life to the Christian nurture of children and youth.²
- b. To encourage family worship in the lives of all the workers.
- c. To illustrate the difference between mechanical process and creativeness in the worship experience.

2. Theme: The Fair Family Worships

3. Fellowship Supper

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- 1. Maus, op. cit., p. 603.
- 2. Ante, p. 7.

4. Devotions

Ephesians 6:1-4
Rules for Parents and Children

5. Program

The procedure for this conference is centered around two family life dramas presenting two aspects of worship in the home.

- a. Introduction to the playlets. A short explanation should be given concerning the great importance of the home as a central place of Christian nurture and the recent trends in the family life of America. Material for this introduction is found in the introduction of Frances Dunlap Heron's book entitled, Four Dramatizations about Home and Church, in which the play for this conference is located. Prepare audience for buzz sessions after the plays.¹
- b. Presentation of Scene I.
- c. Presentation of Scene II. (Perhaps a musical interlude or possibly group discussion could be used with profit between these scenes.)
- d. Conference divides into buzz sessions to discuss and present concrete ideas for placing more emphasis upon the Christian home.
- e. Compilation of reports from buzz sessions.

6. Departmental meetings

- a. Quarterly preview.
- b. Apprentices and Prospects. Discussion concerning observational visits.

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1. Ante, p. 37.

7. Worship. Theme: The Love of God Reflecting at Home

The hymns and worship thoughts should be centered around the concept of the love of God, in keeping also with Valentines Day.

I. The March Conference

1. Aims

- a. To instill within each worker a sense of awe and wonder of God and a new awareness of His nearness and presence.
- b. To develop skills in making worship real to those whom the workers are teaching and leading.
- c. Preparation for the Easter season.

2. Theme: Making Worship Real

3. Fellowship Supper

4. Devotions: Isaiah 6:1-8
The Nature of Isaiah's Worship

5. Program: A symposium. The question given to the speakers is:

What is happening in the world today that tends to make children, young people, and adults lose faith in God? What effects are rapidly changing world conditions and the inroads of paganism now having on little children? On youth? On mature men and women? ¹

- a. After the speakers have presented their viewpoints, the conference divides into buzz sessions or departmental groups to discuss and point up one way to make worship real and vital in the educational program of the church.
- b. Reports of the buzz sessions and compilation of suggestions.

6. Departmental meetings

- a. Discussion concerning Easter plans.

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- 1. Presbyterian Church U.S., Department of Leadership Education, Workers' Conference Program No. 10, Making Worship Real to Children, Young People and Adults. See also Workers' Conference Programs No. 8, 9.

b. Apprentices and Prospects - Discussion, What is Worship?

7. Worship. Theme: The Meaning of the Resurrection

Center worship service around Easter with spring flowers as a center. A well planned worship service is essential here to substantiate the principles discussed in this meeting as well as the previous one. Worship must be real to the workers before they can make it real to others.

J. The April Conference

1. Aims

- a. To broaden the scope of Christian witness in the minds of each worker in order that their pupils might be encouraged to interest themselves in the missionary enterprise.
- b. To develop skills in using various methods to teach missions at different age levels.

2. Theme: The Regions Beyond

3. Fellowship Supper

4. Devotions - "Lift Up Your Eyes and Look"
John 4:35

5. Program

There are many ways a missions theme may be worked out in the conference program. Such means as a missionary speaker, a challenging missionary film, or individual reports about what various groups are doing in missionary education would be helpful. Any one of these suggestions may be used for this conference. After the program, more specific application to the message would come in the departmental meetings.

6. Departmental Meetings

Discussion: How can we present missions to our particular group of pupils?

Missionary display. Objects of interest from various countries, or the meeting may center upon a specific country.

7. Worship Theme: Missionaries at Home

This period of worship should point to the fact that every one of God's children is called to witness and asked to be faithful in tasks assigned to him. Close with the following poem:

O teach me Lord that I may teach
The precious things thou dost impart;
And wing my words, that they may reach
The hidden depths of many a heart.

K. The May Conference

1. Aims

- a. To encourage reading as a means of growing in the Christian life and especially in effectiveness as a worker in the educational program of the church.
- b. To help workers to become aware of particular books which would be helpful to them.
- c. To stimulate use of the Church Library, or to motivate workers toward the establishment of one.²

2. Theme: Reading with Purpose

3. Fellowship Supper

4. Devotions: A short review of part of a good devotional book.

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1. Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879.
2. It is assumed that the books would be in reference to Christian Education.

5. Program

If a church library is large enough to seat comfortably the workers present, it would add atmosphere to this meeting to hold it there. Books which are known to be of help should be on hand for the workers to browse through and time should be allotted for this. A mimeographed sheet of available books and magazines would be of great advantage. This list should also include a portion about the church library and the method of borrowing books. Specified articles in the magazines should also be indicated as they are relevant to the needs and interests of the group.

- a. A series of short book reviews discussed informally.
- b. Questions from the group. Informal discussion.
- c. One might bring up for discussion the question of making the reading of a certain number of books about Christian Education one of the requirements for all workers.¹

6. Departmental Meetings

- a. Quarterly Preview
- b. Apprentices and Prospects. A discussion about particular books which would be helpful for beginners in the process of learning to teach and lead. Books should be on hand and suggestions made for their use.

7. Worship. Theme: God's Book

Worship center should consist of an open Bible, or possibly a display of Bibles in other languages or translations. Music and worship thoughts should center in the Bible as the source

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- 1. The idea for this procedure is from a letter received from Miss Gladys Jackson, First Presbyterian Church, Spartanburg, South Carolina, October 8, 1956.

of inspiration and revelation of God. Use hymns such as:
Holy Bible, Book Divine; Standing on the Promises; Thy Word
is Like a Garden, Lord.

L. The June Conference

The June conference may well be planned as a purely social event for the purpose of bodily refreshment and a time of outdoor fellowship. A picnic away from the city, or a party in the home of one of the members of the conference might be very helpful and purposeful.¹ A devotional period should be included as part of the event.

M. The July Conference

Because it is usually difficult to secure attendance during the summer months, it may be impractical to try to plan a workers' conference for this month. The following conference was held in the First Presbyterian Church in Goldsboro, North Carolina.²

1. Aims

- a. To give practical help concerning a major source of difficulty in teaching and leading, the matter of discipline.
- b. To develop insights into the problem and motivate workers toward their own solutions.

2. Theme: Discipline--Its Meaning and Mode

3. Fellowship Supper

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1. Ante, pp. 9-13.
2. Crane, Solving Problems is Function of Workers' Conference, Presbyterian Action, April, 1957.

4. Devotions: Andrew, the Quiet Disciple
5. Program
 - a. Introductory remarks, "The Definition of Discipline"
 - b. Panel discussion on "Discipline"
 - (1) Principal of a high school
 - (2) Head of Protestant Kindergartens
 - (3) Specialist in kindergarten work, former D.C.E.
 - (4) Head of Community Boys' Club Work

The contribution of the panel of experienced community leaders was the outstanding element in the program. A great deal of discussion was stimulated and many of the teachers commented on the helpfulness and effectiveness of the meeting.¹

N. The August Conference

1. Aims
 - a. To review and evaluate the work of the past year with the view to improvement for the next.
 - b. To give opportunity for sharing ideas received from attendance at summer conferences and conventions.
2. Theme: Review and Preview
3. Fellowship Supper
4. Devotions: Forgetting the Past--Pressing Toward the Future
Philippians 2:13-14
5. Program
 - a. Reports from delegates to conferences and conventions.
 - b. Reports from observational visits to other churches and groups.

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1. Crane, loc. cit.

- c. Evaluation and summary of reports by the leader.

6. Departmental Meetings

- a. Quarterly preview
- b. Planning session for the fall program and rally day.
- c. Apprentices and Prospects sit in on the planning session.

7. Worship

Thank You Lord

The nature of this worship service is that of praise to the Lord for all He accomplished through the workers in the year just ending. Hymns such as Praise Him, Praise Him, O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing, and dedication hymns such as Take My Life and Let It Be would be appropriate. Material for this worship service may be found in Cynthia Pearl Maus' book, Christ and the Fine Arts.

O. Summary

The suggestions of this chapter have been made in the light of the principles and procedures mentioned in the second chapter of this study. It is realized that these conferences will of necessity be adapted to suit the needs and interests of each workers' conference, and that setting up a whole year of conferences negates the principle of naturalness. It has been suggested that these plans are only an illustration of the fact that one can meet a major proportion of the aims and objectives of any leadership education program in the local church through a well-planned workers' conference.

Many of the ideas for these programs have come from a study of prepared workers' conference programs from the Presbyterian Church U.S.

and Shaver's Workers' Conference Programs. The themes of the conferences are a result of a study made of lists of program suggestions of which a tally was made and the results of this study appear in the appendix. The procedures described in this chapter are a utilization of the suggestions made in chapter two and some methods are used several times in different ways.

The elements of fellowship, inspiration and information appear in each conference and are provided for in many different ways. The sharing of ideas and patterns, eating together at the fellowship supper and bringing suggestions to the group from visits made to other churches and to conferences will make their contributions toward the important part of the meeting, namely, fellowship. Through panels, demonstrations, lectures and the use of audio-visual methods, information has been given which will increase the quantity of teaching techniques and skills toward greater efficiency in the work of each individual, and, hence, the total program. The devotional period prior to the fellowship supper, which is largely a time of Bible study, will serve to inspire and motivate the workers because of the very nature of the Word of God, and because of the personal relationship of the worker to God and to His Word. The climax of each conference is a period of worship which will serve to inform, to inspire, to challenge, and to provide spiritual oneness and fellowship. It is hoped that these plans may be of practical value to those who realize the importance of a central meeting of all church leaders for the purpose of leadership training.

CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to develop a series of outlines for purposeful workers' conferences in order to illustrate how strategic this regularly scheduled meeting of all lay workers in the educational program can be in the development of effective and consecrated teachers and leaders. In view of the present location of Christian Education in the local church, and the responsibility of leadership in the educational program resting largely upon lay members, it has been shown how important the training of these workers is.

The sources used for this study have largely agreed that the workers' conference can be a most effective means of training the lay workers in their teaching and leadership responsibilities. In the survey made of various books and publications regarding the broad areas of training in the church, it was found that the aim of Christian Education in the church is to foster growth, to nurture people in the Christian life, and to develop a completely Christian philosophy of life. Furthermore, it was discovered that the community and the home share in the responsibility of the church in this growing process. These facts point to the supreme importance of leadership in the program of the local church. In a study of the teaching ministry of the church, it was concluded that two services are required--the preaching of the Word of God and the teaching of

the Bible. It is evident, then, that the quality of the educational program is contingent upon the training of the lay worker.

The types of training were found to be many and varied. This process begins in recruiting and continues through apprenticeship, enlistment and in-service instruction. Potential leaders are existent in every congregation and motivation for service must come through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. It was concluded that one's personal relationship with God is the supreme source of all motivation in the Christian service enterprise. Therefore, if persons are taught and led to Christian maturity, the result will be adequate quantities of workers which need to be trained, having already been motivated to serve. This calls for a definite program of training such as supervision, quarterly preview, workers' conferences, leadership education courses, workshops, community training functions, and conferences, conventions and institutes.

In the second chapter, the focus was upon the workers' conference specifically. It was found to be a gathering of all the educational leaders of the church for the purpose of instruction, inspiration and fellowship. It was concluded that because this type of meeting reaches the greatest proportion of workers at a regularly scheduled time, and because of the nature of such a conference being functional and purposeful, the workers' conference may well be the very core of the leadership education program of the local church. The inter-woven elements of fellowship, instruction and inspiration in each conference meet a great need in the spiritual life and training of every worker. The workers' conference serves as

a perpetual leadership training program because it continually instructs, it continually inspires, and it continually provides the social relationships which are recognized needs in all the teachers and leaders.

Such methods as buzz sessions, group discussions, symposiums, lectures, reports, role-playing and audio-visual techniques were found to provide variety, balance, and instruction in many different ways. These procedures proved to be helpful to apprentices and prospective teachers as well as those who were serving in the educational part of the church program.

The third chapter reveals how the application of these principles and procedures can work out in an effective and worthwhile program of leadership training in the local church.

The aims of each conference illustrate that each meeting is planned for a specific purpose and is, therefore, meaningful to those who attend because it is planned with practical objectives in mind. The topics chosen were on the basis of a survey made of all the lists of suggestions for subjects for workers' conference programs and a breakdown of these into ten general headings. The topics, therefore, come out of a sense of need, as illustrated in the many lists of suggestions. Eating together provides the greatest amount of social relationships and, therefore, begins the meeting on a genuinely free and happy basis. The Bible study serves to inspire and motivate the workers, as well as the worship service which has its view toward providing the workers with an outgoing expression to God, whereas the Bible study is ingoing. Both are important elements

in the conference and do not overlap in function. The program in its variety and opportunity for the workers to give, as well as receive, provides instruction and information which, in turn, serves to make the worker more skillful, more effective and more interesting.

It may be concluded, then, that the workers' conference, when planned carefully, prayerfully, and functionally, may be an extremely vital part of the total leadership education program of the church; in fact, the very heart of it. It is hoped that the material of these chapters may be used to help leaders perfect their training program in order to help others present the Gospel of Jesus Christ in such a proficient manner as to lead growing persons to total commitment to Him and toward a genuine Christian philosophy of life.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

A STANDARD FOR MEASURING WORKERS' CONFERENCES

I. OBJECTIVES (10)

Are the purposes of the conference definitely centered upon improvement of the educational program of the church? (5)

Are the objectives clearly stated? (2)

Are they made evident in the planning and conducting of the conference? (3)

Total for "Objectives"

II. PLANNING (10)

Is the conference planned by a responsible committee? (2)

Are the plans adapted to the interest and ability level of the workers? (2)

Are departmental and general needs both met by the plans? (2)

Are the plans made a sufficient time in advance? (2)

Are the plans given early and adequate announcements? (2)

Total for "planning"

III. SETTING (10)

Is the meeting held in comfortable and attractive surroundings? (4)

Are all equipment details cared for? (3)

Is a setting specially appropriate to the particular subject or purpose provided? (3)

Total for "Setting"

IV. ATTENDANCE (10)

Are all the workers in attendance? (10) (Compute on proportion of workers present)

V. LENGTH (10)

Two hours are suggested as standard. Compute time given to sociability and eating on a 50 per cent basis, for example, one hour supper or social period plus one hour work would count as one and one half hours. (10)

VI. LEADERSHIP (10)

Is a leader provided for the meeting? (2) _____
Does he carry out the purpose of the plans he
made? (2) _____
Does he guide the discussion well? (2) _____
Does he lead the conference from discussion to
action? (2) _____
Does he develop a spirit of fellowship and
inspiration? (2) _____
Total for "Leadership" _____

VII. RESOURCES (10)

Are resource persons provided for the conference?
(2) _____
Are they used to the fullest extent? (3) _____
Are the material resources provided? (2) _____
Are they used effectively? (3) _____
Total for "Resources" _____

VIII. CONTENT (10)

Is fellowship provided for? (2) _____
Are inspiration and encouragement given? (2) _____
Is helpful information given? (2) _____
Is work done (are improvement plans made)? (4) _____
Total for "Content" _____

IX. QUALITY (10)

Is the conference interesting? (2) _____
Is there good participation by the members? (2) _____
Is singleness of purpose evident? (2) _____
Is there an "esprit de corps"? (2) _____
Is there a spirit of loyalty and consecration
to the task? (2) _____
Total for "Quality" _____

X. OUTCOMES (10)

Are improvements in the educational program brought
about? (5) _____
Have the workers grown in consecration and skill? (5) _____
Total for "Outcomes" _____

Grand Total (for a single conference) _____

A SERIES OF CONFERENCES

To measure a series of conferences answer the foregoing questions
in terms of the general average of the entire series. Ten sessions

of the conference are suggested as standard for a year's program. Compute the score for the series by multiplying the "Grand Total" above by the proportion of ten sessions held.¹

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1. Copied from Shaver, op. cit., pp. 60-62.

APPENDIX B

COMPILED LIST OF TOPICS FOR WORKERS' CONFERENCE PROGRAMS

Department of Leadership Education, Presbyterian Building, Richmond,
Virginia

1. What Am I Trying To Accomplish in My Teaching?
2. Why Do Our Pupils Act as They Do?
How Can We Better Understand Them?
3. Signs of Success in Teaching
4. The Good News We Teach
5. The Way Ahead
6. The Purpose of Worship in the Church School
7. Overcoming Hindrances to Worship in the Church School
8. Making Worship Real to Children, Young People, and Adults
(planned programs)

Department of Leadership Education, Division of Christian Education,
Board of Home Missions. Boston, Massachusetts

1. If I Were a Teacher
2. Enlisting and Helping New Teachers
3. Ways to Prepare for Better Leadership
4. The Rewards of Being a Teacher
5. So You Want Inspired Teachers
(planned programs)

Congregational Education Society, Department of Leadership Training,
Boston, Massachusetts (Series B)

1. Re-Dedicating our Teaching Talents
2. Educational Evangelism
3. Jesus the World's Teacher
4. Handwork: Its Use and Abuse
5. Teaching Pupils to Think
6. The Christian Social Order
7. Reading with a Purpose
8. Our Pupils
9. Co-Laboring with Parents
10. Creative Teaching

(Series A)

1. Taking Stock of our Teaching
2. Our Supreme Aim
3. Setting Forth the Truth
4. A Good Discussion
5. Encouraging Pupils to Study
6. Teaching Through Play

7. Enriching the Lesson
8. How to Use the Bible
9. Teaching Through Service
10. Teaching by Projects
11. Preparing the Lesson
12. Teaching Through Worship
(planned programs)

Lists

Burke, The Workers' Conference, p. 28.
The Use of the Bible in Teaching
Preparing the Lesson
What Shall We Teach
How Can Worship be Made Real
What is Good Equipment?
Home and School Working Together
Knowing Pupils Better
Ways of Promoting Attendance
Encouraging Promptness
Behavior Problems
How Persons Learn
Teaching as Jesus Taught
Using Audio-Visuals
Purposeful Activities
The Place of Memory Work
Teaching Through Service
Evangelism in the Church School
Observing Special Days
What Shall we Read?
Standards of Work
Our Year's Achievements
What Are our Needs?

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APPENDIX C


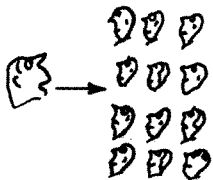

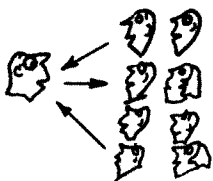
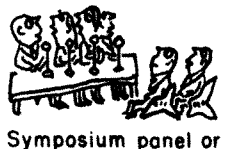
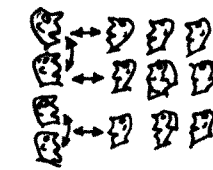

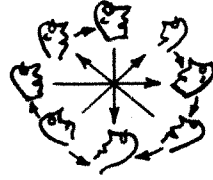

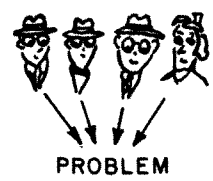

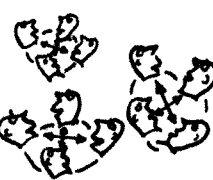

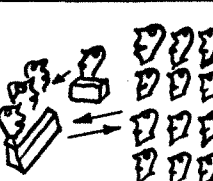
INTEREST LOCATOR FOR SELECTING SUBJECTS
FOR WORKERS' CONFERENCE PROGRAMS¹

- ☐ Worship in the Sunday School
- ☐ Stewardship in the Sunday School
- ☐ Evangelism in the Sunday School
- ☐ The Home and Church Working Together
- ☐ How Do People Learn?
- ☐ What Are We Trying to Do?
- ☐ The Story Behind our Materials
- ☐ The Place of Music in Christian Nurture
- ☐ The Room Teaches Too
- ☐ The Use of Dramatics in Teaching
- ☐ Memorization
- ☐ Books to Help a Teacher
- ☐ Use of Audio-Visuals (maps, charts, displays, etc.)
- ☐ A Teacher Needs to Grow Too

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1. Used by Westminster Presbyterian Church, Richmond, Virginia.

CHECKLIST OF PROGRAM METHODS¹

METHOD	CHIEF CHARACTERISTIC	PATTERN OF PARTICIPATION	SPECIAL USEFULNESS	LIMITATIONS
 Lecture, film, reading, recitals, etc.	Information-giving.		Systematic presentation of knowledge.	Little opportunity for audience to participate.
 Forum	Information giving followed by questions for clarification.		Audience can obtain the specific information it wants on particular aspects of the subject.	Formality; lack of freedom to interchange ideas.
 Symposium panel or debate.	Presentation of different points of view.		Different points of view spotlight issues, angles, approaches; stimulate analysis.	Can get off the beam; personality of speakers may overshadow content; vocal speaker or questioner can monopolize program.
 Discussion	High degree of group participation.		Pooling of ideas, experience, and knowledge; arriving at group decisions.	Practical with only a limited number of people.
 Project, field trip, exhibits, etc.	Investigation of a problem cooperatively.		Gives first-hand experience.	Requires extra time and energy for planning.
 "Buzz groups"	100% participation by large audiences through small clusters of participants.		Makes individual discussion, pooling of ideas, possible in large groups. Develops leadership skill in members.	Contributions are not likely to be very deep or well organized.
 	Spontaneous giving of opinions and facts by experts in response to questions.		Brings knowledge from a number of sources to bear on one problem.	Becomes disorganized without careful planning of material to be covered.

1. Little, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

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