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AN ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF SELECTED  
MATERIALS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

By

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## INTRODUCTION

AN ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF SELECTED  
MATERIALS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION

A. The Statement of the Problem

"Family worship has declined until, at least in the United States, the percentage of families practicing daily worship in the home is so small as to be negligible."<sup>1</sup> This was the lament of Henry C. Cope, General Secretary of the Religious Education Association in 1915. Fourteen years later a professor of Religious Education noted a move toward solving this predicament. He stated, hopefully:

The custom of family devotions, on a simpler scale than in the past, is decidedly on the increase. Many churches have thought it such an important matter as to conduct special campaigns to enlist families who would agree to re-establish the custom.<sup>2</sup>

In our day the problem is yet quite keen. The ray of light in the situation is the increasing awareness of the churches as to their responsibility, evidenced in a number of ways. Mrs. George Brown, the Director of Christian Family Life in the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church U. S. A., said in an address sponsored by the Inter-

. . . . .

1. Cope, Henry F.: Religious Education in the Family, p.126.
2. Fiske, George W.: The Christian Family, p. 95.

national Council of Religious Education, "We as church leaders need to get across to this generation of parents this matter of the teaching of religion moment by moment and hour by hour in the home."<sup>1</sup> Later, she gathered together a group of twelve parents in a training institute. The results of the institute appeared in a book, with, among others, the conclusion that some parents of today have an aversion to the mere mention of family worship because they have childhood memories of uninteresting periods of long Bible-reading and prayer.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Walter Maier, in his recent survey, concluded that many young people hesitate to establish their family altar because they regard practically all religious exercises as beyond their scope and ability.<sup>3</sup>

It would seem that the great majority of families in our generation have not tried set periods of worship, and for many, as Miss Lowd points out in her thesis, it would seem so forced and unnatural that it would take help from the church over a long period of time.<sup>4</sup> Though the church cannot force anything on them, especially in the realm of worship, it has been preparing a number of suggestive helps

. . . . .

1. Brown, Mrs. George: International Council of Religious Education Report, 1950.
2. Brown, George William and Ruth McAfee: Teaching Religion in the Home, p.42.
3. Maier, Walter A.: For Better Not For Worse, p. 543.
4. Lowd, Hilda Marion: The Church and Christian Family Education, Thesis, Union Theological Seminary.

for family use, providing ample resources for worship so that the fire will not die because of lack of wood.

In view of the potentiality of enlarged resources in material and method to make family worship more interesting and constructive, the purpose of this study is to examine and compare a group of representative devotional materials made available by various denominations, in order to discover their specific contribution to worship in the home. As Lentz has so aptly expressed it:

The home has not very many responsibilities left, but those which it retains are among the most important on earth. To help families in living up to these responsibilities is a never ending challenge to the Christian Church.<sup>1</sup>

How the Church is meeting that challenge is the interest of this study.

## B. The Significance of the Problem

The church regards Christian parents as the largest and most significant teaching force in Christian Education. Christian homes are the elementary schools of Christian faith and living. The church feels that its role is to supplement and assist the home in the Christian nurture of growing persons. To quote:

By placing families within the fellowship of Christ's

. . . . .

1. Lentz, Richard E.: "The Church's Opportunity in Family Education," *International Journal of Religious Education*, October, 1950.

church, God has made the church responsible for interpreting to parents the spiritual nature of their task and for assisting them to succeed in doing it well.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the International Council of Religious Education summed up the church's task and its significance. Further, Wood states that the crucial place of parents in the training of children suggests the need of parent-education and parental growth. He reasons that children are influenced most by those whom they most love.<sup>2</sup> Hence the church has increasingly realized the unique importance of the home. Wood reminds us that a prayer or a hymn in childhood may open the way to life's decisions in adolescence.<sup>3</sup>

The importance of worship cannot be emphasized too strongly in these chaotic days of our generation. As Frederick W. Brink declares in his guide for those contemplating marriage, "Both formal and informal worship experiences help to bring God truly into a home . . . Family worship helps to bring God's influence to bear on the problems of life."<sup>4</sup> Hence it is also clear that worship is at the heart of Christian experience, and that the development of a definite, conscious religion in the life of the family is all important. In light of these facts, is it

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1. Education of Christian Parents, National Conference at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, 1950, p. 7.
2. Wood, Leland Foster: Building Spiritual Foundations in the Family, pp. 11, 12.
3. Ibid.
4. Brink, Frederick W.: This Man and This Woman, p. 61.

any wonder that the revival of family worship and the preparation of new special materials for it have been acclaimed as one of the exciting phenomena in modern Protestantism.<sup>1</sup>

Church leaders have not been alone in realizing the significance of this problem. J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, has been quoted as saying:

The continuing flood of immorality and crime accompanies an all too evident substitution of a secular, materialistic philosophy for the historic reliance upon divine guidance which has been a cornerstone of our American Democracy. The youth who has experienced old fashioned Christian training and discipline in the home and has received sound, efficient Bible teaching in Sunday School has been given a sword and buckler against temptation. Parents must create in the home an atmosphere of Christian living and reliance upon divine guidance. This may well be accomplished by a revival of family Bible reading and prayer.<sup>2</sup>

### C. The Delimitation of the Problem

The numerous books which seek to help families in building spiritual foundations in the home make it very clear that there is an experience of God in and through the every-day activities and relationship of the family, for God is not limited to special times, places or methods. It is natural, however, to express the deeper attitudes of

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1. Hayward, Percy R. and Hayward, Myrtle H.: The Bible in Family Worship, in *Hearthstone*, October, 1949.
2. *Sword of the Lord*, September 7, 1951.

the family in periods of common worship and fellowship with God.<sup>1</sup> This study will concern itself with just such set periods as related to materials provided by three major denominations.

So often, as Wood points out, family worship is simply adult worship with children compelled to attend.<sup>2</sup> However, this study will keep in mind the possibilities of every period of worship to bring the family into unity at an ideal level, by considering the needs of each member of the family. The observances that are commonly known as the simple forms which worship takes in the family fall into the following categories:

1. Grace offered at meals.
2. Prayers of children on retiring and occasionally on rising.
3. Daily gathering of the family for an "act of the Spirit."

This study is limited for the most part to the third form, which, though sometimes called formal worship, is not necessarily formal, save as the gathering occurs at definite, determined times and places. There are a great number of children's Bible story books available which enrich the life of the Christian home; however the material here an-

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1. Wood, op. cit., p. 43.
2. Ibid., p. 44.



alyzed will of necessity be limited to devotional guides, published by three major denominations and one state Council of Churches. The devotional materials are prepared for both family and individual use. They will be considered in relation to the former. Christian magazines are also current publications provided by the Church for the home. Several of these have been chosen for analysis in that they are a means of information and guidance to those who initiate and sustain worship in the home.

#### D. Method of Procedure

In order to analyse a varied group of devotional materials, it will be necessary first to set up criteria for evaluation. The first chapter will be devoted to the items which seem essential to a full worship experience that meets the varying need of members in the homes. The second chapter will deal with the material itself, analysing it over a period of time according to the set criteria. The third chapter will evaluate the material analysed and compare the various publications, seeking to discover the contribution of each to family worship. In conclusion, the findings of this study will be briefly summarized.

CHAPTER I  
CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF SELECTED MATERIALS  
FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

CHAPTER I  
CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF SELECTED MATERIALS  
FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

A. Introduction

If selected devotional guides provided by representative denominations for family worship are to be thoroughly analysed and evaluated in the light of their specific contribution, it will be necessary first to discover the difficulties that must be surmounted in successfully carrying out a devotional program, the methods that can be utilized to make it most effective, the content that is essential for the rich spiritual growth of the family, and though less important, yet a factor in creating the best worship experience possible, the outer mechanics of a publication such as attractiveness, organization, and cost.

As Wood points out:

Real family worship needs a program . . . Its form and program may be as varied as the experiences and needs of different families and different individuals, but each family should work out with care the program best suited to its opportunities and needs.<sup>1</sup>

It will be the purpose of this chapter to set up criteria which grow out of known needs that are common

. . . . .

1. Wood, Leland Foster: Building Spiritual Foundations in the Family, p. 44.

in family worship and tried practices that have proved valuable and essential.

## B. The Factor of Time

### 1. Problems Involved

Irma Highbaugh in her Source Book on Home and Family Life states simply: "Time for family worship is essential".<sup>1</sup> If family worship is to be a meaningful group experience, it is imperative that the family take adequate time. Family worship should never be hurried or marred by a sense of time pressure.<sup>2</sup>

Yet on this very point most families break down and give way rather to the rush of life which dominates this era. "Finding time for family worship is a part of the larger question of finding time for family living".<sup>3</sup> This is a critical need in a modern world; even the Church is guilty of increasingly chopping the family into pieces and consuming the pieces outside of the home. Perhaps even more at the heart of the problem is the fact that only as parents see the values of family worship will they make time for definite, conscious religion in the life of the

. . . . .

1. Highbaugh, Irma: Source Book on Home and Family Life, p. 80.
2. Short, Bishop Roy H.: The Family at Worship - Four Simple Rules.
3. Highbaugh: op. cit., p. 78.

family. As Cope points out, "We tend to set the making of a living before the making of lives!" We can always afford to do that which is most worthwhile doing; surely the character of one's children, the gain the family makes in the eternal values of the spirit, such as love, joy, truth and goodness, is the gain most worthwhile. When these are the dominating purposes of family life other considerations, such as the pressure of business, the desire for gain, for ease, for pleasure, for social life, will fall into the category of lesser values.<sup>1</sup>

Once the eternal values are considered all-important, each family will have to determine the times most suited to a quiet fellowship in their particular family situation. Dr. Walter A. Maier aptly describes a typical American scene as a daily morning scramble preceding the hurried exit from the home, which hardly leaves room for organized family worship.<sup>2</sup> It may be that the evening meal is more leisurely. But the problem will first of all be settled only by setting a definite time and holding to it rigidly, giving it priority over all else. It should be a time when all members can be present, for one of the very aims of worship in the home is to bring the family into unity

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1. Cope, Henry F.: Religious Education in the Family, pp. 131, 132.
2. Maier, Walter A.: For Better Not For Worse, p. 539.

at an ideal level.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Problems Solved

It is clear then that the family must determine the best time to be together with the least probability of interruption, and allow nothing to interfere. In the matter of regularity a devotional guide can be a great help in forming the habit of family worship, in that it assists day after day in family worship until it is a natural and normal experience to worship together. Maier advises that the books with devotional material for every day in the year are usually more valuable than those containing only prayers for the seven days of the week.<sup>2</sup>

Cope suggests another essential principle to follow: "Insure brevity. For that part of worship in which all are expected regularly to unite, ten minutes should be ample."<sup>3</sup> A devotional guide should take this principle into account in its arrangement. It should also be noted that the use of a devotional guide, to be most effective, requires careful study and preparation beforehand on the part of the one who is to lead in family worship.

Sunday mornings are ordinarily more leisurely, hence provide more time and opportunity to prepare the members

. . . . .

1. Ante, p. vii.
2. Maier: op. cit., p. 544
3. Cope: op. cit., p. 138.

of the home for the congregational worship of God at church, through the family period.

### C. Methods Utilized

#### 1. A Progressive Experience

A vital test of the adequacy of devotional material in the home is the extent to which it realizes the importance and needs of the individual members of the home. Wood's idea is one that should be carefully carried out for the best results:

Family worship should be a progressing experience, graded to the successive developments, showing flexibility in its worship program, from honeymoon days on through the days when the first babies come and the children grow up into high school and college young people, and into old age.<sup>1</sup>

Here again worship in the home can be seen to take varying forms through the years, and some of these possibilities will now be discussed.

##### a. Early Married Life

Maier expressed the earnest plea of the Christian Church that the Christian husband and wife, especially in newly established homes, experience the companionship of Him who must be the Third in every essentially happy union.<sup>2</sup> Time for Christ in the formative years of a

. . . . .

1. Wood: op. cit., p. 46.
2. Maier: op. cit., p. 541.

Christian home can mean a unique opportunity to read Scripture together without having to adapt the passages chosen to listeners of more tender years. Wood suggests to young couples a program of familiarizing themselves with the great prophetic writings, the Psalms, the gospels and epistles, the story of the early church told in Acts, and other noble portions of Scripture. The purpose for such a plan is that there be "an intellectual advancement in religious ideas during this period, as well as reverence and humbling of heart together before God."<sup>1</sup> Devotional booklets should contribute toward this desired end. They should provide thoughts that will elevate and enable the relations between husband and wife. They will in turn tend to give the newlywed's home stability and a sense of high fellowship.

The act of a home dedication service including a fitting scripture passage, hymn, and consecration prayer, places an emphasis on the sacredness of the home and on the distinctness of the new family.<sup>2</sup> There are a number of devotional services available for newlyweds, celebrating special moments in their experience - the bridal

. . . . .

1. Wood: op. cit., p. 47.
2. Wood, Leland Foster: Harmony in Marriage, p. 104.



chamber, the first day, the first Sunday, the home, etc.<sup>1</sup>  
Not only young married couples comprise this group with their unique opportunities in worship, for there are many "families" all of whose members are adult. Their needs will require a certain type of devotional help.

b. Early Parenthood, (Babyhood)

With the coming of children into the home come new joys and responsibilities. At such a time, when training is needed of a religious nature, parents reach out to evaluate and improve their own spiritual resources and religious habits.<sup>2</sup> The Church believes that God expects children to learn of Him through their parents. But it is evident that there cannot be true worship in the family that is irreligious in its essential qualities, in its character, in its ideals and atmosphere. Wood points out that "A spiritual atmosphere is the product of Christlike living on the part of parents and in due time of the younger members in the family."<sup>3</sup> The value of a spiritual atmosphere can not be overestimated. Recent studies have shown that it is in the first five years of life that the

. . . . .

1. One of these is entitled, "When You're Married" by William Ward, 1951, and contains scripture, a thought and a prayer for the first fifteen days, often quoting from various marriage services.
2. Brink, Frederick W.: This Man and This Woman, p. 58.
3. Wood, Leland Foster: Building Spiritual Foundations in the Family, p. 9.

child receives his life pattern; furthermore, the child is capable of religious feeling before he is capable of religious thought.<sup>1</sup> Because of this Fiske advises a minimum of instruction with younger children. He feels that the emphasis is rightly on training in worship, rather than mere instruction - not that religious instruction has no important place, but with young children it must be very simple.<sup>2</sup>

Most authors advocate starting to introduce home worship in the most simple and natural way by grace at the table, either spoken or sung. Even a baby in a high chair senses the attitude and reverence of the family in prayer.<sup>3</sup> It is clear that sincerity must be the foundation of all planned worship since it is "caught" by children before the spoken word is fully understood.

The power of unconscious influence is also exerted in the bedtime hour:

Many a mother has learned later that in the quiet hour before her child went to sleep at night, when she sang or quoted poetry, or made a simple prayer, or talked naturally of the meaning of life, and God, she was doing her most effective teaching.<sup>4</sup>

As can be clearly seen, this lays a heavy task on parents. It lies with them, not only to deliver God's

. . . . .

1. Mumford, E. E. Read: How We Can Help Children to Pray, p. 14.
2. Fiske, George W.: The Christian Family, p. 96.
3. Wood: op. cit., p. 47.
4. Hayward, op. cit., p. 20.

message to the child but to shape their lives in such a way that they (the parents) reveal His very presence.<sup>1</sup>

It is the opinion of Brown that there is a grave danger in urging family worship on many parents who cannot be sincere in leading it. It is essential that they first come to believe, and to experience vitality in prayer themselves. She feels no finer contribution can be made in educating parents toward family worship than graded books for various ages on daily devotional material.

### C. Preschool Children

"With wisdom more can be done for the child religiously between three and five than in any other period of his growth except the first three years."<sup>2</sup> The principle that "the law of habit finds virgin soil in the life of a growing child" means that these habits may easily affect their life-long devotional life and experience. The warmth and reverent mood will do much for this age as well as younger to make up for concepts used that are not understood. But parents should be alert to the openings of the mind at each stage of childhood, for:

Momentous for character and personality are the preschool years. Parents can make these years very

. . . . .

1. Mumford: op. cit., p. 14.
2. Folsom, John D.: Religious Education in the Home, Easton and Mains, New York, p. 165.

fruitful by building spiritual foundations for everyday living, and by giving the child a store of sacred memories which he may take with him through life.

At this age children begin to have a fascination for Bible stories. This interest grows with repetition. According to some, the child should at this time be taught a table blessing and an evening prayer. Others feel, however, that spontaneous, original prayers should be encouraged from the beginning. In addition to the prayer, which should be simple, brief, and conversational on the part of the parents, a table blessing can be sung as a means of help and delight to the preschool child.

d. The Growing Family

After a few years the average family expands until it can claim as members a little preschool child, a child or two in the grades, and possibly a teen-ager or college student. This poses serious problems to the home that would reach each child satisfactorily on his own level at the worship hour. Well chosen Bible story-books will be an aid. Whatever else is used should be related to shared interests and experiences of the whole family. Many families use "Thoughts of God for Boys and Girls"<sup>2</sup> together

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1. Wood: op. cit., p. 10.
2. Post, p. 60.

at this period in a family's life. The Browns suggest that as the children mature a monthly or quarterly publication such as many denominations now publish will be found helpful.<sup>1</sup> A number of these devotional guides will be analysed in Chapter II.

e. Maturity and Old Age

When the family is scattered there will be opportunity to start fresh new Bible study, an increased interest in missions, and an eager interest in the denominational material.

2. Flexibility of Program

Since the home is made up of persons of both sexes and of varied ages, abilities and interests, the worship program will need to be flexible if the parents are to keep it vital and interesting to the children as they grow up.

a. Participation

Cope strongly advises:

Plan for the largest possible amount of common participation. This is to be the expression of the unity of the family life. Children enjoy doing things cooperatively and in concert.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Brown, George William and Brown, Ruth McAfee: Teaching Religion in the Home, p. 42.
2. Cope: op. cit., p. 138.

It has been suggested earlier that the young children can participate in the prayer. Children who are old enough can read the Bible passage and devotional suggestions on certain occasions at least. Sherrill feels that participation is one of the most significant ways by which children learn, for they have a natural desire to do what the adult does if the activity is taken seriously by the adults.<sup>1</sup> Certainly participation is necessary if worship is to function for each individual.

b. Methods of Procedure Varied

Not only should prayer be offered by various members of the family but at times members of the family should be asked to offer prayers of their own in addition to the suggested prayer of the devotional guide. It is the opinion of a good number of leaders that a vital Christian life is best fostered and sustained by informal procedures. Religion as shared in the family should be a natural thing to talk about. Possibly an incident from the daily paper will suggest an appropriate scripture out of which grows a discussion ending with scripture and prayer. "Much is gained by any natural and unstilted discussion of what is being read."<sup>2</sup> These moments may be some of the highest

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1. Sherrill, Lewis Joseph: Family and Church, p. 146.
2. Sherrill, Lewis Joseph: The Opening Doors of Childhood, p. 125.

because each member has had an equal share, and seen the relevance of God to all of life rather than observed merely an external custom.

### 3. Special Celebrations

#### a. Holidays

The church is powerless to recapture the true significance of holidays unless the parents celebrate them. There is an easing of schedule in the home on these occasions and a sense of awe that can bring unhurried fellowship together. Askew exclaims:

Certainly family worship provides the ideal time and place to impress upon the memory those great portions of the Bible which belong to the special seasons of our Christian faith.<sup>1</sup>

Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving provide opportunity to leave a lasting impression of the days' deeper meanings to all the family.

#### b. Birthdays

Birthday and Wedding anniversaries provide one of the best opportunities to develop family unity and loyalty. Here, as in all these special times, prayer can uniquely gather up loving personal thoughts and feelings.

#### c. Family Achievements

Another means of making God more truly a part of the

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1. Askew, Mrs. S. H.: Your Home Today and Tomorrow, p. 60.

family is to recognise in some way progress, achievements, promotion, going away to school, the arrival of a new baby from the hospital with mother, the visit of an absent member of the family, the joining of the church by a child, death, illness, or any threat to the family's solidarity or happiness.<sup>1</sup>

d. Welcoming Guests

Maier has said, "Family prayers will exert a blessed influence on friends who visit our homes or on guests who are sheltered within our walls".<sup>2</sup>

D. Content

1. Biblical Material

a. Its Place in the Home

"The Bible is pre-eminently the book of the home," states Robert A. Lapsley, Jr., in his book, Beside the Hearthstone." "It was meant to be the foundation of the hearthstone," he continues.<sup>3</sup> It is often the case that parents delegate all Bible teaching of their child to the Sunday School which in turn seldom has more than thirty minutes a week.

b. Its Place in Worship

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1. International Council of Religious Education, 1950.
2. Maier; op. cit., p. 588.
3. Lapsley, Robert A.: Beside the Hearthstone, p. 122.



Not only has the Bible an important place in the home, on the family bookshelf. Let us discover its importance in family worship. Mary Ellen Chase says:

The ideal way to read the Bible remains, at least in the beginning of one's acquaintance with it, the good old way of reading it aloud in the family circle, not as a required exercise, but rather as a daily, or at least weekly, custom that holds within itself interests, excitement, and beauty for all concerned.<sup>1</sup>

Werner observed in 1943 an increasing interest among the Christian family in the Bible as indispensable for the inner life as are three regular meals a day for the body.

She says:

In family worship it plays an important part, for even though a devotional guide . . . is used, this is not regarded as a substitute for the Word itself. Passages basic to the meditation for the day are found and read aloud from the Bible."<sup>2</sup>

She refers also to the pamphlet How to Conduct Family Worship at The Table?

### c. Difficulties Involved

There are however, a number of difficulties to be surmounted in the use of the Bible in the home. Perhaps because of the importance of the parent the first would be parental ignorance of the Bible and especially of its beau-

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1. Chase, Mary Ellen: Early Reading of the Bible, National Parent Teacher, May, 1935.
2. Werner, Emily: "The Christian Family", The Lutheran Women's Work, April 4, 1944.
3. A pamphlet by Guy, Oliver, and Ira Black, it is published by The Upper Room, Nashville, Tennessee, 1942, and contains a helpful list of Bible readings.
4. Cope, op. cit., p. 120.

ties for the young.<sup>1</sup> A feeling of unnaturalness in the special reading of this book can do much to hinder the spirit of it. The answer to such a problem should be for parents to use the Bible themselves and use it naturally, and often, just for pleasure, rather than occasionally as a task book only. Its use then, in worship, should also be as natural as any of the social pleasures of the family.<sup>2</sup>

A number of writers decry the dangers of reading long portions. "Too prolonged periods will subtract from that delight in family worship which should be at its very core, especially for the younger members."<sup>3</sup> If a short passage is used it is more suitable for memorizing and could be repeated in concert as a means of variation and benefit. Far more can be gained by taking short enough passages for the children to respond to a few great ideas at one time, than can be gained by surfeiting them in a desire to get the reading done faster.

#### d. Choice of Suitable Passages

Since the daily worship period offers one of the best means of weaving the truth of this Book into the warp and woof of life, there is a need for careful planning as to its use. Familiarity with the Bible can begin very early

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1. Cope: op. cit., p. 120.
2. Ibid., pp. 121, 122.
3. Askew: op. cit., p. 59.

in a child's life. Stories can be used long before the reading of the actual text itself can be understood. Many families use simplified Bible story-books. In this regard the Browns warn that "Extreme care should be used in choosing books about the Bible."<sup>1</sup> Other parents use either simplified versions or read directly from the Bible itself. But even here choices must be made, and passages selected that incite worship. It will often be wise to preface the reading with a brief account of its original circumstances, so that all may hear the words as the actual utterances of a real man living in real life.<sup>2</sup>

As was suggested earlier, ordinarily one will begin with stories for the very young children, stories of other Bible children in particular. Preschool children have a wider range of interests. Sherrill suggests that the simple Psalms can be readily understandable by children before they go to school and that the beautiful imagery makes a rich background for the language of devotion. The Proverbs can be read slowly, skipping about with an eye to the children's experience. He points out that "this can furnish the setting for many a 'homey' conversation about the results of this or that type of conduct."<sup>3</sup> Certainly, in a growing family, the Bible should be used as a book of

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1. Brown: op. cit., p. 36.
2. Cope: op. cit., p. 123.
3. Sherrill: The Family and Church, p. 143.

life, for it contains countless pictures of actual lives meeting real temptations. Doctrinal portions should in time provide the occasion for earnest discussions on the part of older members. Askew raised the question of reading the whole Bible in regular, consecutive order at family prayers. Her conclusion was that such continuity would be rewarding to mature minds but certainly not to children or young people in the groups.<sup>1</sup> Chapters in Isaiah and the Gospels are recommended and even the books of Mark and Acts read consecutively might possibly stimulate a child's reverence in worship. During special seasons an opportunity is provided to impress certain great, and fitting portions on the child's mind and heart. Also certain Psalms can be used at times of departure on a journey.

e. Goals Determined

In planning the best use of Biblical material the delicate distinction arises as to whether the goal in audible worship should be instruction or enjoyment. Though every thoughtful use of the Bible increases knowledge and understanding, Askew urges, "Keep that goal secondary in worship. Seek the pure joy of conscious communion with the Heavenly Father over His Word, in open prayer, in silent meditation."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Askew; op. cit., p. 61.
2. Askew: loc. cit.

It is well to keep in mind the fact that the Bible primarily is a means of developing and directing lives. An effort should be made to relate the Bible to the happenings of everyday life. Highbaugh points up another phase of this same truth:

Unless family worship helps to solve family and community problems it fails to function toward building the new world imperative to a lasting peace. Family worship can be the place where all members of a Christian family naturally bring their problems for solution.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Extra-Biblical Material

The possibilities of extra-Biblical sources will merely be mentioned here, the use of which will later be observed in the various devotional guides. Hymns and music of a family are part of the treasury of devotion. An apt passage or poem from general literature may be introduced, that will stir the mood of wonder and worship. Pictures can help make a Bible verse or passage more meaningful, if a child is guided to discover what it portrays. The only way to make youth realize that human life is capable of great ideals is to make them aware of the aspirations and ideals of as many people as possible. This can often be accomplished by means of a story.

## 3. Elements of Faith and Belief

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1. Highbaugh; op. cit., p. 80.

As has been inferred, at least, getting the most out of family worship "presupposes a home in which religion is encouraged by parents who themselves hold sincerely to religious beliefs."<sup>1</sup> The question may rise as to what religious beliefs are basic and why parents must have religious beliefs. The Browns mention first of all that what parents believe determines their answers to their children's religious questions, about prayer, about the Bible, about the character of God.<sup>2</sup> But the parent also unconsciously teaches what his ideas of God are when he prays, and what he believes regarding the nature of prayer. The Browns list the following subjects as basic religious beliefs "without which a vigorous religion cannot flourish": God; Jesus Christ; the Holy Spirit; the problem of good and evil in human nature; the Bible; prayer; the church; the life everlasting.<sup>3</sup>

Another aspect of this problem is brought out by the Haywards who consider it inevitable that there be a gradual perception of God as a Spirit rather than merely a glorified man. As the child grows older early explanations can be enlarged and enriched on the basis of the wider knowledge that has come to him, rather than giving

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1. Brown: op. cit., p. 15.
2. Ibid., p. 16.
3. Brown: op. cit., p. 22.

children a theological interpretation that is beyond their capacity to understand. With children under ten years of age they advocate presenting God as a loving Father, primarily.<sup>1</sup>

The adolescent is dependent upon the type of worship with which he was familiar in childhood, but at the same time stretches out eagerly to new forms and ideas as he thinks through his own religious experience. The Haywards state that:

From seventeen years on the more intellectual and philosophical basis of Christianity may be dealt with as an addition to, but not as a substitute for, the more personal elements that have previously entered into the religious experience of the growing child.<sup>2</sup>

#### 4. Prayer

##### a. Dangers to Avoid

It has been seen that the content of prayers will be guided by the faith and belief of the parents. The importance of prayer cannot be underestimated for "Prayer brings God right into the family," but there are dangers to avoid. In no belief or practice is there so much misunderstanding or unwise teaching as in prayer. It is the responsibility of parents to teach their children to avoid the selfishness of asking God to give them what they want,

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1. Hayward and Hayward: op. cit., pp. 126-128.
2. Ibid., p. 128.

and guide them into offering prayers that breathe the right spirit.<sup>1</sup>

b. Aspects of Prayer

Instruction should be given in the important aspects of prayer such as thanksgiving, confession, prayer for pardon, adoration and intercession. Most modern parents are giving their attention to prayers of gratitude. Sherrill reminds us that "there are times when a family cannot worship together until the tense air has been cleared and cleansed."<sup>2</sup> Here repentance has a vastly important part in guiding children from cheap excuses, alibis, self righteousness, blaming others, resentful attitude, to seeing the others' part as clearly as his own, and with help, honestly feeling sorry. Wieman feels that at the very heart and purpose of family ritual is not understanding of prayer or instruction about God, but "a patterned recognition of commitment to God." This commitment is not made through one great and final act but rather through progressive experience.<sup>3</sup>

c. Objectives of Prayer

Though the first objective in prayer is to seek a consciousness of God's very presence in the home, family prayer

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1. Brown: loc. cit.
2. Sherrill: The Opening Doors of Childhood, p. 126.
3. Wieman, Mrs. P. W.: The Family Lives Its Religion, p. 215.



should not be limited to themselves alone, for their very relations to others make them a part of their day's living. Petition for the children's teachers, business associates and national leaders as well as the minister and church bodies will greatly enlarge the family prayer experience.<sup>1</sup>

The use of printed prayers is an excellent way to help children grow in their understanding of what prayer is, and of the tremendous scope prayer has. The fact that some of these prayers 'find' the children where they are has been proven.<sup>2</sup>

#### 5. Relevance to Life

Prayer, Christian fellowship and commitment in the home develop moral stamina in all members of the family so that belief may be expressed in action. The content of worship material should aid in Christian adjustments within the home. Maier says:

The family altar, pointing to the complete self-denial and self-sacrifice of Christ, will help to stifle selfishness in us and promote forbearance, generosity, courtesy.<sup>3</sup>

Relations between parents and children should be elevated.<sup>4</sup>  
A certain stability and direction to family living is gained as the family finds through shared faith common

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1. Askew: op. cit., p. 58.
2. Darry, Mrs. Vera Campbell: Children's Prayers, p. 19.
3. Maier: op. cit., p. 537.
4. Maier: loc. cit.

activities and interests which draw them closer together. The family in turn moves forward together in worthy endeavors.

Another result that should be obtained from worship material is the strengthening of the family to withstand bravely the adversities of life, for it should contribute to founding homes on that Rock against which all trials and tempests will beat in vain. Religion in the home sharpens and strengthens Christian conscience. If a curriculum can make families discuss Christian principles, great results will follow. Christian attitudes should be built toward other races.

Religion in the home must be kept useful, relevant to all of life; as soon as it becomes an ornament, a decoration or an heirloom, it is dead.

#### 6. Coordination With Overall Church Program

The content for family worship should include an interpretation of the work of the Church and assist in strengthening the influence of the Church in each life. It should broaden the knowledge of the family and give them a part in the work of Church agencies throughout the World, by stimulating their prayer and financial interest.

#### E. Mechanics

##### 1. Attractiveness

In order to be all inclusive on the impressions and help that a devotional guide offers, a few items of mechanics should be considered briefly. Children and adults alike are drawn to an attractive aid more than an unattractive one.

## 2. Organization

The degree of helpfulness will also depend largely on how a publication is organized and back of that, what its purposes are and how they are attained.

## 3. Cost

A great essential for Church leaders is to understand, in their efforts, the various income families - low income families in particular - for it is possible only to increase the sense of frustration, already overpowering, which these families have. Some find it difficult to afford a family vacation together, let alone a family religious magazine on \$40.00 a week salary.<sup>1</sup>

Bishop Roy H. Short counsels concerning the use of devotional guides that "the wise family will provide enough copies of the devotional guide so that each member can have his own copy before him!"<sup>2</sup> This too, will affect the financial consideration of publications.

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1. Lentz, Richard E.: The Church's Opportunity in Family Education, International Journal of Religious Education, October 1950.
2. Short, Bishop Roy H.: op. cit.

## F. Summary

It has been discovered that the interest of the church concerning family worship in Christian homes has been increasing rapidly in recent years, but the available literature is scarce. It is not enough to speak of the necessity for family prayers and Bible study. People need definite help, teaching, and demonstration in the art of family devotions, because it is not an easy thing to make the experience meaningful to a small group representing such different ages, experience and interest.

In order to judge the relative worth of specific devotional literature that has been made available for homes today, suggestive criteria have been set up on the basis of elements that go to make up an adequate experience of family worship: first of all a method of approach that provides for each age group represented; this involves such help for the parents as will enable them in turn to be able to sincerely lead their children in vital experiences of worship. A reverent atmosphere is the essence of a small child's experience. The earliest beginnings may be around the table. During preschool years invaluable foundations are built. Consideration for family worship should begin with the founding of a new home and continue through the twilight years of a couple's life. The need then is obvious for a flexible program that al-

lows each member to participate in some way and that provides enough variety to keep interest high. In this regard the great variety of daily experiences and special celebrations should offer rich possibilities.

Secondly, the content of a devotional guide; in order to bring about desired results in the personal lives of each family member and influence the life of the family as a whole the content should give a prominent place to the Bible, with careful attention to its proper use with small children and with a primary goal of worship before instruction. Numerous extra-Biblical sources can be included and inherent in all content should be certain basic elements of faith and belief. Prayer, ideally, should involve many diverse aspects and cover a wide scope. All content should lead into avenues of action. A closer relationship to the Church should be stimulated.

Lastly, the influence that the outer mechanics of the literature brings to bear on the total experience of the worshiping group by means of its attractiveness, organization, and cost has been considered.

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF SELECTED DEVOTIONAL GUIDES

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ANALYSIS OF SELECTED DEVOTIONAL GUIDES

A. Introduction

In the preceding chapter criteria were set up in order to analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of selected materials for family worship provided by the church for the home. This chapter will include an analysis of materials published by three representative denominations and one State council of churches, covering a period from six months to a year depending on the character of the material chosen; hence results will be limited. This examination will be based on the discussion and formulation of criteria in the first chapter as restated below in outline form. All points will not be found in any one material necessarily. They act as a general guide to the content of the material.

1. General Description
  - a. Attractiveness
  - b. Organization
  - c. Cost
2. Content
  - a. Biblical Material
    - (1) Choice of Passages
      - (a) Bible Stories
      - (b) Poetry and Wisdom Literature
      - (c) Doctrinal Portions
    - (2) Means of Presentation
      - (a) Length of Portions

- (b) Consecutive Passages
  - (c) Version Used
  - (3) Goal Determined
  - b. Extra-Biblical Material
    - (1) Music
    - (2) General Literature (Poem or Passage)
    - (3) Pictures
    - (4) Stories
  - c. Themes in the Meditation
    - (1) Elements of Faith
      - (a) Concerning God
      - (b) Concerning Jesus
      - (c) Concerning The Holy Spirit
      - (d) Concerning Good and Evil
      - (e) Concerning the Bible, Prayer
      - (f) Concerning Life Everlasting
    - (2) Application to Life
      - (a) Christian Adjustments in Home Relationships
      - (b) Strength to Withstand Adversities
      - (c) Motivation Toward Christian Principles
      - (d) Patterns for Christian Living
      - (e) Light on Present Day Problems
    - (3) Relationship With the Church
  - d. Prayer
    - (1) Form
    - (2) Aspects of Prayer Emphasized
      - (a) Thanksgiving, Praise
      - (b) Confession
      - (c) Adoration
      - (d) Petition
      - (e) Intercession
3. Methods Utilized
- a. Amount of Time
  - b. Provision for Gradation
    - (1) Young Married Couples, Adult Members Only
    - (2) The Family With Young Children
    - (3) The Growing Family
    - (4) Maturity and Old Age
  - c. Amount of Flexibility
  - d. Use of Special Celebrations
    - (1) Holidays
    - (2) Birthdays, Anniversaries
    - (3) Family Achievements
    - (4) Welcoming Guests

B. Today



1. General Description

a. Attractiveness

The monthly devotional publication, Today,<sup>1</sup> presents a neat, orderly appearance with a black and white cover picture as the center of interest. It is bordered by a bright color on which is placed the simple caption, Today - Think on these things. The month and year stand out on the lower border. Perhaps its most conspicuous characteristic is its small, handy size of five and a half by four inches. The cover picture portrays either the theme of the month or some significant happening during the month and deals with concrete objects such as nature, a Communion Cup, or a Christmas tree ornament, rather than people. A calendar on the back cover indicates special days of the month, including Church days, marked in color.

b. Organization

The first page each month is given over to the Editor's visit which includes an introduction to the writer of the month's devotions, his picture, and something of his purpose, as well as a reference to the special days of the month and any other pertinent information.

The pattern of the meditations is similar for the

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1. Published by the Westminster Press, the issues analyzed include May, August, September, October, November, and December 1951.

most part: a title, a text (one or the other, or both), a meditation, a Bible reading reference, a suggested hymn, and a conversational prayer. The writers come from varied walks of life: Pastor (most frequently), Christian Worker, hymn-writer and Business Manager, Chaplain, and house-wife.

Though small, this booklet has a number of added features: A vital article on evangelism contributed by the same man each month; a page of prayer requests for specific Christian workers throughout the world; a page of mealtime prayers sent in by people who have used them in various ways - in girl's groups, homes for the aged, etc.; an occasional poem; a letter page telling how others use Today; latest book advertisements; an article on the home; and finally, the last two pages which are always devoted to The Bible Book of the Month - essentially a reading and study guide chapter by chapter, with helpful background material on the author of the one specific book for that month, the historical situation, and the value spiritually to the life of today.<sup>1</sup>

c. Cost

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1. This plan was inaugurated in 1944 in cooperation with the Bible Mastery Month Campaign which originated in Seattle in 1929. It has been continued in Today because of the wide use throughout the church. Request has been made recently that this section be placed at the back for those who wish to preserve it.

Individual copies cost five cents, and a year's subscription costs sixty cents, with special prices for quantities of popular series which are often desired.

1. Content

a. Biblical Material

The Bible reading suggestions at first glance appear to cover a wide variance of Scripture passages in somewhat heterogeneous fashion. Yet around the great variety of Scripture portions is woven the main thought for each day.

(1) Choice of Passages

For over a period of six months in 1951 a great number and variety of Bible Stories are suggested. They are chosen in connection with the theme for the day, week or month. The month of devotions based on Genesis contains the account of Creation, Cain and Abel, Noah, the Babel venture, Abraham, Isaac, and Joseph's experiences. In connection with these Old Testament stories, some material from the Gospels is used, as for example the Parable of the Lost Sheep and Jesus calling the disciples. The material with the theme of the home contains about six stories from the Old and New Testament. The month's studies on nature refer to Burning Bush account, Lot's choice, and David in the Wood<sup>1</sup> from the Old Testament, and the stories of the

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1. I Samuel 28:14 - 18.

life of Christ in the New Testament, from his birth, healing ministry, parables, and miracles to the accounts centering around his death. The series of studies on music in the Bible centered around numerous passages in the Old Testament, some of which are obscure. Stories in connection with the studies on the last supper are of course the actual account of the last supper, and other accounts that refer in some way to that supper.

The poetry literature is widely used, being found in each month's materials regardless of their center of interest. Particularly in the themes of nature and music are the Psalms used and also Job. The advice of Proverbs 10:1-9 is used with the emphasis of the home family.

The rest of the Biblical material falls into the category of teachings of Jesus or doctrinal portions from the Epistles of Paul.

## (2) Means of Presentation

The length of the Biblical portions ranges from two to ten verses. The short texts written in full that highlight the day's teaching will easily lend themselves to memorization. The Scripture quotations are taken from the American Standard Edition of the Revised Bible and the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, but for the most part the reference alone is given. In only one issue out of eight did the writer choose to present his scripture lessons consecutively. However, each issue contains the

Bible Book of the Month with suggestions that will guide at least some of the family into an intensive study of a book a month. Eight of the books covered throughout the year of 1951 were The Acts, Colossians, Proverbs, Nehemiah, Micah, Philippians, Exodus, and Malachi.

(3) Goal Determined

It would seem that the goal is not primarily instruction, for the Scripture reading is often taken out of its context, and one would hardly get an overall view from the great variety in choice of passage from day to day. Even Young who wrote the series of devotions consecutively from Genesis believed Genesis contains valuable devotional material to be lifted out and made available for the Today family. He enters imaginatively in<sup>to</sup> Abraham's experience and points out to the readers "how close we can feel to Abraham in this experience!"<sup>1</sup> Similarly Leeper re-creates the experience of the apostles at the time of the last supper.<sup>2</sup> He also relates their experience to the basic Christian experiences today. It would seem then that the goal behind the use of Scripture here is to make it meaningful in a devotional way to life today. How this is accomplished will be seen more clearly in the study of "Themes In the Meditation."<sup>3</sup> The emphasis would seem to

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1. Young, William Lindsay: Today, September 23, 1951.
2. Leeper, James C.: Today, October 13, 1951.
3. Post, p. 40.

be worship, and scripture is used to fit into this aim of fellowship with God.

b. Extra-Biblical Material

The hymn suggestions for each day in the month are usually most fitting and worshipful, providing the key-note of the thought for that day, expressing a prayer or just the needed challenge. The use of these hymn suggestions requires the possession of a hymn book, for only once in the eight issues is there included the musical notation and that to the hymn composed by the author of the devotional thoughts for the month. One writer had the words of the hymn printed for the benefit of those who have no book.

Very little use is made of poems. One poem on the thought of nature is placed at the back of the number on nature meditations. A few others are included in the meditation.

One month's series of studies is based on Da Vinci's famous painting of the Last Supper; it supplies the spiritual climate for each day's devotional message.

The use of short stories is very carefully intertwined in the brief daily meditations.

c. Themes in the Meditation

The themes are as varied as the scripture passages. They cover a wide area of subjects, emphasizing the home, church, community and world family in connection with

Family Week in May, meditations on the beauties of God's mountains, streams, skies, trees and flowers during a vacation month, a study of the book of Genesis, a series of messages on Da Vinci's famous painting of the Last Supper, a study of music in the Bible, and a presentation of the written Word and the Living Word at the Christmas season.

(1) Faith and Belief

(a) Concerning God

God is set forth as Creator of all things, as seen in Genesis, yet more wonderful than all His works. He is presented as Creator of the family. In the issue on music the glory of God's creation as seen in man's speaking and singing voice is praised. Added to this characteristic is God as sustainer of life He has created, sufficient and purposeful in dealing with men. God's everlasting love is shown in His pursuit of man. Sweazy in his page on evangelism for November finds an answer to the whole of God's creation in the Redemptive plan of God.

(b) Concerning Jesus Christ

The October publication in particular gives a Christ-centered impression throughout in its portrayal of the Last Supper. It is shown how Christ draws people by the cross. God, Himself, is seen in Christ. He is presented as the sole Saviour, the Son, in whose name alone

comes salvation and the family of God. Salvation is clearly presented as a narrow entrance which then has wider reaches, and full commitment to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord is urged often. A man can find in Him alone help in controlling his life and emotions. Life is seen as a daily experience in relationship to Him - the Door to heaven and our Advocate, alive evermore!

(c) Concerning Good and Evil

One writer says man must learn that human ingenuity, no matter how great, will never lift him out of the mire.<sup>1</sup> In the study on Genesis there is a careful analysis of the first appearance of sin, its nature and results. It is seen in a reoccurring pattern as the history of mankind develops. This writer's conclusion is that the peril of sin is always near. He turns his meditation into a challenge: "Only constant vigilance and the grace of God can save us from its woe and degradation."<sup>2</sup> Another writer also recognises that "the choice of sin is always before us" but happily "the choice of life and righteousness is ours also."<sup>3</sup>

(d) Concerning the Bible

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1. Young, op. cit., September 19, 1951.
2. Ibid., September 10, 1951.
3. Leeper, op. cit., October 18, 1951.



In the study of Genesis the purpose of the Bible is presented as conveying spiritual truth rather than teaching science. The Bible is conceived as unique among sacred books in that it reveals God in search of man.<sup>1</sup> One writer spends time in his meditation to instruct on how to read the Scripture which he considers a living Book. In fact he interprets the purpose of this little magazine, Today, to be but an aid to the end that those who use it for worship may examine the Scriptures daily.<sup>2</sup>

(e) Concerning Life Everlasting

One day's devotion, at least, is centered about the truth that death shall be swallowed up in victory. It is suggested in connection with the music of resurrection and refers to the culmination of God's plan of salvation, and the consummation of all things; when there shall be no more corruption; no more mortality.

(2) Application to Life

(a) Christian Adjustments in Home Relationships

One writer discusses the tendency to hurt those of one's own household, a practice more common than might be suspected at first thought. True brotherly love

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1. Young: op. cit., September 8, 1951.
2. Peters, Dr. George T.: Today, December 2, 1951.

is encouraged on the basis of Scriptural admonition and growing out of Joseph's experience. Other advice to the home is in the realm of building up family fellowship - doing things together - and insisting that fellowship have priority over the business ambition of the father or the social whirl of the mother.

(b) Strength to Withstand Adversity

In one devotional in May, during National Family Week, two parents discuss the home family facing a crisis. They point families to the presence and power of a living Lord who makes the difference in every situation. One pungent saying stands out: "If God is well known before the emergency hours, his grace will be sufficient for the time of testing."<sup>1</sup> All issues of Today that were examined seek to do just that - make Him well known.

(c) Motivation for Christian Life

Sponsors of young adult church work write in May on the subject, "The Church Family," motivating the home in their Christian service, be it as Sunday School pupils, teachers, or just as part of the Church family, to aim high in Christian attainment with no thought of reward, in return for Him who gave His all for them.

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1. Kearns, Raymond V. and Mrs.: Today, May 7, 1951.

(d) Patterns for Christian Living

Numerous challenges to experience the full Christian life can be found. Among them there is the reference to God's word and prayer as a means of personal growth, commitment to God's will that He Himself can shape one's character aright, and humility as a sign of true greatness.

(e) Light on Present Day Problems

Young makes timely parables from the experiences found in Genesis. He sees in the Babel builder's experiences the seeds of the wrong kind of nationalism. He sees a Babelite tendency in any professed follower of Christ who restricts Christian concern and activity by racial, nationalistic, or geographical considerations.<sup>1</sup> From Noah's experience, which he claims is not an isolated one, he sees the importance of being concerned about the intrinsic rightness of moral issues, and not being swayed by popular negative sentiment.<sup>2</sup> The problems of the world today such as greed, power, sectional pride, materialism, and war force him to the following conclusion: "Nothing short of reborn men will make possible the kind of world we desire and for which God bids us labor."<sup>3</sup> As for eco-

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1. Young: op. cit., September 18, 1951.
2. Ibid., September 12, 1951.
3. Ibid., September 13, 1951.

nomic problems one devotional writer answers that spiritual liberty is more necessary than economic liberty. Another says boldly that those who promise "a classless society" cannot assure the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life. And so attitudes are formed in the hearts and minds of families who see the relevance of eternal values to all phases of life.

### (3) Relationship With the Church

The function of the Church is clarified and the minister's position is interpreted as that of guide. The family is led to appreciate those who serve. Even the choir's purpose is analysed in one issue. The monthly articles by Sweazey do much to keep warm the evangelistic fervor. Much is made of special church days such as Universal Bible Sunday and World-Wide Communion Sunday. Giving both money and talents is strongly encouraged, as is church attendance by diverse means. Familiarizing the family with the hymns of the Church Hymnal should do much to enrich worship at church as well as at home.

Both in the meditations and in the added page, "Pray for Our Christian Workers!", interest is kept alive and intelligent concerning the work of the church abroad by reference to definite countries month by month.

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#### d. Prayer

The prayers are printed at the bottom of each day's devotional thought and as a whole gather up the thoughts expressed. One month in particular follows a very similar pattern day by day. Another month bases all prayers on "The Book of Common Worship." A page of mealtime prayers is included in the back gathered from various contributors.

Each aspect of prayer is present in one month or another. Thanksgiving and praise are based on great thoughts of God. Confession is found more frequently as a natural outgrowth of the devotional leader's thoughts on general needs, such as a lack of humility, temptations, cheap compromise, etc. Some have a keen sense of "today" and its needs, and keep the prayer in the setting of an early morning worship hour of consecration to God in every circumstance of life. Petitions are kept on a high level as "hallow our task" . . . "help us to face the evils of our time," etc. Intercessions for the church and for all nations are among the numerous pleas on behalf of a "bleeding world."

### 3. Methods Utilized

#### a. Amount of Time

The average amount of time required in the use of this devotional magazine is five minutes, and ten minutes at the most. A regular daily period is provided.

b. Provision for Gradation

Today meets the needs of the members in the household on their varying levels at least at some point. It is weaker for some ages than others.

(1) Young Married Couples, Adult Members Only

In the special articles at the end of the magazines are monthly articles concerning the need for a feeling of security, complete trust and mutual concern, faith, hope, and love in the home rather than strife, discord, contempt, and misdirected interest in the things that one possesses. Two of these articles deal with the marriage ceremony, its significance, and thoughts of Christian marriage.

There is a distinct element of progression in the sense that a writer builds on an idea presented in former meditations. In December, for example, various phases of the Birth of Christ are developed, and also in the case of the Genesis studies a picture of the whole begins to unfold and become increasingly meaningful as it is tied in with New Testament portions. Yet the heart of these devotions appears not to be intellectual growth alone for there is continual challenge to a spiritual relationship with God. As one writer puts it, "Intellectual clarity awaits moral commitment."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Young: op. cit., September 2, 1951.

## (2) The Family With Young Children

The devotions for National Family Week and the entire month of June stress a family's obligation to God and help parents in particular to see that they are teachers and as such should seize their opportunities to teach their children well, as God first of all teaches them. The joy of having children is emphasized and parents are made to see their great influence in shaping future generations by teaching their children in word and deed about God's love and will for the world. These devotional guides go as far as telling a parent what they can do as Christian parents but give no further instruction on how to do it with regards to young children in the home.

## (3) The Growing Family

Much food for thought is provided by Today for adults. But what of the growing family? Many secrets of family living are set forth in the meditations and the whole family is gathered up in the prayers that follow. The growing family is encouraged to work together in a spirit of fun and to work together for the welfare of others as well. Stories include references to a son in the scout troop, a daughter at school, and a three year old helping at home. Yet they are more often used as illustrative material for adults than examples for children. The occasional use of difficult words and symbolical thoughts

which are beyond children's concrete thinking give further evidence of a more adult approach. That young people find Today helpful is substantiated in a letter written by a teen-ager to the editor, urging him to continue challenging youth to bring their religion into everyday life, for, as it was stated,

Young people all over the country want to keep the glow that they found in their summer conferences, yet it is often hard because apart from the fellowship they often lose the sense of commitment.<sup>1</sup>

#### (4) Maturity and Old Age

Inside the back cover, books are advertised for the more mature reader. One advertisement in particular was for men and women beyond middle age. Letters from those who use Today include one from a man who is eighty-three years old and writes, "I keep thinking every issue of Today is the best yet."<sup>2</sup> The variety of each issue combined with the deep spiritual insight from month to month should appeal to those of more mature years.

#### c. Amount of Flexibility

There is very little variation in the form of the devotions in Today, except for the wide variety of themes. Many new thoughts are presented daily and from month to month the style differs according to the new writer. Yet

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1. Today, November 1951, page on "How They Use Today!"
2. Today, May 1951, page on "How They Use Today!"



there is a similar pattern of illustration and application throughout. There can easily be participation in the various elements of the devotions for those who are old enough to read. Occasionally questions are included that can stimulate discussion.

d. Use of Special Celebrations

(1) Holidays

In August the theme follows special vacation possibilities of trips into mountains or by streams. Labor Day is referred to very briefly. A fitting devotional thought is presented on Thanksgiving day and the entire issue is a general theme of praise. The Advent experience is kept in mind even in the Bible Book of the Month for December. Reader's are guided to meet the New Year unafraid with Christ.

(2) Anniversaries

There is one reference to a writer's thirtieth wedding anniversary, and the place of music in his own home as he reminisces.

(3) Welcoming Guests

One day's devotions prepares the family to provide a genuine atmosphere of Christ's presence in their home that all who visit there will receive a friendly welcome and a spiritual blessing.

C. Discovery

1. General Description

a. Attractiveness

A new venture in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., namely "Christian Faith and Life, A Program For Church and Home," has brought into being the magazine, Discovery,<sup>1</sup> for teachers and parents of Junior boys and girls. It is a regular sized magazine, eleven by eight inches, which any family would be proud to have in their home. It is issued quarterly and brought to the home, preferably, by a church visitor. The cover for October-December shows three grinning Juniors piled on top of a football. Other pictures similarly brimming over with life are scattered throughout the interior as are articles of special interest to parents of Junior children.

b. Organization

A great majority of the magazine is given over to the complete development of the Church School lessons. Yet the guiding principle of this new effort is parent emphasis. There can be seen in the various articles the motivating force of parent education, that in turn there may be parent participation. One page is given over to a suggested

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1. The copies here analysed cover the months of July to December, 1951. They came in two issues, July-September and October-December.

worship program for the family, centered around daily Bible-reading suggestions under weekly themes. The outline of Bible-readings for home worship is intended to be the same for all ages, although this is specifically a Junior-group magazine. The Bible-readings for the October-December 1951 quarterly were not closely correlated with the teaching plan because it was felt such correlation would lead to tiresome duplication.<sup>1</sup> Yet they contribute in general to the year's theme, emphasizing the truths found over and over in Jesus' teachings. The Summer quarter contains no specific Bible-reading suggestions for family worship. But its entire theme is Worship.

Additional features that aid the family worship experience are the articles which enrich this and others phases of Christian home life and the letter to the home which follows each Sunday lesson. Though attractively arranged the organization in parts seems too crowded.

#### c. Cost

Single subscriptions cost \$2.00 a year. School subscriptions, two or more to one address are \$1.40 a year and \$35 cents a quarter each.

## 2. Content

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1. It is interesting to note a change of the basic idea in the January-March 1952 quarterly which is, in contrast, closely correlated with the curriculum for all ages.

a. Biblical Material

The Scripture passages are chosen according to the theme, The Promises of God, from October to December. These promises are given in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New. Besides these the Psalms are used specifically during the Thanksgiving week with the emphasis on gratitude for faithful keeping.

(1) Choice of Passages

All other Bible readings through the first week of December are taken from portions of the Old Testament prophets emphasizing promises God made to men of old - promises of pardon for sin, of strength and health, concerning the needy and the coming of the Messiah.

For the remainder of December the passages are found in the Gospels and I John which bring out promises fulfilled, promises of joy, of wonder - during the Christmas week - and the concluding thought of our debt of love.

(2) Means of Presentation

Although there is an absence of Bible stories, it is suggested that the Old Testament portions will be made more interesting if the child is given opportunity or the parent prepared to tell briefly the story of which the reading is a part. No portion is longer than eight verses. During the Christmas week less Bible verses are used and carols are substituted for variation. For family correla-

tion the Bible story book, A Star Shone, is suggested for use with Kindergartners.

(3) Goal Determined

The summer quarterly states that the aim of worship as a whole is not necessarily teaching but rather gathering up teaching in worship. However the element of teaching is present to a degree, for it is elsewhere stated that parents can teach directly through family worship, Bible reading, and the use of the curriculum books and magazines.

b. Extra-Biblical Material

The related activities of the Church School for the Summer months greatly enriched the resources for family worship. The Junior group had made Grace Table mats, and illuminated Bible verse to have in the home, and studied the first American hymnal, the Bay Psalm Book. The section, "Plans for Teaching in the Home," suggests that the child share the background of the hymns that he is learning with the family. Several songs are included in the magazines - one a simple round of thanks and praise for bread. Pictures that portray family groups and Bible subjects are distributed throughout the magazine. The family is urged occasionally to include worship materials from each age group in their worship plans. These will consist of stories, prayers, poems or hymns.

c. Themes in the Meditations

There are no daily meditations as such in this magazine. Yet the desire to make worship meaningful in the home permeates its pages. How it provides for elements usually contained in Meditations will be seen from an analysis of additional helps toward family worship in the magazine such as the letter to the homes, other articles, and the manual regarding the general use of this new magazine venture.

(1) Elements of Faith

Family worship is summed up in its simplest terms as the family thinking together about God and praying to Him. Parents are further instructed that they help their child most by letting him know that God is important to them, and that they love and worship Him. The manual in connection with the New Presbyterian Curriculum gives some elements of faith considered basic:

Juniors should see God as just demanding righteousness as well as giving love; Jesus as an heroic Master, seeking followers of equal loyalty and courage; the church as a place for sharing in the most stimulating knowledge and action; the Bible as a source of knowledge and power;<sup>1</sup>

The presence of sin in human nature is recognised, and also the experience of pardon as seen in one week's Scripture

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1. Parent Education and Christian Family Life in the Local Church Board of Christian Education, Presbyterian Church U.S.A., July 1949, pp. 25, 26.

lessons. The special articles, such as "What Does Commitment Mean," give needed understanding in elements of belief.

### (2) Application to Life

Parents are urged to let family worship be naturally connected with everyday life. In the letters to the home the teaching received by the child is carried over into the home. Parents are made to see that if they have a sense of dependence upon God their child too will develop it, and that one of the best ways to help them grow up with this dependence is the constant participation in family devotions. The one outstanding emphasis of life application in the directed Bible reading is the thought that God's way of meeting human need is often through other men, i.e. man is his brother's keeper.

### (3) Relationship With the Church

It has been seen throughout that this new plan is a cooperative venture between church and home. Information on baptism and other church beliefs are explained in the letters to the home. Numerous articles on the church and charts on church worship make a meaningful contribution. Articles such as "Beyond the Rim of Our Own World" keep before the family the wide outreaches of the church.

d. Prayer

The church writes to the home in the fall months: "If you have not been a praying family this is a natural time to begin." Several aids are accessible in articles on table blessings. A sheet of mealtime prayers of thanks is contained in the child's workbook. Yet individual extemporaneous prayers are suggested as the most meaningful form.

3. Methods Utilized

a. Gradation

Discovery has been provided by the Presbyterian Church with specific needs in mind - those of growing children in that Junior stage, and parents of these children. It recognises however that a family may consist of children at various stages of growth and therefore makes suggestion that parents take turns concentrating on the various age levels and materials provided for them. However, it also includes all ages in the Bible reading for the family and suggests a special Bible story book for the very young child.

(1) Parents

This magazine assumes that a number of parents have never made an approach to worship in the home. The entire church plan attempts in every way possible to help parents become real teachers of their children by clarifying their own thinking so that they themselves can be "con-



sumingly interested." The Fall quarter contains suggestions for method of family worship contributed by parents themselves. The Summer quarter's emphasis on worship attempts to show parents the opportunities to deepen family worship experiences during the vacation. Not only are parents challenged to use their influence aright; they are given concrete means of accomplishing the task. They are given guidance for instance in discouraging attitudes of revenge and dealing with their child's boastfulness - typical problems of Junior children.

(2) Children

A strong conviction behind the provision of these materials is the belief that the Christian experience of children should not be a watered-down variety of adult Christianity, but one that meets their needs and gives them opportunities to think and feel and act as Christians at their own age level! An aim expressed in the summer issue is that the Junior learn to worship better alone, in his family, in church school, and in church.

b. Amount of Flexibility

Everyone who is old enough to help should plan and participate according to the manual. They should be encouraged to participate from the experiences they have been gaining in church school, and more specifically with the devotional materials in the Junior child's personal devo-

tional book, Day by Day, received from the church school. Many families, it was said, use this booklet as a guide to their family worship. In order to see its specific contribution to this entire denominational plan for the home a brief study of it will be made following this analysis. Similarly it is suggested that teen-agers bring something interesting into a worship period from their lesson book.

c. Use of Special Celebrations

There is much emphasis on a family worship service for Christmas Eve found in Day by Day. Worship, it is stated, should be meaningful on special days such as the beginnings of dad's new job and when visitors are present. New Year's resolutions are referred to and two top ones are suggested as follows:

1. To say grace at each meal.
2. To participate in family devotions.<sup>1</sup>

D. Day by Day - October-December 1951

1. General Description

The Junior Workbook of the Presbyterian new curriculum contains a booklet for the child's personal daily worship. The child puts the book together, makes his own cover for it, and uses it at home, sometimes only to the

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1. Discovery, October-December 1951, p. 59.

extent that he is guided by the parents. This cooperation of parent and child can often develop into a worship experience of informal sharing, and by this means Juniors themselves can help initiate family worship. Day by Day is a guide to the use of the Bible. Each page contains a week's suggestions including verses to learn, daily Scripture reading, prayer and pages assigned in a Bible story reading book. Instead of a meditation there is a brief comment concerning the Bible passages.

## 2. Content

The stories from Scripture center about the life of Christ - His birth, boyhood, and manhood, with emphasis on His teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. Portions from the Prophets, Isaiah and Micah, are used as they relate to the coming King. The child is challenged to put together Matthew and Luke's accounts of the birth of Christ. Appreciation is developed for the disciples and their contribution. Much use of the Psalms is made at the Thanksgiving season. Matthew, chapters five, six, and seven, are studied consecutively for a month. A brief thought is added each day to sum up the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount in everyday terms of a Junior boy and girl. The attempt to link the Old Testament with the New is notable, as is the brief length of the portions. The reading assigned in addition is from the Bible-story book of the life

of Christ for the junior, The King Nobody Wanted. This is to be read in preparation for the church school. The child is given one to six verses to learn a week. These can be a definite means of contribution to the family worship.

The advice is given in one of the lessons that it is better to pray quietly than talk about one's religion. There is opportunity to study "the kind of prayer Jesus said we should use." There is some emphasis on quiet prayer in one's room.<sup>1</sup> One printed prayer a week is provided, leaving ample room for original prayer. The printed prayers follow a simple pattern of thanks for such gifts as home, parents, school, God's love, and Jesus' life on earth, followed by a petition for personal help in living with others, and living for God. One prayer contains the element of repentance and desire for forgiveness, another the element of intercession in the simple phrase repeated occasionally: "Bless my home and my loved ones." The prayer suggestions take a number of other forms such as a Christmas Litany of Thanks, a poem, The Lord's Prayer, a verse of a Christmas carol, a hymn entitled "Day by Day," and a prayer written by the Junior in church school.

At Thanksgiving time the child receives help in noticing God's goodness. At Christmas time a Christmas Eve Wor-

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1. Cf. Matthew 6:5, 6.

ship Service is inserted for use with the family. Besides Scripture and prayer there are suggestions for the use of a picture or crèche, carols, a story from the Junior Workbook and a poem by Rossetti, "What Can I Give Him?"

E. Thoughts of God for Boys and Girls

1. General Description

a. Attractiveness

Thoughts of God for Boys and Girls<sup>1</sup> is, as it indicates, for boys and girls and says as much by its covers which almost move with life and health and happiness. This devotional booklet is prepared every four months, closely following the seasons. The Summer and Autumn covers portray boys and girls in action. Pictures, poems and stories are neatly arranged with large titles for each day's devotions. The size of the booklet is twenty-one by thirteen and a half inches.

b. Organization

First to meet the eye on the inside front cover is a sign saying, "This book belongs to -" immediately making the book the child's very own. Then follows a letter to the children from the writer and editor entitled "A Fel-

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1. Copies studied include May-December 1951 in two issues: The Summer issue, and the Autumn and Christmas issue. These are published by the Connecticut Council of Churches, Inc.

lowship of Prayer," with such information as is necessary to prepare them for the worship experiences of each particular book. The book is dedicated to those who will use it and grow in their knowledge and understanding of God. The first page of the devotions contains a picture, one of many which follow throughout the eighty pages. The last pages of one book are taken up with hymns. In another the hymns are scattered throughout, and a record chart of daily devotional reading is provided for the children on the inside back cover to encourage the regularity of the habit. Each edition is prepared by a different author in cooperation with the regular editor, Edith Welker. Helen Marie Edick, Associate Professor of Education at the Hartford Seminary Foundation wrote the Summer issue, and Olive D. Sparling, Secretary for Younger Groups, Woman's Missionary Society, of the United Church of Canada wrote the Autumn and Christmas issue.

c. Cost

Each copy of this Seasonal devotional booklet costs thirty cents. For a year's subscription ninety cents plus postage is paid. In order to make his library rich and complete it is suggested that the child also have back issues of this magazine and his own Bible and hymn book.

2. Content

The content of this devotional leans heavily upon

extra-Biblical sources, allowing a definite freedom and variety in their daily use. Few Scripture passages are covered but the portions chosen are carefully related in their contexts, and purposefully related in turn to life.

a. Biblical Material

(1) Choice of Passages

In the course of eight months five Bible stories were suggested in the Bible reading selections: Noah, the children and Jesus, Creation, the Feast of Harvest, and the birth of Jesus. The latter two centered around the Christian festivals.

One of the aims of the summer material was to acquaint the children with God's world and His work in it. This was accomplished by directing the child into the rich portions of the nature. Psalms and Job. By a study of Noah's experiences in Genesis other nature passages were highlighted and interpreted as discoveries made by men in these early days.<sup>1</sup> The majority of passages were in the Old Testament.

Much emphasis was placed upon the Shema in Deuteronomy and on the New Testament parallel in the command to love one another. Epistle teachings on love and knowing God, and teachings of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount com-

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1. Cf. Genesis 8:22.

prise the remaining selections.

(2) Means of Presentation

All passages selected are quite short and certain ones are repeated from month to month, thus covering Scripture less thoroughly, but getting the few portions well in mind. A Bible reference is not suggested every day, and there is no mention made of memorizing portions.<sup>1</sup> Suggestion is made, however, that special verses be marked. The Moffett Translation is sometimes used in the Summer issue. Sources used for the Fall-Christmas issue include the Revised Standard Version and the work of pupils in a Methodist Church and Church Vacation School in New London, Connecticut who wrote a play on the Creation story. A poem on Creation closely following Scripture was also used. The Genesis accounts of Creation and Noah were studied consecutively.

(3) Goal Determined

The utmost effort is taken in approaching Scripture to make it meaningful to the child. The phrase, "Think with God about the meaning of this," is used over and over again. As additional stories are read and verses repeated they become increasingly meaningful. One of the

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1. The Winter and Easter issue, 1952, contains many more Scripture passages than the issues here studied, and children are urged to choose some of the verses to memorize.



aims for the Summer issue is to acquaint the child with the Bible.

b. Extra-Biblical Material

Music is a large part of these devotionals. Special hymns carrying out the theme are contained in the book. Many other hymns are suggested also. Poems are often used - seven in one month. As with Biblical material, so with extra-Biblical material the law of repetition is constantly in effect to fill with meaning all worship materials. Pictures are another natural part of the devotions. They are entirely life-centered rather than Scripture-centered, yet present the relation of Scripture to nature and human life. As other types of extra-Biblical resources are a vital part of the worship in this booklet, so the story form is used to great advantage. The Autumn-Christmas issue introduces the boys and girls to the Wood's family, characterizing each member of the family according to their respective ages, twelve, ten, eight, and five, and carries them through many a new adventure that all children can enter imaginatively. By means of the story form children's interests are captured in action and suspense, many perplexing questions are answered, attitudes are formed unawares, and Scripture is brought into life naturally.

c. Themes in the Meditation

(1) Elements of Faith

A number of meditations deal with scientific knowledge and relate it all to the greatness of the Creator God. The principle is set forth that God works through orderly processes both in the Universe and in man. The children are guided to the concept that God is more than a power or order; that He is a loving Spirit found in goodness is emphasized to the exclusion of all other characteristics. One poem suggests that the beauties of Autumn can be called God. It is strongly emphasized that God is Father of all. By loving God and one another one becomes a child of God.

The emphasis concerning Jesus is on His teachings. He is honored above all men, is said to be like God. His knowledge of God is explained thus: "He knew God well because he tried each day to live like Him that others too might know."<sup>1</sup> After his death it was his loving spirit that lived forever, and the Church grew out of his memory.

Concerning the nature of good and evil, selfish thoughts and not doing one's share are considered problems in a child's life. Punishment for wrong-doing is explained as entirely self-afflicted rather than coming from a God who is love and goodness.

The Bible is interpreted as a record of man's search for and discovery of God rather than God's revelation to

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1. Thoughts of God For Boys and Girls, Summer, 1951, Vol. 16, No. 2.

man. Biblical authorship is stated as uncertain yet appreciation for ideas in the Bible is encouraged. Joy in possessing one's own Bible, and its importance at Church School is suggested in stories. The Document theory of the sources is applied to Old Testament Scripture. An attempt is made to reconstruct the gathering of stories into the Biblical record by means of a play, "A Camp-fire Long Ago." There is definite teaching on the correct outlook on prayer.

## (2) Application to Life

Stories of ideal home relationships are the means used to help in Christian adjustments. In some devotions children are caused to think in their prayer time of better ways to live together in the home based on specific Scripture verses.

There is little mention of suffering and adversity. The one reference noted was at thanksgiving time and told the story of a hymn of thanks written in the midst of deep suffering.

Thought questions are asked such as "What can you do to work with God?" Concrete ideas are suggested and children are motivated to do their tasks well in order to make it easier for everyone in the home. The motivation springs from a love for God and desire to work in accordance with His plan of love. Sometimes the appeal is more to the intellect than to the heart or moral standards.

Patterns for Christian living are interpreted to boys and girls as sharing joy with the sick and lonely, growing in peace, understanding other races, unselfishness and thoughtfulness for others.

Children are urged to talk with their family about great questions that puzzle them. "Why wars?" is discussed and they are guided to "think of the things we need to learn if our world is to be free from war and hunger and suffering." The contributions and the limitations of scientists are set forth.

### (3) Relationship with the Church

Again, by means of stories, children are reminded of happy Church School experiences and ideal family-church relationships. The summer months are time for Vacation Church School experiences and a spirit of anticipation is created as the meditations describe "weeks of fun ahead." Appreciation for the church is developed in a story of displaced persons who joyfully worshiped in an attic, reconstructed into a church. Definite ways in which the church helps the needy are described. Inter-church relationships are encouraged.

#### d. Prayer

Prayer forms vary considerably. Often the suggestion is made: "Pray your own prayer to God," or "use prayer \_\_\_ and add your own thoughts." After a thoughtful contempla-

tion there will be at times a quick transition to prayer. Occasionally a stanza of a hymn or a poem becomes the prayer. The Lord's Prayer or a litany is sometimes used. By all means prayer is made a thoughtful thing. The phrase leading into prayer is usually "Think with God . . ."

The majority of prayers are thankfulness, praise, and adoration. A phrase here used is "we are glad . . ." At times the established language of prayer is completely missing and rather than a fellowship with God it appears to be a praise of nature's beauties alone. As is suggested above, creativity is a principle often used in these prayers. For example, the child is asked to take the initiative in thanking God for some of the experiences he has had that day. Another aspect present to a degree is a prayer for forgiveness. Confession is expressed in such phrases as, "We have failed" or "we are sorry." They are led to pray for themselves in relationship to others: "Use us to heal their pain and tears."

### 3. Methods Utilized

#### a. Amount of Time

These devotions can be read in five minutes. Though there are daily suggestions they follow no set pattern and are designed to fit into the short span of attention that children have.

#### b. Provision for Gradation

Perhaps the imaginary Wood family indicates the range of ages that would be interested in these devotions, or at least the fact that a growing family is involved. Though written for individual children, the suggestion is often made that they think the enclosed thoughts with their family and talk over the things that puzzle them. Many family adventures are portrayed and a council hour is suggested, all by means of stories.

c. Amount of Flexibility

Creativity, it has been seen, is the keynote of these materials. They make use of a great variety of resources and suggest a number of activities which do away with monotony. There is a certain element of review and repetition that might carry a certain monotony. The entire attitude is one of suggestion - Find the scripture . . . look up . . . think . . . discuss . . . sing your favorite hymn, etc.

d. Use of Special Celebration

Such seasonal celebrations as May Day, Arbor Day, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, vacation trips, Children's Day, July 4th Camp, Birthday of Vacation Church School, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, and New Year are woven naturally into boys' and girls' worship experiences.

F. Hearthstone

1. General Description

a. Attractiveness

The monthly periodical, Hearthstone,<sup>1</sup> is published by the American Baptist denomination, and was first issued in October 1949, as the Baptists came to realize their imperative assignment to help the modern home to develop a strong conviction that the work of the church and the parents can no longer be unrelated.

Some covers are more attractive than others, but they all suggest a family magazine. Some of the themes are a healthy, smiling child, two children and autumn leaves, a baby and a dog, a mother and children, a father pulling children on a sled in the snow, and a grandmother with a box from the florist.

b. Organization

In the heart of this magazine a double page is devoted to "Worship in the Family with Young Children." The page consists of printed prayers and poems, a sketch, a hymn or two, and a short meditation for the month. Beginning in February, 1952, the title was change to "Resources For Worship with Young Children" and the various poems, songs, stories and Scripture were gathered into weekly suggestions in connection with the Church School material. Four age groups are represented and indicated with each selection:

. . . . .

1. The issues studied cover the months of September 1951 to March 1952.

Nursery -3, Kindergarten 4-5, Primary 6-8, and Junior 9-11. In December, 1950, the planning session for the general contents of the year 1952 was held. At this time they discussed the important problem of helping families with young children attain a more effective plan of family worship, which would account for the increased organization and helpfulness of this page for family worship.

Other helpful features of the magazine include "A Word from The Word" with an accompanying picture on the title page; articles on the lives of great men; fiction stories for children; articles of value for youth, for parents whose children have grown up, adults with no children, adults ready for retirement, and grandmothers and grandfathers; a family counselor's page; a page on what the churches are doing in family life; a study guide for parents on one of the articles of import; poems scattered throughout and activities for children as well as book and record suggestions.

c. Cost

Each copy of Hearthstone costs twenty-five cents, or for five or more copies to one address, twenty cents each. They are sixty cents a quarter and a single subscription costs \$2.50.

2. Content

a. Biblical Material



Bible stories over a seven month's period cover four Old Testament stories and eight New Testament stories about the life of Christ. Several references from Proverbs are used and Psalm 136 is suggested as a Thanksgiving Litany. The remainder of passages are concerned with the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels and Acts, and some of the Epistle teachings.

Most Scripture selections consist of one to two verses in length with the exception of the entire chapter of Luke 2 and Psalm 136. The Moffatt version of the Bible is quoted once or twice, and Bible story books, as Jone's Tell Me About Jesus, are suggested for general reading in connection with the theme on Jesus. The brevity of the Scripture passages suggests the aim of making the Scripture that is used meaningful for a small child. One general aim is realized that of guiding young minds toward a firm dependence on God's Word in their daily lives.

b. Extra-Biblical Material

Songs are a part of most months' devotions. The music is included on the worship page. The songs are specifically children's songs except for one or two hymn tunes. Songs learned in the Church school are also utilized in the later issues. It is suggested that family enjoy such great music as Handel's "Messiah" for Christmas. There are numerous poems and such general literature as "The Vision of Sir

Launfal." A picture study is included for March and taken from the Primary Pupil's Book. General stories about animals and Sunday experiences are suggested from the Church School curriculum.

c. Themes in the Meditation

Themes carried out in the Worship suggestions include "We Thank Thee, God, For Friends," "Thank You, God, For Our Church," "Sing Thank You To God," "Christmas Means Joy," "The March of Days," "Consideration For Others," and "Jesus."

(1) Elements of Faith

God is presented as the loving Father and friend of all. Jesus is presented as the friend of children and the teacher about God. The essence of his teachings are summed up in one word: love. His death is discussed briefly with emphasis upon his attitude toward those responsible, and toward those he loved - an example of sacrifice for the sake of friendship.

(2) Application to Life

The meditations are first of all directed to parents with helps for children. One issue gives the parent direction in helping his children to learn kindness, loving, sharing and forgiving. "Love one another" is the key note. The prayers provide motivation to do things God would have a child do, and the poems show how Jesus understands and can help the child do as He should. Grown-ups

are shown that they can guide friendship toward persons of other races, religions and lands. Regarding the present day problem of attaining a Christian World, the solution is presented as putting into practice Jesus' teachings.

### (3) Relation With the Church

One month's resources are intended to guide parents and children in thoughts about their church.

#### d. Prayer

Prayers are most often in the form of printed poems or informal prose as a guide. There are several for use as a table grace. Thanksgiving Day is interpreted as prayer and the point is made that often the real spirit of prayer is found more in spontaneous expression than in the longest formal prayer of worship. The entire meditation for January is a prayer of gladness for the New Year in long conversational form. In March some prayers are very short and simple for nursery children and others more complex for Juniors, depending on the selected curriculum. An article in the November issue entitled, "Are They Learning to Pray?" gives additional helps regarding the prayer experience of Junior High boys and girls.

Prayers of thanks in the form of poems appear most frequently. The element of confession is included in the New Year meditation: "We are sorry for the mistakes we have made." Petition is seen in the thought, "Lead us

through the day," and intercession is made for one's enemies.

### 3. Methods Utilized

#### a. Amount of Time

The time required for devotions in these magazines is indeterminate. The September to January issues seem to assume that family may have only several periods of worship during the season, or even one special one a month. The February and March issue fill up the worship page with more abundant suggestions for weekly worship, but the time element is left entirely to those who plan their use.

#### b. Provision for Gradation

Though the worship material itself is devoted to parents and children, such articles as "Faith and the Unhappy Marriage" should prove helpful to young married couples. The expectant parents are reached by the church in such articles as "Expecting? So Is Your Church." The poems, prayers and meditations on the worship page are intended to help parents guide their children's development in Christian living. They are guided in helping a child understand the spiritual significance of the festivals. It is felt that parents can best guide their child's religious growth when they know what he is learning and thinking, hence the new emphasis on the church school curriculum. Numerous other articles in the magazines give encouragement to family worship and the "know-how" in its various aspects. The advantage of the use of church school materials for the child

is that he is not confused by too much, nor too varying materials. The child's love of the familiar is appealed to and he has the joy of sharing his church school experiences with interested parents.

c. Amount of Flexibility

There is a great deal of flexibility in all the elements of worship in this magazine. All material is clearly planned as resource, with the advice that the parents determine those that will be most meaningful in their own family life and select them accordingly. Poems suggest further family discussion and each member can share in the things to do that have been added in the 1952 publications. These suggested activities grow out of the belief that the most effective worship results in action. A special worship service is provided for the family's Christmas observance.

G. The Upper Room

1. General Description

a. Attractiveness

The Upper Room<sup>1</sup> is a daily devotional guide issued six times a year for family and individual use. It claims an

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1. This devotional is approved and recommended by the Board of Evangelism of the Methodist Church and the United Church of Canada. The issues studied cover the months of July-December, 1951. Reference is made to the May-June issue because of its relevance to family worship.

unbelievable circulation record of over 2,300,000 copies distributed in the home edition alone. In addition there is a circulation of twelve different languages and sixteen editions all together.

The colorful masterpieces on the cover are the first feature that meets the eye. One finds the pictures to be purposeful, for inside there is a page of interpretation written by Albert E. Bailey. The magazines here analysed have cover themes of Raphael's Sistine Madonna, da Vinci's Last Supper, and Millet's Gleaners. The May-June issue deviates from the Bible theme, in a sense, with Uhde's "Come, Lord Jesus, Be Our Guest," a fitting theme for Christian Family Week.

b. Organization

The meditations are organized around a different subject each week. The subjects are not necessarily correlated, covering rather a wide variety of Scripture meditations and Christian experience. Each meditation is written by a different author from various parts of the country. There are two special numbers throughout the year, the lay witness number with articles contributed by lay men and women, and the World Christian fellowship number with meditations by Christians throughout the world. The elements of each day's devotions include a key scripture, suggested Scripture passage, meditation, prayer, and a short thought for the day.

c. Cost

A single copy of The Upper Room costs ten cents, ten or more copies of one issue to one address, each five cents, and a subscription for two years, or two subscriptions for one year, one dollar.

2. Content

a. Biblical Material

The majority of passages used are the teachings of Jesus found in the Gospels, and the teachings of all the Epistles, with sporadic reference to Old Testament passages.

(1) Choice of Passages

In the August issue under the week's series entitled "Outdoors with Jesus" several stories of Jesus' parables and healing ministry are assigned in the Bible reading. The topic, "Rejoicing in Faith," contains a number of stories from the Acts. During December passages from Matthew, Luke and John are used constantly as various phases of the Advent story are presented.

The reference to nature in August involves the constant use of the Psalms. The week before Thanksgiving, alternate suggestions are given, one from the Psalms, the other from the New Testament for the sake of those in the armed forces who have available the New Testament only. A reference in Job is used once.

(2) Means of Presentation

The length of the portions read averages about five to ten verses a day. Two weeks in July contain the only series of consecutive passages. Entitled "meditations in Hebrews" and "The Character of Job," the development of these books and their most climactic portions are brought out.

(3) Goal Determined

Judging by the great variety of passages used, the method of skipping around in Scripture, with the primary emphasis on doctrinal teachings of faith and practice, it would seem that the goal behind the use of Scripture is to contribute to a mature, adult Christian experience.

b. Extra-Biblical Material

Though there is an absence of any music, there is an abundance of short stories or illustrations taken from life. Due to the contribution of such a great score of people from all walks of life, in all parts of the world, these meditations are exceedingly rich in this field. As was noted earlier, the art on the cover and its interpretation form a definite part of the added resources for worship. The picture of the Last Supper covers both the front and back cover.

c. Themes in the Meditation

(1) Elements of Faith



(1) Elements of Faith

In the first issue analysed (July) God was presented as loving Father, Creator, and Redeemer of the Universe. These three characteristics are present throughout. In the December edition it is particularly stressed that God is a Person, that He is purposeful, good, that the Babe of Bethlehem was God come to earth.

The heart of the purpose of this devotional magazine may be summed up in the following remark of the Editor:

"In Christ's name we are putting forth a tireless effort to win others to accept Christ as Redeemer and Master."<sup>1</sup>

The above purpose is evident in all six issues which primarily focus on a personal relationship with Jesus, the Saviour, Friend, Helper, Burden-bearer. His saving grace and transforming power are emphasized as is His oneness with the Father and His Resurrection life. One striking testimony is that of a Hiroshima victim who writes of Him, "Christ our hope." Commitment to Christ is explained and urged, the matter of choice being made clear.

There are several references to the Holy Spirit as the Guide of the Christian, and the giver of insight by His presence.

Sin is interpreted as utterly distasteful, yet a factor in human life until blasted from lives by God's

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1. Potts, J. Manning, in the editorial of The Upper Room, September-October, 1952.

redeeming power and love. There is also some emphasis on the teaching of "a spark of divinity in every man" - the inner capacities and unrealized possibilities of man.

Scripture is presented as "words to live by," "pure seed," "not void." There is a series on The Word in December, in connection with Universal Bible Sunday and on "Preaching the Word" in July. The high purpose of prayer is emphasized in a series of lessons as well as at other times.

There is considerable teaching on the life eternal. The quality of abundant life brought by Jesus Christ, beginning here and now, is contrasted with the Old Testament emphasis on life as quantity.

## (2) Application to Life

The series on "Our Mission to the Home" for a week in November gives special thought to Christ's place in the home, focusing attention on godly family living in contrast to the discord and unhappiness of unchristian homes. On Thanksgiving day the family is led into thankfulness for one another.

There is not a month that passes without abundant help for the numerous hardships faced by the family. The series on "The Character of Job" is rich with teaching concerning suffering. There is keen awareness of a world that is torn assunder with shattered hopes and a Christianity that has

suffered deep persecution, as seen particularly in the World Christian Fellowship Number. But throughout it all there is presented the provision for courage and a conquering faith.

A strain that runs through all six magazines is a motivation to Christian service. It is shown that inactivity with regard to God-given talents is actually a lack of faith in the guidance God offers, that is, in the command He gives, and a lack of vision to see the great need of the world.

The matter of witnessing, part of the pattern of the Christian life, is further clarified as not being merely by word of mouth but by daily conduct. Princess Wilhelmina in her devotional thought conceives of the portrait of Christ as being seen in the Sermon on the Mount and increasingly in the Christian. Another writer brings out the fact that this Sermon is not ideal only but practical and real.

World conscious writers will naturally write of present day problems. Dr. Frank Laubach of the World Literacy Program interprets the work of United Nations as obedience to Christ's command to love one's neighbor. The appeal of Communism is discussed and the importance of Christians working toward social justice shown. One man writes of two worlds: the world God has made and the world man has mangled.

### (3) Relationship With the Church

In the study of nature during August the point is made clear that nature is no substitute for the House of the Lord. Special Church Days as World Wide Communion, Reformation Day and Universal Bible Sunday are alluded to. The challenge of Missions and the urgency of harvest is presented. Avenues of expression are suggested, as prayers, talents, gifts, money, and lives.

d. Prayer

Suggested prayers are printed at the bottom of each page and on the back cover; the latter sometimes includes a table grace and other specialized prayers such as "A Mother's Prayer For Her Young Son," "A Patient's Prayer for Patience," etc. A book is advertised as useful in teaching prayer to children.

Thanks and praise are usually the first expression of the daily prayers. A desire for forgiveness is often expressed, sometimes following the pattern of David's Penitential Psalm. At times the prayers are absorbed in adoration. The petitions are on a high plain and there is a sense of daily commitment to God's will. Prayer for others includes those in the home, at work, and in the world.

3. Methods Utilized

a. Amount of Time

The daily devotions in The Upper Room can be read in an average of five minutes a day.

b. Provision for Gradation

For a young couple not established in the habit of family devotions The Upper Room articles occasionally encourage it and emphasize its importance. The wide range of Scripture passages and teaching for the Christian life should contribute to spiritual advancement for those particularly who are able to discern spiritual truth from the parabolic pattern of the meditations.

Parents are regularly urged to give their children a basic Christian heritage, and are reminded of the effect the home atmosphere has on a child. Often illustrations will be drawn from children, and none can know the impact as poignantly as a parent. Christ is always set forth as the head of the home. These articles are in a real sense a message from parent to parent.

For the growing family there are several suggestions such as calling a family conference, checking up on whether Jesus is at home in the home and a reminder that petty, selfish ways are determined by whether one is in or out of harmony with God's love. Old age is revered and some illustrations refer to the saintliness of those of more mature years as examples. However, the need for communion with God, so often mentioned in these meditations, applies to all ages alike.

c. Amount of Flexibility

The pattern of The Upper Room remains strictly the same. Yet the content is widely varied, and the presentation of the power of the gospel around the world is a most unique accomplishment of unity in the midst of diversity in a magazine.

The amount of participation would vary with the individual family as they creatively worked it out.

d. Use of Special Celebrations

One feature not yet mentioned is the special worship service for Christmas including prayer, scripture, songs and thoughts for meditation. Much is done in other devotions also to promote spiritual preparation for Christmas in contrast to material. Even ideas for Christian gifts are included.

July fourth is another holiday that is tied in with the topic for the week on Christian liberty. Thanksgiving Day is surrounded with the thought of God's blessings.

H. The Christian Home

1. General Description

a. Attractiveness

The Christian Home<sup>1</sup> is a monthly publication with many

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1. Issues studied include the May, August, September, October, November, and December issues for 1951.

attractive features and helpful articles for the home. The blending colors of the full sized cover as well as the subjects pictured contribute to its desirability. The scenes range from small children at home, to a portrayal of school days, to a family with older youth in worship about the fireplace. The Christmas cover contains a kodachrome picture of the original, "Adoration of the Shepherds" by Van Dyke. Throughout the magazine there is an abundant supply of pictures which are of interest because of their family appeal.

b. Organization

This magazine contains numerous articles, a Photo feature, stories, page on parent's problems, a study guide for parents, and a daily devotional guide for family worship. In the latter there is a special theme and purpose for the month. Under this main theme the devotions are divided into sub-themes. Each day and date is indicated and the form of the devotions carefully outlined. The general form, though varied at times, includes Scripture reading, meditation thought, directed discussion, and prayer. A number of sources are taken from the Child Guidance magazine, and Reader's Digest. In the issues examined here three authors have contributed the devotional material, Laura A. Athearn for four months, Edward Daniels and Edward Staples for a month each.

c. Cost

The rate for annual subscription to The Christian Home is two dollars; it may also be purchased for forty cents a quarter.

## 2. Content

The life of the family seems to be the center about which all Biblical, extra-Biblical, Meditations and prayer revolve.

### a. Biblical Material

The Gospels and Acts provide numerous incidents in the lives of Jesus and the disciples that are chosen for the Bible readings. Familiar Old Testament stories are recalled, and in one instance a member of the family is asked to read an Old Testament portion and tell the story. The Psalms are suggested for reading often during each month as are the Proverbs. Jesus teachings and what He means by them together with the many Epistle passages are the most widely used.

The Bible selections are never very long. All quotations from Scripture in the magazine itself are taken from the American Standard Version, the Revised Standard Version or the Moffatt translation, depending on the writer of the month. The goal determining the use of Scripture is expressed in the October issue during the special service initiating National Bible Week: "It is our purpose as a Christian family to make the Bible a guide to every day



life."<sup>1</sup> Daniels is more specific as to his purpose behind the use of Bible passages for the month. He urges that they be seen in relationship to the science of the day in which they were written and that "the message of the Bible for our generation" be honestly sought out. On occasion the Bible selection has no direct bearing on the meditation but is chosen for its devotional value. The method of memorization is suggested from time to time.

b. Extra-Biblical Material

Each month's materials include three or four hymns to learn along with the devotions which fill these hymns with meaning. A musical prelude of piano or recording is often suggested. General Literature is often utilized - biographies of great men and women, church history, and poems by Stevenson and Longfellow in particular. There is almost an over-abundance of poems of all types. During the Christmas Season a study is made of Christmas art as part of the worship experience. Instead of complete stories, the meditations are full of illustrations centered around life situations, some more real than others.

c. Themes in the Meditation

The devotions for May develop the topic, "What Makes a Home Christian?" In August thoughts center around Christian friendship with primary emphasis on the perfect friend, Jesus, and lessons from animal friends. Good health for the

family is the theme pursued in September and from October to December themes center on human relationships: the Christian concept of family love and unity through fellowship with God and the example of Jesus; Christian attitudes toward those beyond the home, especially in community relationships; and a combination of home and community good will, as traditional customs and symbols of Christmas are spiritualized to counteract the materialistic practices of modern life. Central themes for each month can be seen throughout the entire magazine.

(1) Elements of Faith

God the Creator is presented as a dependable God, who does not put aside the laws He has created. Perhaps primary emphasis is given to God's love and care for all. He is said to be the Friend of all people, the good and the bad.

One writer emphasizes Jesus Christ the Son of God as divine, a "part of God." Another writer speaks of Him as the greatest teacher who ever lived. His life of love on earth as an example is the center of interest, yet an attempt is made to interpret His present relationship to the home as the living, growing Spirit of goodness. Whether such phrases as "his living Spirit" and "Spirit of Christ" refer to Jesus or the third Person of the Trinity is difficult to determine.

Sin is mentioned by one writer as disobedience to God's laws, and a hardened conscience the result. The Bible is acclaimed the greatest of all books, the World's greatest devotional literature. It is interpreted as a record of man's religious growth, the Old Testament characterized as not the highest level of Christian teachings.

## (2) Application to Life

As has been seen, family relationships in the home are one of the primary interests behind the formation of these devotions - i.e. family relationships made sacred. Concrete ideas for getting along together are constantly suggested. Periods of trouble and crisis are anticipated by these devotionals, and opportunity given to discuss economic depression or hard tasks; the provision of a strong foundation of faith in God is made, so that the family will stand firm when storms of adversity come.

The motive of serving God by serving others is present in each issue. Christian giving is interpreted as sharing with others something one has and values. Christian virtues are constantly set forth. In one case in particular the twelve laws of scouting are discussed day by day and filled with meaning, though not always with clear - cut Christian meaning. Present day problems are centered more on home and community needs than world needs, with the belief that as goes the home so goes the nation and ultimately the world.

### (3) Relationship With the Church

There is only slight mention of the work of the church at home or abroad in these six issues. Sunday is made a special day in the devotions however, and the family is challenged to be God's helpers building a better world by cooperating with other Christian workers in the world.

#### d. Prayer

The form of prayer varies greatly each month. At times a prayer thought is suggested, other times a sample prayer given. Often a poem or words of a hymn are given for the prayer. A litany is used for many occasions, and a benediction used at the close of each devotional period for one month. Sentence prayers or silent prayer is also suggested. A table grace is included in three issues.

Prayers of thanks and praise are not limited to Thanksgiving time. There is a large element of petition for help in the family and in turn for others as they are made aware of needs about them. At times the prayers are led into a confession of all wrongdoing and a prayer for forgiveness of selfish ways.

### 3. Methods Utilized

#### a. Amount of Time

Though individual programs may be from two to ten minutes, the average time taken for these devotions is five minutes.

b. Provision for Gradation

Young married couples, or youth about to take this step will find some helpful articles from month to month in the body of this magazine. However its approach is primarily directed to parents and as the worship title indicates, the devotions are for the growing family.

A special provision for young children is on the first page of the devotions - a group of selected poem and songs from which the child can choose. Much atmosphere is provided, especially during the Christmas months. Each author gives special directions to the parents on how to use the devotions for best results, according to the ages represented in the home.

For the growing family lessons are learned from the familiar and well loved. Children's language is spoken, and when new words are used they are carefully explained. For older children discussion topics are often provided.

c. Amount of Flexibility

Questions are included at the close of the devotions to stimulate thought and discussion. Parents are constantly advised to vary the worship experience so that it is meaningful to each member. Once it is suggested that children draw a picture of the story. Many other activities are prescribed for the family - arranging a worship center for worship, trips to the woods, making a crêche and greet-

ing cards together. The provision for discussion enables each family to relate to their personal experiences the daily meditations.

d. Use of Special Celebrations

School holidays such as Columbus Day and Armistice Day are recognized. Halloween is made wholesome - a time for family fun. Christian Festivals as Thanksgiving and Christmas are celebrated and the idea of sharing all these special occasions of family fellowship with others is suggested. The Christmas celebration starts on the first day of December in order to beat the commercial preparations that are made. Dedication is a key word for the devotions in The Christian Home. In October there is a home dedication service, and in December the greeting cards, Christmas tree and New Year are all dedicated on separate days. There is also a special Christmas Eve service and a Christmas gift service. Provision is made during one month for special family devotions for a birthday.

I. Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to analyse selected devotional material for family worship in the light of the criteria set forth in the previous chapter.

Today is a small, neat booklet put out by the Presbyterian Church for family or individual use. Topics full

of human interest and spiritual insight are supported by a wide core of Biblical content, a correlated hymn and the meditation which centers in an illustration and application. A very close relationship to the church is fostered. There is some provision made for all ages, but the direct approach is to adults, especially in the Bible study for each month.

Discovery is a magazine for the parent of junior boys and girls as a part of the new Presbyterian Curriculum. Keyed to the life of the home as well as the life of the church, Discovery contains Bible readings for three months of family devotions. Weekly letters and other helpful articles encourage worship in the home. Some suggestion is made regarding family correlation of the materials.

Day by Day is a booklet found in the last ten pages of the Junior Workbook provided by the Presbyterian Church for a junior's personal devotions. It can be used as a guide to family worship or as source material for occasional variation. The weekly content is most meaningful for a child and is supported by his Bible story book.

Thoughts of God for Boys and Girls is prepared three times a year by the Connecticut Council of Churches for boys' and girls' daily devotions. The use of extra-Biblical material is its most outstanding feature thus supplying family worship with rich resources. The writers, well qualified educationally, get close to children's experiences and direct them Godward.

Hearthstone, a monthly magazine of the American Baptist denomination, appeals to the family at all levels through its attractive contents. The double page devoted to "Worship in the Family With Young Children" gives specific weekly resources related to the church school material.

The Upper Room is a widely used devotional published bimonthly for individual or family use. The meditations are single units on a great variety of subjects, and are contributed by Christians around the world. The material is especially rich in illustrations from life, freshly drawn from the writers' experiences. Its main impact is in the area of spiritual help for times of need.

The Christian Home is an attractive magazine from cover to cover, indicating purpose in all of its organization. The pages on devotions for the family are most complete, and designed primarily for a creative worship experience in a growing family.



CHAPTER III  
EVALUATION OF SELECTED MATERIALS  
FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

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FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

A. Introduction


The criteria determined for evaluating devotional materials have been used in analysing seven devotional guides. While these guides vary in their approach, content, and make-up, they are similar in purpose, namely to guide families in satisfactory worship experiences in the home. The next step, then, is to evaluate the findings.

The fact that the issues analysed do not exceed eight months, and involve a different number of contributors each, shall be taken into account in this consideration of findings. Because of these factors judgements may be altered on some points with a consideration of more items. However, the pattern will remain the same.

Charts will be used as means of making graphic the results of the analysis based on the given criteria. Comparative value of the guides will be revealed. An evaluation will follow on each major point in the criteria: mechanics of the books, their content, and the methods they have utilized.

Devotional	Attract-iveness	Organ-ization	Cost			
			No. of Issues	Single	Yearly	Scale
Today	X	*	12	\$ .05	\$ .60	3.
Discovery	X	-	4	\$ .35	home \$2.00 church \$1.40	1.
Day by Day	-	X	4	\$ .20	\$ .80	1.
Thoughts of God For Boys and Girls	X	*	3	\$ .30	\$ .90	4.
Hearthstone	*	-	12	\$ .25	\$2.50	6.
The Upper Room	-	X	6	\$ .10	\$ .50	2.
The Christian Home	*	*	12	\$ .40 quarter	\$2.00	5.

KEY: \* - good  
X - average  
- - limited

Scale of Expense -   
1. least expensive

C. Comparative Value of Selected Materials  
According to Structure

There is a general neatness about the appearance of Today, Discovery, and Thoughts of God For Boys and Girls, that contributes to their effectiveness. Hearthstone and The Christian Home magazines are unusually attractive from their large sized colored cover to their numerous artistic features throughout. Day by Day does not attempt any art work save a sketch or two, yet its pages have neatly spaced printing. The Upper Room has the one attractive feature of a colored cover but because of the still life portraits it is classified as less attractive to a lively family on first contact. This is not to say that taste can not be developed for this conservative and truly great art. It can be seen that pictures are the contributing factor to an attractive devotional guide.

Some devotional booklets excel in good organization whereas others have limitations along this line. Day by Day and The Upper Room are easily followed, though The Upper Room lacks a certain correlation due to the plan of daily contributors. Today, though a small pamphlet, is well organized to include many helpful features. Thoughts of God for Boys and Girls is very carefully and purposefully planned so that certain materials can be used over and over again, thus filling them with meaning in the

four month period. The Christian Home shows an amazing piece of workmanship in the way the entire magazine for a month is built around a timely theme. Discovery holds a worthy purpose to interest parents in the importance of family worship, but is limited in attaining that aim because of crowding so much material together that the appeals to parents are covered over and somehow lost. Hearthstone is in a state of transition and is steadily developing a more inclusive organization in its worship helps.

The cost of worship materials available is an important item in establishing family devotions for many homes. The Presbyterian denomination considers the project important enough to place the magazine Discovery in homes free of charge and provide for Juniors their work book containing the devotional Day by Day as well as the annual Bible story reading book, the church bearing the expense. Some churches may not be able to afford it, in which case it would be an expensive venture for the home to undertake. The Upper Room is the next most reasonably priced, followed by the Today because it comes more often. Thoughts of God is inexpensive because its material is combined in only three yearly issues. The most expensive materials are two magazines, Christian Home and Hearthstone, which of course provide many more features for the added expense.

#### D. Chart on Content of Selected Materials

CONTENT	Biblical			Extra-Biblical				Meditation Themes					Prayer Aspects						
	Stories	Psalms	Teaching	Music	Poetry	Picture	Stories	Faith			Life		Printed	Varied	Thanks.	Confess.	Pett.	Intercess.	Ador.
								God	Jesus	Spirit	Btll	Hayer, Hb.							
Devotional Guides	X			X			X	X	X	/		E	X	X	X	X	X	/	
Today	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	/	5	X	X	X	X	X	X	/	
Discovery	/	/	X	X	/		/	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Day By Day	/	/	X	/	/			X	X	/	3	/	X	X	/	X	/		
Thoughts of God for Boys and Girls	/	X	X	X	X	/	E	X	X		4	E	X	X	/	/	/	X	
Hearthstone	X	/	X	X	X	/	/	X	X		4	/	X	X	/	/	/		
The Upper Room		X	X			/	X	X	X	/	5	X	X	X	X	X	X	/	
The Christian Home	X	X	X	X	X	X	/	X	X	/	5		X	X	/	X	/		

← Key: 5 points total  
 E = exceptional feature  
 X = a main feature  
 / = a minor feature

E. Comparative Value of Selected Materials  
According to Content

1. Biblical Content

As a glance at the previous chart will reveal, all devotional guides here studied are unanimous in their selection of portions in the life and teachings of Jesus, the doctrinal and practical portions of the Epistles, and related teachings of great Old Testament prophets. All devotionals refer to the Gospels at the Advent Season. The teachings of Jesus are considered by some authorities to be most important in devotional value for childhood and adolescence.<sup>1</sup> Next to the Gospels come the great Psalms, according to these same authorities. Here again over half of the devotionals make the "world's classics in the literature of devotion" a main feature in the Bible-reading selections. All devotionals refer to the Psalms at Thanksgiving time. As was suggested in Chapter I, many of the Psalms lend themselves naturally to the experiences and needs of even a child. The least reference was made to narrative portions of both Testaments. The Bible stories in Today are chosen according to the themes, and used for the primary purpose of highlighting a certain phase of the story, whereas Hearthstone, and The Christian Home use the Bible story as

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1. Cf. Weigle, Luther Allan, and Tweedy, Henry Hallam: Training the Devotional Life, p. 48.

a means of interest to the young child; Discovery also realizes the value of giving the background story of the reading for the sake of the child. Day by Day supplements its daily devotions with the use of a Bible story book. Since Biblical material varies in its devotional values for specific age groups, the variation of Bible content in these devotionals bear a significance on the ages reached effectively.

Today, perhaps, has the most in Biblical content, with its provision for monthly book studies as well as a wide general presentation of all Scripture. Hence, it could claim an instructional value in Biblical knowledge, along with a devotional value. Use of various versions is a common practice with each devotional guide. There is a slight variation in length of portions. Day by Day, Thoughts of God, and Hearthstone contain very brief passages, the first two capitalizing on the capacity of a junior to read, and the third considering the very young child and his limitations. The other guides provide a medium length passage.

## 2. Extra-Biblical Content

The Christian Home and Thoughts of God are most outstanding in their use of extra-Biblical resources which can contribute to a greatly enriched worship experience. Hearthstone provides these sources to a lesser degree with the various ages and interests of children in mind, whereas



Today makes use of these elements on an adult level.

### 3. Meditation Themes

The Upper Room and Today contain the most extensive view of the six elements of faith considered important in the criteria. The Upper Room most often emphasizes the God-head. Yet neither devotional is overbalanced in its doctrine content, for both are high in life application. The level of this life application, however, does not involve all ages alike. By means of parables or symbols spiritual truth has been applied with amazing ease and conciseness. In the brief compass of two paragraphs the devotional phrases a challenge so as to strike at the heart of mature Christian adults' experience, or give direction to stimulate youth to consecration and empower them for effective Christian living. Both Today and the Upper Room breathe an atmosphere of a living Lord and constantly urge a personal relationship with Him. This quality is not as noticeable in Thoughts of God and Christian Home though attempt is made to approximate it in both. The elements of faith are present in the latter but both emphasize primarily the relationship to man as an outgrowth of faith. Conversely Today and Upper Room give only general suggestion for the outworking of an inner faith through human relationships. All other devotionals in one degree or another are concrete in terms of action and therefore suited to boys and girls.

It should be added that elements of faith are liable to vary in the same devotional with the change of writers. Thoughts of God as a whole, though emphasizing Jesus and God, tends toward a Unitarian position in the presentation of God. The Christian Home emphasizes Jesus as an example primarily. The Presbyterian materials hold forth a loyalty to Christ as Master, and The Upper Room, for the most part, holds the basic conservative tenets despite the daily change of writers. Hearthstone has a very simple, elementary approach in beliefs.

#### 4. Prayer

All devotionals provide a pattern prayer whether poetry or prose, that proves valuable in directing all members of the family into the terminology and wide vistas of prayer. However, Day by Day, Thoughts of God, and The Christian Home go farther in leading the family to spontaneous expression in prayer - a freedom that is important if one is to grow in his prayer experience.

The Upper Room and Today contain most aspects of prayer, though they are not always couched in language intelligible to children. The others are carefully planned to make prayer meaningful for children, but are limited in most aspects except that of Thanksgiving which is the first natural expression.

F. Comparative Value of Selected Materials  
According to Methods Utilized

1. Time

Each devotional analysed is a valuable guide to put into the hands of families who say, "We have no time for family worship." None exceed ten minutes, and usually involve only five minutes. Here the importance of organization is again felt, for if a devotional is a jumble of too many thoughts, nothing of lasting value is carried over into busy lives. The text in Today and the thought for the day in The Upper Room provide for this needed impetus. The Christian Home carefully carries out a theme from week to week. The repetition of thoughts is helpful for children. Discovery, Hearthstone, and Thoughts of God do not require any definite time and do not contribute strongly in building up a regular habit of the worship experience.

2. Flexibility

Today and The Upper Room, because of their exact form, are limited in variety and possibilities for participation unless parents are skilled in making use of them creatively. Discovery allows for some flexibility in connection with the use of Day by Day. Hearthstone and Thoughts of God have a great deal of variety and can be termed resource material for a creative family to use. The Christian Home is the only material which can boast of regularity with variety.

3. Use of Special Celebrations

Today and The Upper Room make mention of legal holidays thus indicating their appeal to adults in the business world. The Christian Home and Thoughts of God include a large number of school holidays and special days of interest to children. All devotionals include the major Christian festivals. Today goes a step further in emphasizing special church days, as does The Christian Home in providing a birthday service and numerous dedication services.

4. Gradation Chart

Devotionals	Young Couples		Parents	Children		Youth	Mature Adults
	A	H		Young	Growing		
Today	A	H	P	P	P	A	A
Discovery			A		A P	P	
Day by Day					A P		
Thoughts of God					A		
Hearthstone		H	A	A	A	H	H
The Upper Room	A		P	P	P	A	A
The Christian Home		H	A	A	A	H	

KEY: A Most Adapted  
 P Partially Adapted  
 H Help Provided in Special Articles

By examining the above chart it will be apparent that The Upper Room and Today carry an appeal primarily to youth and adults, with a partial adaptation possible for younger members of the family; that The Christian Home, Hearthstone and Discovery magazines provide a wealth of material for parents and their growing family; that Thoughts of God and Day by Day are especially aimed at a growing age level in the family, and as well as serving an individual purpose, can be useful also as resource for family use; and that these materials often contain additional helps for young married couples and youth rather than direct worship appeal.

#### G. Summary

On the basis of the criteria concerned with the mechanics, content, and method of materials for family worship, the seven devotional guides selected have been compared for their value. It was found that the most attractive materials are the magazines which contain pictures as a conspicuous feature. Some are limited in value because of haphazard or monotonous organization. The material that offers the greatest variety is also the most expensive.

The main content of all the guides consist of the life and teachings of Jesus, and related materials from the Old Testament. A few of them provide narrative Biblical material with the interest of children in mind. The meditation themes reveal a divided emphasis: one group

centers on spiritual truth with a general application in terms of challenge, whereas the other group is life-centered with only a vague spiritual content. Only three guides vary the prayer procedure to encourage spontaneous expression so that the individual will not become bound to an entirely formal prayer experience.

All guides adhere to the principle of brevity but vary in their attainment of flexibility. The Christian Home leads the group in experimenting with a good number of variations which best unite the family before God. Though each devotional can be adapted at least partially to the growing family some are more suited for adults. The magazines for the home do not provide worship guides for youth, or the aged, but articles that meet other specific needs of this age group.

CHAPTER IV  
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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A. Restatement of the Problem

The home needs help if it is to begin family worship and carry it on successfully to the spiritual growth of all concerned. The church, which alone can give this help, has responded phenomenally to this need in recent years by providing new materials for worship in the home. The purpose of this study has been to examine selected devotional materials for worship in the home.

B. Summary

The publications of three major denominations were selected for a given period of time. Criteria were organized by first investigating the difficulties involved in family worship. It was seen that time is one of the greatest problems to surmount. Furthermore, if an aid is to be adequate it must provide for the needs of each family member whether three or eighty three. Since most homes represent a wide range of ages and capacities, a flexible program, it was discovered, will bring best results. Judging the essential content to be the Bible, extra-Biblical sources, implicit doctrinal beliefs and prayer, a study was made of their



use. Finally the mechanics of a devotional - attractiveness, organization and cost - were realized to be significant in the overall scheme of things.

Next the devotional guides, seven in all, were carefully analysed on each point of the above criteria. Today, though similar in pattern, was found to be complex in the abundance of Biblical content, chosen in connection with monthly themes. The added features as well as the concise meditation - challenges were aimed at adults. Discovery, a parent-teacher magazine, revealed a project of the Presbyterian church to engage the home in its Christian teaching obligation. It provided a bare outline of daily Bible readings and brief, scattered suggestions on method, more often a persuasive appeal to initiate family worship. Day by Day was seen to be a provision of the Presbyterian church school to foster the habit of daily devotions in the life of its junior boys and girls, with the hope that it would served as a guide to family worship, perhaps inaugurating it by informal sharing of parent and child. Thoughts of God for Boys and Girls makes a unique contribution to a child's devotional life according to the analysis. Variety of pattern and wide use of extra-Biblical sources characterized its seasonal approach. The Hearthstone magazine proposed by the American Baptists three years ago relates the home and church. Only in the last few months, it was observed, have the worship suggestions

been graded and specific weekly resources made available for the family with young children. The Upper Room is recommended and used by many churches to supply the homes with daily guidance. The pattern is the same throughout, the aim being to win others to Christ as their Redeemer and Master. The method involves relating the power of the gospel around the world to members of the home. The Christian Home is a magazine similar to Hearthstone provided by the Methodist Church. There is little emphasis on church relationship. Maximum aid is given parents in how to conduct family worship with extensive content that is geared to relationships in the home and community.

Finally, the findings of the analysis were charted and a comparison was made of the values of each devotional guide. It was seen that haphazard or monotonous organization hindered the effectiveness of some guides. The magazines were most attractive by virtue of the numerous pictures, but more of a financial strain to the family than the less expensive devotionals. All guides sought to lead from worship to life action, but one group tended to be Bible-centered with a general spiritual stimulus, the other life-centered with concrete action but weak spiritual stimulus. Prayer expression was good as far as it went, but only three made effective suggestions that would allow for growth in free, informal expression. A weakness was found in most materials regarding the degree of flexibility re-

quired to interest all participants. But each denomination is making some strides toward reaching the family on its graded levels. The Presbyterians divide their efforts between youth and adults on the one hand and parents with growing children on the other. The American Baptists attempt to reach the entire family in a monthly periodical, but specialize in worship resources for the family with small children. The Methodists are utilizing both the periodical with adult content and a magazine which, despite some weaknesses in content, strikes at the highest amount of family unity.

### C. Conclusion

In this study it was a revelation to the writer, first of all, to see that devotional material of this sort has such a wide and vital contribution to make to the daily Christian life of young and old alike. Certain limitations have also been revealed which drive one to specific conclusions and suggestions:

1. No one material meets the needs of each age. Careful instruction in adaptation is needed for best results. Some guides suggest that parents adapt the materials to children's language and experience - an impractical suggestion for some parents who still need guidance on how to do so. Even persuasion to start family worship is insufficient without an outline to give definite impetus and

and direction. There is, further, a need for instruction on how to bring children's resource material into family use.

2. Implications were seen in the fact that adults must adjust their worship experience when children are small. It would be well to provide them with material which stimulates their personal spiritual growth on the side. However, there is a dynamic experience of growth involved in a democratic sharing of ideas, and the very example of a child's direct, simple approach to God can be refreshing.

3. The lack of variety in adult worship material may presume too much, and as a result hinder adults from attaining full growth in prayer and knowledge of the Bible, the worship experience becoming less vibrant.

4. The general trend is toward the use of church school materials as resource for family devotions, with the exception of The Christian Home which makes use of specialists in the field of the family. The use of church curricula reflects the pendulum swing of curriculum to a life-center. This is a dangerous move in the sense that character education may lack the firm roots of doctrinal Christianity. The personal relation to Jesus Christ, so prominent in adult devotional books, tends to be vague in materials which approach the child level.

Though it can not be said that the Scripture is

searched daily in these devotions, there is value in leading the family into a climate of Scripture each day in a devotional attitude and supplying God's direction for all of life. Though very possibly the family will grow beyond these valuable aids, they are means which the church has put at the disposal of the family unit in order to establish firmly the devotional life. If they are carefully and prayerfully used, they will be the means of molding a Christian home.

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