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A MANUAL OF PLAY PRODUCTION  
FOR THE  
AMATEUR CHURCH GROUP

By

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A Thesis

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To the

"Brooklyn Presbyterians"

who have lived with this  
thesis from Sunrise to  
April and without whom  
it could never have been  
written, it is affection-  
ately dedicated.

Gift of the Author

24999

September 15, 1946

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## INTRODUCTION

A MANUAL OF PLAY PRODUCTION  
for the  
AMATEUR CHURCH GROUP

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem

With the increasing popularity of the media of motion pictures, the theater and the radio as means of entertainment, and with the perfecting of still another step in the field of science, television, there has come an increasing recognition of the effectiveness of dramatic production. Not merely as a source of entertainment and diversion has it become popular, but as a method of education. Educators are realizing in a new way how much can be accomplished by the presentation of material in dramatic form. Lessons learned in this way are less readily forgotten than if presented to the pupils in any other form.

The Church also has become aware once more of the effectiveness of the dramatic method, originally a tool of the Church. This method has been used increasingly and in a variety of ways to teach the great truths of the Bible and life. Because the learning principles of acquiring knowledge through seeing and doing are practiced through the use of this method, it is now generally accepted as holding no small place among the techniques of Christian Education. Religious Drama Councils have been set up under a number of Church federations and councils, and the

available source materials for such work are increasing rapidly. Almost every dramatic publishing house now has a Religious Drama Department, with plays, pageants, and dramatic services being written to cover every possible need of the Church life.

Although the value of dramatics as a means of Christian Education is recognized by most Church leaders, they are often loath to attempt a program of that sort, feeling that they are inadequate to direct such work. This study will therefore endeavor to fill the need for concrete suggestions as to how to proceed when confronted with a group of young people who demand, "Let's give a play!"

The thesis will take the form of a manual of play production, suitable for even the most simple Church set-up. In order to present suggestions in concrete form, it will outline, step by step, the procedure followed by the writer with a group of Seniors in a recent presentation of the play Where Love Is by Iden Payne.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of experiences involved in this project, the manual will set forth principles and techniques which may be adapted to any Church situation.

Since the question, "What play shall I use?" is always a pertinent one, a bibliography will be included which may be used as a guide in selecting plays, not only

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1. Published by Walter H. Baker Co., Boston, Mass.

for certain occasions, but also for individual group needs. In order to facilitate further such selection, this bibliography will be annotated. An appendix dealing especially with Biblical costuming will also be included, since the play under discussion does not call for Eastern attire.

#### B. Significance of the Problem

In the age of 'seeing is believing', the method of expressing truth in dramatic form is a valuable one. Christianity's tenets, presented through the medium of a well-organized and inspiring play, have a way of becoming more attractive, more vital than when they come through many of the other media sometimes employed by the Church. In work of this sort, not only is the desire for self-expression fulfilled, but both the cast and the audience receive spiritual blessing and strength through the message of the play.

Therefore, it is necessary that Christian leaders have some sort of background and experience in dramatization and its methods and uses. Young people want to see for themselves, and this is one of the best ways of directing that vision.

Dramatization fulfils one of the basic needs of a true religious experience, that of learning how to work together as Christians. Play production is a group effort,

and therein lies great value. It deals with each member of the cast as an individual and as part of the significant whole. As Emma Sheridan Fry states it:

"Educational dramatics does not attempt to train actors, it develops human beings. It deals, not with a 'talent' but with a universally active instinct; it practises the player in living, not in the technique of an art; it summons him to activities related to his own evolution as a man, not to commercial, industrial, or art obligations. It makes of him a citizen, training toward universal brotherhood; it does not specialize him as a craftsman or use him to help along the success of an experiment in entertaining." 1

That the problem is a significant one cannot be denied. Dramatization is an important experience in the life of the participant, and through him it assumes importance to those receiving the portrayed message.

"Bible dramatics in its magnificent sweep takes in all the heights of idealism, and all the depths of human woe. It points to the dazzling purity of the beauty of holiness and shrinks from the shuddering darkness of besotted sin. It shows the power of love, the folly of hate, the strength of brotherhood, the heroism of faith, the gentleness of forgiveness, the joy of giving, the patience of hope, the serene peace of the life everlasting. This is no child's play. It is a glorious adventure, a daring exploration into the brightest beckonings, the richest values, the irreducible realities of life." 2

. . . . .

1. Ferris, A.E., Following the Dramatic Instinct, Missionary Education Movement of the U.S. and Canada, N.Y. 1922  
Quoted on p. 10.
2. Raine, James Watt, Bible Dramatics, Century Co., N.Y.,  
London, 1927 pp. 18, 19.

To realize these potential values, an adequate knowledge of techniques and materials is essential for the amateur director. Because intended for the novice, this thesis will not be all-inclusive or elaborate, but will serve merely to point out in a practical form those simple principles basic to work of this type.

### C. Method Employed in Studying Problem

As already stated, the producing of the play version of Leo Tolstoy's Where Love Is, There God Is Also, prepared by Iden Payne, will be the basis of this thesis. It is a one-act drama, with six main characters, and an off-stage voice. The actual presentation time is not longer than thirty minutes.

Beginning with the process of selection which culminated in the choice of this particular play, the proposed manual will carry through step by step all that was involved in its successful presentation. These steps are the factors involved in the choice of a play, preliminary preparations, play rehearsals, staging, presentation, and evaluation.

The annotated list will consist of the plays which the writer, after a careful examination and evaluation of more than fifty selected plays, feels are most adaptable to the amateur Church group. The materials will be

classified as to age group, occasion, and type.

#### D. Sources of Working Materials

Although actual experiences will comprise the main source for the thesis, these will be supplemented with suggestions from the writings of those considered expert in the field.

**PREFACE TO MANUAL**

## PREFACE TO MANUAL

The manual of play production has been prepared to fill the need, which has arisen among lay workers and Christian education directors, for help in techniques of presenting material in dramatic form. Its value lies in the fact that it has been based upon an actual production. Therefore, all the material is first-hand and workable. The account of the writer's experiences in producing the play Where Love Is, an adaptation of Tolstoy's story of the same name by Iden Payne, has been supplemented with suggestions and principles from various authorities in the field. The annotated list is intended to facilitate the selection of suitable plays for any age group or occasion. It is not complete, but consists of a representative list of the available materials for use in a small Church situation.

Most of the techniques set forth in this manual are not new in dramatic circles; it is the purpose of the writer that by their restatement and by concrete illustration, they will prove helpful to those who wish to venture into the field of Christian education through the use of dramatics.

## CHAPTER I

### FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE CHOICE OF A PLAY

# CHAPTER I

## FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE CHOICE OF A PLAY

### A. Introduction

As already stated, that the dramatic method of approach to the truths of God is a valuable one is not to be questioned. It has been tried repeatedly, and found to be efficacious. Often it has been the means of bringing new understanding, new values, new ideals to the consciousness of those who participate as well as to those who are in the audience.

It is essential, therefore, that the vehicle of expression, the play or pageant itself, be chosen with the utmost care and discretion. The play must fill as perfectly as possible, the need for which it is intended.

In the process of selection, certain basic factors must be kept in mind, factors which may be considered in terms of the questions Who? Why? What? They are the factors of group, of purpose, and of form and content, which will be considered in turn.

### B. Members of the Group - Who?

Drama constitutes a contribution which the young people of the Church are capable of making, although it is

an effective method for all ages. Probably the best age group with which to work is that ranging from fifteen to twenty-five. This would include both Seniors and young people. Of this, Osgood says,

"The dramatic urge is at its maximum with young people. They have romance, vigor, natural grace, self-confidence, and zest for self-expression. They are likewise instinctive team players. Older folk are self-conscious, their concept of drama has grown theatric, they 'feel foolish' as actors, but the sight of earnest youth still meets them. Children, of course, are naive and appealing, but their drama cannot be substantial. Young people are uniquely called to this specialty in Church life. The minister who is interested to bring truth to living utterance by dramatization, will find his young people his Aaron and Hur to right and left of him. They will gladly become his living words. They will feel the awe of the preaching function. They will count themselves valuable to the Church in a dignified, specialized department. They will be contributing what no one else can do so well." <sup>1</sup>

The leader should know her group as intimately as possible before venturing into the field of religious dramatics, for in selecting a play, she should have her players and their abilities well in mind. If seeking for a play with a definite number of speaking roles, visualizing the possibilities for actors for each, the leader will find the task of casting easier in the end, even though the selection may be more difficult.

As important as technique and acting ability are, they will be as nothing if the individual is incapable of feeling and incorporating within himself the spirit and

. . . . .

1. Osgood, Phillips E., Pulpit Dramas, p. xvi,  
Harper and Bros. N.Y., London 1929

message of the play. The play therefore must be within the individual's spiritual and emotional capacity.

In dealing with a specific group, it is wise to remember that there should be more persons in the group than there are parts in the play, for there are important jobs to be taken care of which do not call for acting. The cast, then, should be smaller than the group itself. Therefore, in selecting a play, the leader should have each individual in mind, noting his capabilities and also his physical appearance, an essential requisite for certain parts.

The Senior Christian Endeavorers of the Classon Avenue Presbyterian Church wanted to present a play. They had attended a summer conference and had received a new vision of the importance of witnessing as Christian Young People. It had never fallen to the lot of this group to be entrusted with the special privilege of testifying through dramatization. They had been considered too young by the Young People's Society for any such undertaking, but now in the dignity of their fourteen-to-sixteen years, they felt ready to do their share in enriching the worship experience of those in the Church. Each member had experienced a new sense of commitment to Christ and therefore, each felt that he had a message to bring before the congregation. As yet there had been no way to make a public stand for Christ, and the Seniors were eager to 'let everybody know'. So the cry became, "Can't we do a play?"

Please let us give a play!"

Sensing that at last the group was ready to be given a share in the responsibilities of the Church worship, the leader asked that the matter be discussed in the next business meeting of the society. Here, while the leader merely sat and listened, the Seniors decided that, provided they received the proper permission, they would present a play. They wished one that was already published, for they considered themselves too busy to write one of their own. Having voted upon this plan, they asked the leader to be their guide in carrying out their plan.

The dramatic experience of the group was decidedly limited. From the ranks of the boys, only three out of six had ever participated in anything more than a Children's Day pageant. The five girls had had about the same opportunities. With such a limited background, the leader had ample grounds for speculating upon the wisdom of such an undertaking. But there was one factor which outweighed such considerations. That was their deep desire to voice a message. If they were eager, then half of the problems were already solved, for they were willing to work and they were willing to give up precious play time for rehearsals. Thus, armed with the thought that Manuel, Kenneth, and Alexander had had previous experience and that Elizabeth was taking a course in Dramatic English,

the leader consented to undertake the task.

Since there were only eleven in the group, it was essential to look for a play with a small cast, preferably using only half the number available. This would leave enough Seniors to fill the various managers' positions. The other requirement as far as cast went was that the parts not be long or difficult, for the group was comparatively inexperienced.

#### C. Occasion and Purpose for Dramatization - Why?

A play should not be presented just for its own sake; rather, there should be some reason or purpose for the effort. That is, there should be some motivating factor for this form of expression of worship. Often a special season of the year or a particular event in the life of the Church may be heightened through the use of an appropriate play.

Upon consulting the Sunday School Superintendent, it was discovered that one of the best times for the Seniors to present a play was at Thanksgiving. Certainly that time was appropriate, for the purpose of the group had been to give thanks to God publicly. The play selected, then, would satisfy the desire of the Seniors for expression, besides heightening for the Church one of the important seasons of the year.

D. Form and Content of the Play Itself - What?

In choosing a play, first there is the suitability of the plot to be considered in relation to the group and the purpose for its presentation. Is the cast of the right size? Does the message of the play fit the occasion and purpose?

Meeting the above requirements, however, is not enough for, regardless of its purpose, any play, to be effective, must meet certain dramatic standards. It is therefore necessary to judge the orderliness of the basic pattern. If there is unity of structure, that is, if the sequence of events leads in steps to the choice which is inevitable in any play, it is probably a play that will lend itself readily to production. The best procedure for which to look is that of basing the whole plot around one person. This will also produce unity in the structure of the drama. The play must be permeated with a sense of dignity,<sup>1</sup> and therefore, if the script tends to be too colloquial, the reverent spirit will be lost. The dialogue, which is the most essential single element in a workable play, should be brief, and as natural as possible, that it may be easily spoken. Dialogue with a majority of Anglo-Saxon words is the best, for it is more likely to be readily spoken and understood than any other.<sup>2</sup>

. . . . .

1. Raine, James Watt, Bible Dramatics, p. 91, Century Co., N.Y. and London, 1927
2. Bates, Esther Willard, The Church Play and its Production Walter H. Baker Co., Boston, Mass. 1938 p.52

When considering the suitability of the plot, not only the foregoing technical details must be taken into account, but also the suitability of the situation posed in the play. There must be nothing in either the ideas or dialogue which would offend any member of the cast or audience.

Besides the suitability of the situation and general structure of the written material, the problem of the dramatic elements included must not be ignored. It must have the dramatic strength necessary to put across the story and message.

Eastman and Wilson, in their book on Drama in the Church, ask eleven questions concerning the dramatic strength of the play:

1. Does it reach the emotions?
2. Do the characters seem real?
3. Is the conflict adequate?
4. Does the conflict rise to a climax?
5. Is the suspense sustained?
6. Do the characters have to make important choices?
7. Is the theme clear and worth-while?
8. Is the solution convincing?
9. Does the play reveal struggles common to the experience of the audience?
10. Does it present contrasting moods?
11. Does it have a well-knit episodic structure? <sup>1</sup>

The answers to these questions should be in the affirmative, in order to insure the cast and audience of a worth-while spiritual experience. There should be humor,

. . . . .

1. Eastman, Fred, and Wilson, Louis, Drama in the Church, pp. 24, 5, 6, Samuel French Co., N.Y., Los Angeles 1933, 1942.

be it subtle, or laugh-provoking, and a deep sense of awe or reverence.<sup>1</sup> While emotion is necessary, there should be "no sloppy emotionalism",<sup>2</sup> but real "spirituality in terms of humanity".<sup>3</sup> There should be a progression of emotions rather than progression of events.<sup>4</sup>

Characterization is one of the most important items to be discussed in connection with play selection. As a general rule, the fewer characters there are, the more unified the play will be. There should be contrasts between characters, some sharply defined, and others more subtle. The characters should be consistent throughout the whole play,<sup>5</sup> and the qualities which each possesses should be of permanent value to the actor, enabling him to either accept as good, or reject as loathsome the characteristics portrayed.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Bates, op. cit. p.52
2. Ibid. p.4
3. Ibid. p.4
4. Eastman and Wilson, op.cit. p.22
5. Bates, op. cit. p.52
6. Edland, Elisabeth, Principles and Techniques in Religious Dramatics pp. 19-21, Methodist Book Concern, N.Y., Cinn., Chicago 1926

If the portrayals are too hard for the actors to express, the play should not be used. The players should feel the spirit of the play and of each character. As Kimball says, they must be "filled, not drilled".<sup>1</sup> The main emphasis of all religious play production should be that of character development rather than elaborate mechanical techniques.<sup>2</sup> However, if there are not sufficiently good acting opportunities, the spirit of the play, no matter how worthy, will not reach across the pit to the audience. Characters must be true to life, and, if it is a Biblical drama, true to the Bible.<sup>3</sup> They must be universal, that is, of a nature that everyone may be able to understand.

There is another question which must be considered in the selection of the play. That is, what are the demands of the play as to equipment?

If the facilities are such that there are no stage, curtains, lights, or properties readily available, the selection of a play will be affected considerably. There are many effective plays which require the minimum in staging, and there are many audiences who are able to

. . . . .

1. Kimball, Rosamond, The Wooing of Rebekah, p.6, Chas. Scribner's Sons, N.Y. 1925
2. Edland, Elisabeth, Children's Dramatization, p.31, Pilgrim Press, Boston, Chicago, 1926
3. Raine, op.cit. p.132

picture the setting merely through the power of the spoken word. This, of course, is a real challenge to the actor. No matter how simple the setting, however, if a setting is used, it must be credible; there must be no discrepancies between the plot and the stage.<sup>1</sup> Even if there are only two chairs upon the stage, they must be in keeping with the period depicted, the economic situation, the country, the age of the characters, and the whole mood or tone of the drama. If such details are impossible to accomplish, then the play which requires them is not suitable for the group, no matter how moving the message, or how profound the thought. The same principle must work with regard to the effects of lighting, costuming, and character make-up. If these details are not as perfect as possible in every way, the illusion which the play seeks to create will be spoiled.

The financial limitations of the group may also play a part in the question of choice of vehicle. Elaborate pageants are not suitable for small churches with limited financial abilities. Here the question of royalty must be considered, the production fee placed upon certain plays, usually the works of famous authors. The amateur producer often finds the right play among those listed with royalties, but feels that the fee would put too much added expense upon the production. There is

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1. Bates, op.cit. p.52

one word of advice which every authority offers to the amateur on this subject, namely, to use the royalty play. It is true that there are many non-royalty plays which are excellent, but if a royalty play suits the need and the group, the wisest thing to do is to employ that which will reap most benefits for audience and cast. If it is the correct choice, the expense of the royalty will somehow be met.

The last and most important consideration is the effectiveness of the message of the play. The poorest type of play is the one with too obvious attempts to teach; it is the type to avoid. The best plays will be those which have a definite religious effect upon both the audience and cast, those which leave the participants knowing that they have been with God.<sup>1</sup>

"If, as a result of seeing the play, the men and women in the audience are lifted closer to God and inspired to go out and live more Christ-like lives, then the play is a religious play. So, too, with the actors. If the interpretation of their roles broadens their sympathies and purifies their hearts by a sense of the sacredness of life, then the play is a religious play." <sup>2</sup>

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1. Eastman and Wilson, op.cit. p. 26.
2. Ibid. p. 24

These factors, then, were kept in mind as the leader of the Senior C.E. proceeded to examine plays. The simplicity of cast required by this group, the Thanksgiving theme, and the knowledge of the qualities that make a good play were all taken into consideration. Ideally the Seniors themselves should have had an opportunity to read many plays and been given a wider choice in the matter but because the group did not have time at their disposal when they could read and evaluate a number of plays, the leader undertook the task of finding the proper one. However, she kept the group informed of progress made and they followed the reports of the process of selection with interest and enthusiasm.

It soon became apparent that there were few Thanksgiving materials to be had and that those available were secular rather than religious dramatizations. Therefore, it was necessary to search for something with a theme which could be adapted to Thanksgiving. Finally, because its message lent itself to such adaptation and because it met the other requirements, Iden Payne's Where Love Is, based on Tolstoy's well-known story, was selected.

The story of the play is that of the old show-maker, Martin Avdyeitch, whose love of God prompts him to help those who need care. As he reads his Gospel one night, he hears Christ calling, and is told that He will visit Martin's basement shop the next day. All the

following day, Martin searches each pair of boots that trudge past his window, but everyone is familiar; there is no Stranger to be found. At the end of the day, disappointed because of his fruitless search, Martin lights his lamp and once again turns to his Gospel. From the dark corner of his little room, Martin hears the Voice once again, and each person for whom he has done some little act of kindness during the day appears in a vision to tell him that "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me".

The play with its cast of six fit into the size of the group perfectly, for it seemed that there would be a job for each Senior to manage. Some would act, while others would tend to the costumes, stage-set, make-up, prompting, and the accompanying worship service. No one would be overburdened with too many responsibilities.

Although out of the six characters in the play, only three were young, it was felt that the Seniors could step into the parts with naturalness and poise. There were Martin, an old shoemaker; Gerasim, a merchant; a young woman; Stephanuitch, an old soldier; an old Applewoman; and Ilya, a twelve-year-old child. None of the characterizations seemed overly difficult with the exception of Martin. When selecting the play,

the leader had been thinking about the individuals in the group and therefore had an assurance that each part could be filled adequately.

The plot and its dramatic version seemed to be just what the group desired. There was unity of structure, and each scene within the one act added to heighten the climax. The repetition of Martin's eager scanning of the passersby was the most pronounced element of suspense.

The set which was required was a simple basement room, not too neat, and rather poor. This did not seem too difficult to accomplish, since the Classon Avenue Church was equipped with a stage and some properties.

There was a royalty fee of \$5.00 on the play. After debating the various possibilities, it was decided that the message of the play was worth the royalty fee, and thus the last obstacle which might have prevented the presentation of Martin's story was removed.

The message of love and goodwill, and Martin's reward for humble service seemed to have a definite link with the Thanksgiving theme, and therefore, the leader prepared to present the play to the group.

#### E. Summary

There are many factors which must be considered before a play may be chosen for production. In terms of

rules or principles of what to look for in a play, the writer would suggest the following:

The leader must be acquainted with the group with which she is to work in order that there be complete understanding between them.

There must be motivation on the part of the group to present a message in dramatic form, that is, there must be a definite occasion or purpose for which the dramatization is to be used.

There must be careful study of the available materials before the final selection of the play to be used. In this process there are certain criteria upon which to base judgment of the play:

- The members of the group must be taken into account, regarding their age, their spiritual and their dramatic experience and ability.
- The cast must suit the size of the group so that the actors are not burdened with other details which might detract from their handling of the parts.
- The plot of the play must be technically sound.

- There must be adequate dramatic elements to carry the play to a lofty climax.
  - The characterizations must portray real rather than idealized people.
  - The setting required must not go beyond the limitations of the building in which it is to be presented.
  - The play must suit the treasury of the group, but the group must not deprive themselves of the best plays because of small royalty fees.
  - The play must be adapted to the purpose and occasion and must bring a message which will enter into the lives and hearts of the audience and cast in a new and vital way.
- This is the most important requisite.

CHAPTER II  
PRELIMINARY PREPARATIONS

## CHAPTER II

### PRELIMINARY PREPARATIONS

#### A. Introduction

Since the message of a drama reaches the hearts of cast and audience only when it is prepared as carefully as possible, a great responsibility is laid not only upon the director, but upon the participants as well. If a play, intended to portray a Christian truth, is not well produced, those in the audience who do not agree with the ideal, nor even with Christianity itself, for that matter, will have a fine opportunity to ridicule and sneer. Whatever is done in the Church of Christ must be done well, lest its message suffer in comparison with secular efforts. Although elaborate portrayals are not necessary, nevertheless there must be congruity in the entire presentation.

This chapter will deal with the all-important preliminary preparations; the presentation of the play to the group, the qualifications necessary in a leader, and the difficult task of the selection of cast and managers.

#### B. Presentation of the Play to the Group

Approximately a month before Thanksgiving, the

leader called a special meeting of the Seniors. The play Where Love Is was read for their approval. The setting was described, and the course of action summarized at the proper points in the script. The group unanimously voted to work on this play for their Thanksgiving offering to the Church. An opportunity was given for other plays to be requested, but none were suggested. A date for try-outs was chosen, to be a week later.

There are various ways to present a play to a group. The one chosen in this case was that of having it read dramatically by the leader. The danger in this method is obvious; the players are prone to adopt the leader's characterizations instead of developing their own, when they finally start rehearsals. However, if the leader can read it without setting such a pattern, only changing the voice slightly to indicate the speech of a different character, the message of the play is presented, but no hints are given to the future cast on character study. It is essential that each person develop his own particular role, in order to make the experience an opportunity for self-expression and for character study that is valuable.

Another method is "round reading".<sup>1</sup> This is a way

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1. Deseo, Lydia Glover, and Phipps, Hulda Mossberg, Looking at Life Through Drama, p. 18, Abingdon Press, N.Y., Cinn., Chicago 1931

in which everyone may participate. The play is read around the circle of people, each one reading the speeches in turn. This method is the least satisfactory, for it makes it difficult to keep the thought moving along and to keep the reverent spirit in which the play ought to be presented. For who will not laugh when things become switched and the role of the Applewoman falls to one of the boys?

A third method of presenting the play may be the "cast method".<sup>1</sup> A tentative cast is chosen, and they read the parts assigned to them. This is excellent for a preliminary view as to what the production may be like, but it, too, has its draw-backs. The tentative cast may feel specially selected for the parts and, when the try-outs place someone else in the roles, hard feelings and wounded pride may result.

It is difficult to say which method is best. Probably the ideal method would be that of passing the manuscript from member to member until everyone has read it. But even there a difficulty exists, for by the time the one playbook has made the rounds for approval, either the production date will have been passed, or the ones who read the play first will have forgotten it. And not more than one script should be purchased until the play has definitely been decided upon.

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1. Ibid.

### C. Introspection on the Part of the Leader

Between the meeting when the Iden Payne play was approved and the night set for try-outs, the Leader had time to reflect upon those qualities necessary in a director.

There are three major requisites for an amateur play director. First, she must know human nature; this is important in dealing with actors and stage characters alike. Then, she must have a working knowledge of the Bible, if the play is to be a Biblical one, and a general background of history and customs in order to help her with any other play which might be selected. Last, she must know how to achieve dramatic effects.

If the director is well acquainted with the people who comprise the group with which she is to work, she has already made one great advance in the procedure which she will follow in carrying through the production to a successful completion. For a knowledge of the actors and the managers is very important, both in casting and in working with the play. The director should know their thoughts and their general point of view, for these will affect the interpretations which they give to their roles. For a while the director will probably be the only one who shows any enthusiasm over the play.<sup>1</sup> It will be she who has the

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1. Raine, *op.cit.* p.357

vision of the completed picture, and she must let no one sway those ideals.<sup>1</sup> Raine says, "The director must never forget that she is dealing, not with professional actors, who have presumably mastered their art, but with a group of rather irresponsible, if not frolicking young people".<sup>2</sup> These young people will never be where they are wanted and needed at the moment they are called. They will lose their scripts, arrive late to rehearsals, forget hand-props, and fool all the time the director is trying to perfect a scene or act. Therefore, the director must have deep resources of patience and self-control upon which to draw, as well as the ability to handle people, creating in each the sense of responsibility for his part in the final production. With young people especially, she should be an "absolute despot, but courteous, humorous".<sup>3</sup>

It is essential that the director understand the play thoroughly. Together with the actors, she may work out the interpretation carefully before the rehearsals begin, and once all have agreed upon one accepted interpretation, it should not be changed.<sup>4</sup> All details of background-customs,

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1. Edland, E., Principles and Techniques in Religious Dramatics, p. 45
2. Raine, op.cit. p.357
3. Ibid. p.25
4. Edland, E., op.cit. 45

costumes, geography, history which might be entailed in the production should be well-known to the leader, for there should be no inaccuracies in the play which might destroy the message of the work. This, if the play is a Biblical one, naturally demands an intimate knowledge of the Bible and of all that is connected with it.<sup>1</sup>

But knowledge of people, and knowledge of material will not produce a play if there is no knowledge of those elements which must be taken into consideration during the preparations prior to the actual performance. Some would classify these as "dramatic elements". Raine has listed five suggestions for the director which are paraphrased below:

1. Set the players at ease; encourage them to interpret for themselves.
2. Stimulate team work. There must be harmony if they are seeking to stimulate emotion in the audience.
3. Begin rehearsals promptly; keep the actors at work, for they can learn by watching others.
4. The director is responsible for the play; he must achieve efficiency.
5. Attend to as many technicalities before the rehearsals as possible.<sup>2</sup>

Each player will need some coaching in the course of the rehearsing. In this connection, the director must employ the greatest tact, correcting where it is needed, but always in a private session with the actor, never in

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1. Raine, op. cit. p. 11  
2. Ibid. p. 357

front of the whole cast. Each player must be treated alike, and each must realize that his part is essential. The director must make this clear. It is important that each actor be inspired with confidence not only in the director, but in his own special ability to play the part assigned to him. The leader's own enthusiasm for the play should be caught by those working with her on the production. Hers is the sole responsibility for the final production. She casts, supervises the set, nominates committee chairmen, sets rehearsal times, controls the mood and tempo of the play, helps the actors create their parts, inspires, encourages, praises when she honestly can, and is generally responsible for the completed stage picture.<sup>1</sup> The director must not be afraid of hard work, for it will be hard and often discouraging. She must be a clear thinker, for each scene must be carefully planned so that the continuity of the whole will not be destroyed. Above all, she must not be easily flustered, for a cast will never respond to a leader who does not instill in the players a feeling of confidence and security under her direction.

The director must be able to handle people and situations. She needs to be something of a psychologist

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1. Bates, op. cit. p.60

in order to keep the cast working together toward the one common goal. And that goal, which for every Church group should be the message or purpose of the play, should be uppermost in the mind and heart of the director. No matter how beautiful the play, no matter how deeply the actors feel the message, it will be lacking something if the director does not share those emotions. Sincerity on the part of the director will be reflected in the work of the actors, for it is from the leader that they take their advice and ideas.

Thinking about these ideal requirements for a director, even an amateur director, the leader of the group wondered whether she had not begun a project which might fail due to some lack on her part. But she knew her group, she could find out about the background necessary for Tolstoy's story, and she deeply felt the message of the play. With the aid of several willing assistants, she felt that the play could be given the proper setting and costumes, and her own experience would have to serve as a source-book when it came to acting techniques. The next step, therefore, was to cast the play.

#### D. Selection of Cast and Managers

The best, and only wise, method when dealing with a group which is not very well known by the director, is

the try-out method of casting. The director herself should be well acquainted with the plot and characters of the play before the try-outs are held. If possible, the playbooks should be distributed a week before the try-outs are to be held in order that the prospective players may become familiar with the parts in which they are interested. When the time comes for the try-outs to be held, it is wise to use the stage upon which the performance will be presented if it is feasible to do so, for it will make the whole procedure much more serious and dignified.

The director should have for each participant a list of the portions of dialogue to be used for each character. Then each person trying out for a specific part will read the same piece. This, while being the fairest way, will also aid the judges in their selections. To be impartial, it is wise for the director to ask at least two people to be critics with her. Each judge should keep a rating sheet for every contestant, noting at least four things:

1. Physical appearance for the role
2. Voice, particularly strength, control,  
flexibility
3. Native acting ability
4. Spiritual need of the individual <sup>1</sup>

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1. Overton, Grace Sloan, Drama in Education, Theory and Technique, p.150, Century Co., N.Y. and London 1926

Other aspects which may be observed are the actor's interpretation, cooperative spirit, need for social relationships. Bates says, speaking of the director in the capacity of casting agent, "Besides being an artist in drama, he must be also something of a curer of souls".<sup>1</sup> In preparing Christian drama, it must be remembered that the main goal is not the final production (although that is important), but what the play can do in the lives of those who for a time live as the characters in that play. If that is in the minds of the judges, and if the try-outs are preceded by prayer for direction in the selecting of the cast, the play, no matter how the performance turns out, will have brought new meaning to some lives.

The contestants should not "try-out" in front of the whole group, but should come individually to be judged. In this way, no one will be able to incorporate another's interpretation into his own performance, as may unwittingly be done after hearing someone else read the same material.

It is easiest for the judges if all the persons interested in a particular character try-out for it one after the other, without paying any attention to the other characters until the try-outs for the former be

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1. Bates, op.cit.p.72

complete. With small groups, it is possible, if time permits, to let each person try for as many parts as he wishes, but if the group is large it should be limited to two parts for each. Then, if the judges are not satisfied with the contestants for a particular part, they may ask others to try the role, also.

The play Where Love Is had been read to the Seniors on Sunday night. The try-outs were set for the following Wednesday evening before prayer meeting. Since the playbooks had not arrived in time to be distributed, it was necessary to have the try-out date soon after the preliminary reading in order that the group might not forget the plot and characters. But by Wednesday night, the copies of the play had arrived, in time to be used.

The leader opened with prayer that the right selection might be made.

A list was placed upon the table in the room where the contestants were to wait. It indicated the portions to be read for every character; thus the Seniors were able to look over their parts while they waited to be called. The list was as follows:

TRY-OUTS

Gerasim	page 5 to top page 7
Martin	page 16
Woman	top page 10 to bottom page 10

Stephanuitch	Bottom page 11 to bottom page 12
Ilya	page 14
Applewoman	top page 13 to bottom page 14
Voice	page 17

The try-outs were held upon the stage which would be used for the performance of the play, and two of the judges sat near the front of the room, while the director sat in the back. In that way, the volume of each voice could be ascertained. The judges were two women of the Church, one who knew some of the Seniors, and who had had some experience with the religious dramas presented by various groups of the Church. The other was the principal of a public school, who did not know the group at all, but who knew drama as well as psychology of adolescents. Each kept a sheet upon which they noted their criticisms and commendations.

The try-out list was followed, beginning with the character Gerasim. Because "Martin" was the unifying character in the play, he was invariably the other member of whatever dialogue there was. Three boys came to the try-outs, and therefore, each was called upon in rotation fashion to read Martin's speeches. This was done partly to avoid monotony, and partly to aid in the difficult task of choosing someone for that part, the lead of the play.

Each member of the group was allowed to try as many parts as he wished and, when the results were compiled, it was noted that all the boys had tried every man's part, and all the girls had tried every woman's part. Since everyone had an equal chance, the judges felt that the final selection of cast was the best possible one that could be made from the potential actors and actresses available. It was announced that the selection of cast would be made known after prayer meeting.

Two of the girls had asked that they be excused from being in the play, but they did want to help. They therefore were asked to head committees. The boys who were absent were assigned jobs so that everyone in the society had some special responsibility.

Most of the Seniors stayed for prayer meeting, in order to learn the results of the try-outs. These were then announced:

Manuel Garcia was to take the lead, Martin Avdyeitch. He was chosen because of his exceptional acting ability and his deep spiritual feeling. This choice had been unanimous.

Anthony Basta was chosen to play Gerasim. His tall, straight, almost regal bearing, together with his rich, deep voice, seemed to fit him for the part of the wealthy merchant.

Betty Szigety was given the part of the soldier's wife. She was a little too heavy for the part, but hers was the best interpretation, and her enunciation was clear. It was important that she be given a part as a means of becoming more firmly grounded in the things of the Spirit.

James Cochran looked the part of Stephanuitch, round shouldered and pale, but besides that, he was able to act the part well. His rather clipped speech fitted into the interpretation of the old soldier very well.

Betty Savage, a slim, vivacious girl, did the part of Ilya so well that the decision of the judges had been unanimous. She had the energy that this part, in contrast to the others in the play, needed.

The choice of Edith Reale for the part of the Applewoman surprised the rest of the group, for she was the shy one of the Seniors. Although her interpretation of the part was only fair, it was felt that the experience of being in something like Where Love Is would be a most valuable one. She had had a spiritual experience the summer before and this would help considerably in her treatment of her part. The judges knew that she needed to be drawn more firmly into the group and surmised that participating in the play might be the way to accomplish that.

One of the boys who did not come to the try-outs (Alexander McKnight) was given the small but most im-

portant part of the Voice. His speaking voice is unusually expressive; moreover, being an emotional lad, he feels things deeply. Therefore it was felt that he alone, of all the boys, could best be the Voice of the Master.

Committee chairmen were also announced. Margaret Harrington was to be in charge of costumes, and Jessie Mirol was to help the director with make-up. As both girls selected the jobs themselves, there was no question of their interest in their new work. Raymond Burns and Kenneth Doll were the stage crew, electricians, curtain men, and props department. This, however, was not too great a responsibility since only one setting was required. Kenneth Doll, as president of the society, also had charge of arranging and conducting the worship service which would accompany the presentation of the play. This service was planned by Kenneth with only a few suggestions on the part of the leader.

The all-important task of Prompter was given to Margaret Harrington. She seemed to have all the requisites needed. Her voice was high, and she could give cues in a monotone. This is necessary, for actors can hear a high monotone better than a voice which is low and expressive.<sup>1</sup> Being quiet, she would not cause any distraction. Furthermore she was quick, interested,

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1. Baker, W.H.Co., Producing Your Play, p.15

faithful, and most dependable. She was present at every rehearsal, so making it possible for the director to concentrate on the stage picture rather than on the perfection of the lines. Margaret gave all the curtain and light cues, relieving the director of that responsibility also.

Everyone in the group was satisfied with his particular role, and enthusiasm ran high as the Seniors contemplated their first rehearsal.

#### E. Summary

There are three ways of presenting a play to a group. It may be read by the leader; it may be read by having individuals read each speech in turn as they sit in a circle; or it may be read according to individual parts. The writer would suggest the first as the best method, although there are good points and faults in all three.

There are three essentials for the director. She must know people, and how to deal with them. Therefore, she must be patient and understanding as well as firm and, in some instances, unyielding. She must understand the play and its background thoroughly. Hers is the final say in matters of interpretation, costume, setting, and props, and she must know what is proper for

the play at hand. Finally, she must be able to create from printed words and unskilled young actors a work that will bring new meaning not only to the participants, but to those who sit in the audience. Hers is the task of encouraging individual initiative, of stimulating team work, of being the tactful corrector, the enthusiastic worker. She needs diplomacy and tact, authority, discretion, foresightedness, sincerity. It is the director, who in the final analysis, will be the one to give meaning to the play, or to let it be just another performance. Hers is not an easy job, to be sure, but it is one which can be accomplished if the sense of proportions and values is kept clear and well-defined, and if the goal is kept in sight - the furthering of the Kingdom through the medium of drama.

When selecting the cast and managers for the play, it is wise to use the try-out method. There should be impartial judges who will note very carefully each person's voice, physical appearance, acting ability, and individual need. Each young person should realize the full import of the play and the part for which he is trying. Prayer before the actual casting begins is most essential. In order to be fair, the try-outs should be individual, without the whole group present in the room. The utmost care should be taken to select the right people for the parts, for it will only be a valuable

worship experience for actors and audience if there is no opportunity for any incongruity to enter. Each role is a means to the end, the message of the play, and must be regarded as such by young people, director, and judges.

CHAPTER III  
PLAY REHEARSALS

### CHAPTER III

#### PLAY REHEARSALS

##### A. Introduction

Rehearsal time means hard work, but it also means fun and fellowship. It should be the most valuable time of all that is put in on the play, for it is here that the cast learns to work as a team, and it is here that one learns to work with his neighbor. Rich friendships may be produced, and group loyalties may arise through the centering of the efforts of all concerned on the one big common goal.

For the individual, rehearsals may mean self-expression. They may be a period of drawing out and development. His creative powers will be taxed and strengthened, and, seeking group approval, he will strive to put his best into the part which is his to play.

Not only are rehearsals important for the actors, but for the technical crews as well, for they must shoulder responsibility for the perfection of the stage picture. They too, must develop team spirit, and cooperativeness. Their ingenuity, their technical skill, their resourcefulness will be brought out, and the experience for them, as well as for the actors, should be a

helpful and a growing one.

The director, too, must not be forgotten, for hers will be lessons in patience, in artistic skill, in guiding a group experience into something deep and rich and abiding. She will be the example, the final authority in all matters; therefore, she must approach rehearsal time prepared to answer any questions, to solve any problems, and to guide the developing message to a meaningful and powerful climax.

This chapter, therefore, will deal with the technicalities of the first and succeeding rehearsals. It will not include the all-important dress rehearsal, as that will be discussed in a later chapter. Suggestions and hints which the director may offer to the actors will also be discussed.

#### B. Rehearsal Schedule for Cast and Managers

At the first meeting of the cast, a definite schedule should be drawn up, so that there may be no reason for an individual's not knowing when the rehearsals are to be held. The schedule should include date, time, and place for each rehearsal, as well as what is to be accomplished at each session. The final production date should also be indicated. Each actor should have a copy of this schedule, and if it can be

- posted on the Church bulletin board besides, that will be most helpful. It is wise to make one or two rules concerning rehearsals. First, that after a stated number of absences and latenesses, the part no longer belongs to the offender. Second, that parts must be learned on time, and that the director expects to accomplish what has been stated on the rehearsal schedule. If an actor is not willing to cooperate, he may return the playbook so that someone else may take his part.

A tentative rehearsal schedule had been drawn up for Where Love Is, when it was discovered that two of the girls, who lived in a home for girls, could not attend any week-night rehearsals. This made things a bit difficult, for the times had been set for Sunday and Wednesday evenings. It was therefore decided to have full rehearsals on Sundays and Fridays, and scene rehearsals on Wednesdays before prayer meeting. (The cast always stayed for prayer meeting, a practise which has had lasting results.) Thus, each member of the cast was asked to clip this schedule into his script:

#### REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Wed. Oct. 24	6:30	read through
Sun. 28	6:30	walk through
Wed. 31	6:30	Manuel, Anthony, Betty Szigety
Fri. Nov. 2	5:00	NO BOOKS
Sun 4	6:30	with props

Wed. Nov. 7	6:30	with stage set Manuel, Jim, Ray, Kenneth
Fri.	9 5:00	climaxes
Sun.	11 6:00	costumes
Wed.	14 7:00	Manuel, Anthony, Betty, Jim
Fri.	16 7:30	Dress Rehearsal - set, props, costumes, make-up, lights
Sun.	18 7:30	PERFORMANCE

For a one-act play, this is ample rehearsing, but it must be remembered that the Wednesday rehearsals were not full rehearsals, but covered only the scenes in which Edith and Betty Savage were not on stage.

The chart on page 46 was posted upon the bulletin board, and was used by the Seniors to check up on their memories. The stage upon which the play would be produced was used for all rehearsals, making the placing of the action a task that needed to be done only once. After it was placed, there was no need of shifting because of varying rehearsal facilities.

Each member of the cast and crew realized that he was not indispensable and that if he neglected his task, he would be replaced. Two absences and three latenesses would be allowed. Anyone exceeding that quota would be asked to leave the cast. It is interesting to note that there was only one absence and very few latenesses during the weeks that were spent in rehearsal.

# REHEARSAL SCHEDULE - NOVEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 NO BOOKS 5:00 - REHEARSAL 8:00 - PARTY	3 5:00 C.E. DINNER
4 PROPS 1:30 - REN. 9:00 - BEDFORD PRES. C.E.	5	6	7 STAGE SET 1:00 - MANUEL JIM, RAY KEN	8	9	10
11 COSTUMES 6:00 - FULL CAST	12	13	14 1:00 - MANUEL ANTHONY BETTY JIM	15	16 MAKE - UP 1:30 - DRESS REHEARSAL	17
18 1:30 PERFORMANCE	19 1:00 - BUSINESS MEETING AND EVALUATION	20	21	22 THANKS - GIVING	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

The requirements for each rehearsal were followed and carefully carried out. Through the use of a definitely planned schedule, every member of the cast and crew knew exactly what was expected of him, and when it was to be accomplished. With this plan established, the cast was ready to begin production.

### C. The Rehearsals Themselves

If any rehearsals would be singled out as most important, they would be the first, second, and dress rehearsals. The intermediate steps of pointing up lines and polishing the action so that the play runs smoothly are necessary, too, but without the first and second sessions as preliminaries, and the final as "the perfecter", not much could be done in the middle rehearsals.

At the first rehearsal, as outlined above, the rehearsal schedule should be drawn up with the days and hours selected suiting as many of the cast as possible, and with each member of the cast made to feel personally responsible for attending every rehearsal.<sup>1</sup> The play should then be read by the cast without any of the action.

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1. Bates, op.cit. p.75

The stage will not be used for this; the players will merely sit in a circle to read it through. After the first reading, the director should request that the group come to the next rehearsal prepared to discuss the play in the light of its message and its character interpretations.

The second rehearsal should be divided into two parts. First, there should be the discussion of the play. From this must come the interpretation of the message and characterizations which will be accepted by the whole cast. In order to be effective, this must be a result of their own thinking, not merely the product of the director. After the discussion, the director should explain the details of the set, and the cast may walk through the play, using manuscripts, establishing action for every scene. (It must be remembered that a one-act play is the subject in question. If a three-act play is used, more rehearsals will be necessary, and consequently, the preliminaries will cover more rehearsals than two. While a one-act play requires approximately six to eight rehearsals, depending upon the cast of course, a three-act play will need at least ten to twelve.)

Although the players have participated in the directing in that they have helped to establish the interpretation to be followed, they must remember that

there is only one director and that they are not to tell the others what to do. There may be freedom of expression, but each actor is responsible to the director only for his own performance.<sup>1</sup>

The other rehearsals should serve as periods for developing the play until the message is presented as forcefully as possible. They are the times of polishing in characterization, action, and acting technique. The director should merely suggest and then let the cast go on from there. She should make notes at each session upon the points which she feels are weak, or which could be improved in any way. The director should not interrupt a scene to correct or suggest, but should keep her notes until the scene is completed. Then, calling the cast together on the stage, she may offer her criticisms. The play should always be rehearsed by scene or episode, and if it is a three-act play, it is well not to leave the third act until the end each time, because the actors will invariably be too tired to do it well.<sup>2</sup> Occasionally rehearsing should start with the last act. Nor should more than two rehearsals go by without going through the whole play, for the continuity of the play must not be lost through sketchy rehearsing.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Overton, op.cit. p.155
2. Raine, op. cit. p.260
3. Bates, op. cit. p.77

At the first rehearsal of Where Love Is, the schedule was fixed, as has already been stated. The play was read through, and the Seniors promised to come prepared to discuss it at the next meeting. The director talked to the cast briefly, emphasizing seven points:

1. You are not just acting a play, but presenting a real message.
2. Every part, no matter how short, is essential.
3. Every crewman's job is as essential as the actor's.
4. Promptness and regularity in attendance are expected.
5. The schedule must be adhered to.
6. This is a society project; therefore, everyone will have a chance to participate.
7. Each committee is important, and each will meet with the director as soon as possible.

Every rehearsal was begun with prayer, offered either by the director or by one of the members of the cast. The group considered it the most important moment of the rehearsal.

The second rehearsal was most interesting. The Seniors had really studied their parts carefully and were able to discuss them with understanding. They dwelt upon the character of Martin for the major portion of the dis-

discussion, with Mamel, whose the part was, leading the rest in their thinking. Martin was found to be a gracious, helpful, kind old man. Although he had been evil in his youth, he was now a righteous man who read his Bible and prayed. He was poor, but he was willing to make sacrifices, as shown when he gave the coin to the soldier's wife. When the director asked why Martin had said that he mustn't waste time, she received a variety of answers. One was that he went back to work so Christ wouldn't see him loafing; another that he went back to his bench in order to keep watching out of the window for his Guest. The one that was most commonly accepted was that he was modest, and did not want his kindness and generosity noticed; he wanted to pass it off as nothing out of the ordinary. The last view was the one that best fitted the Seniors' conception of the old shoemaker.

Gerasim, the merchant, was the next discussed. It was felt that he must have certain brusque and business-like mannerisms. He was sure of himself, as any efficient and important tradesman might be. Anthony felt that Gerasim knew how to handle people, for he gave considerable praise to Martin for his excellent service. The group was asked what they thought made Martin talk to Gerasim about spiritual things. Some said that Martin may have understood Gerasim, and Gerasim's probable need for God. Others felt that Gerasim was simply a good listener, and that an

old man like Martin could easily talk to a stranger about such things. The group decided that Martin spoke to Gerasim about God partly because the man was a sympathetic listener, and partly because he needed an experience of God himself.

Betty Szigety decided that her character, the soldier's wife, was the victim of circumstance, and that she had been broken by it. That she was grateful to Martin for his kindness was taken for granted. The group felt that she poured out her woes to the shoemaker because he was old and sympathetic. When asked why she wept all the time, they said that they thought that she had been used to harsh treatment, and such kindness on the part of a stranger overwhelmed her.

Stephanutch, the old soldier, was characterized as one whose mind had been slightly affected by his war experiences, for he repeated the same things over and over again. The Seniors decided that the townspeople probably felt sorry for him because of this. His hesitancy in accepting more tea, while only momentary, was due to politeness.

Since Betty Savage and Edith could not be present, the characters of Ilya and the Applewoman were not discussed.

It was decided that the beginning of the climax scene came with Gerasim's second entrance speech, "It's

getting dark in here". From that point on, things move rapidly to the speaking of the Voice. In this particular play, the climax speech is the last of the dialogue, although the whole final scene is climactic.

"The message of the play", one said, "might be characterized by the Golden Rule". Another thought it was "Love thy neighbor as thyself", being kind to one's fellowmen. A third thought it showed the pleasure one receives from helping others. Everyone agreed that the last line of the play was the true spirit of the play, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me". The director asked each member of the cast to think more about the message of the play.

As the players had been asked to go over their parts carefully to get the action, the last half of the second rehearsal was devoted to plotting the stage pictures, one for each scene.

In succeeding rehearsals, more was discovered about each character. It was seen that each emphasized a different thing. All were placed in the setting to heighten the character of Martin, and to make effective the climax. The group decided that there were balanced characters depicted. For instance, the woman and Stephanutch were the pictures of despair and sickness, while Ilya and the Applewoman were hearty and lively. Gerasim seemed to strike the medium between the two pairs

of people.

As the play is written, there is a slightly Catholic element, for the script calls for crossing one's self, and a Crucifix. These were deleted without changing the rest of the play. After a discussion of the frequent use of the Lord's name, it was decided that each use was intended to be very reverent, and so in only one instance the expression was not used.

As the rehearsals went on, the director was more than pleased with the cooperation of the stage crew. They showed initiative by arranging the stage and collecting props without being urged and prodded by the leader. Once they knew what was wanted, they went ahead and did it.

Before the rehearsal one night, the leader gave out sheets of paper to the cast, prompter, and one crewman who was present, and asked for unsigned statements as to

- a). What I think the message of the play is, and
- b). What the play means to me.

The results were interesting, and gratifying to the director. Mamel wrote this:

"The message this play has to convey is one of love. The love Martin has for Christ and his neighbor.

Martin portrays the every day ordinary laborer, one who wants to see the Lord he believes in and this desire seems to be felt even by the best of us. So the aim of the story is to show Christ to the audience in the simple, unimpressive folk who are invited by Martin into his shop.

The message this play has for me in my portrayal of Martin is the feeling first of impatience, then of disappointment, and then the revealing of Christ's visit to the shop. The closing lines seem to me to contain the core of the play, - 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me'.<sup>1</sup>

It was evident, throughout the whole period of rehearsal, that the play was making a deep impression upon those who were taking part.

#### D. Suggestions for the Actors

Every amateur director should be able to give her non-professional actors hints to improve their technique. The suggestions given below are a compilation of the thoughts of many authors, among them Raine, Bates, Edland, Overton, Wood, and Eastman and Wilson.

Most important is a complete understanding of the play, and of the part to be portrayed. If the actor can forget himself and experience the feelings of the character, making every detail vivid in his mind, he will make that character live. He must remember that the words which are given him to speak are merely the "running comment on the action, which is the main thing".<sup>2</sup> If the action has been mastered, the lines will be found

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1. Other answers to be appended
2. Raine, op.cit. p.331

to fall in naturally with it. It is well for the player to move before he speaks. This will not only give emphasis to his speech, but will indicate to the audience who the next speaker will be. However, this should not interfere with the prompt taking up of cues. If action means the play will drag, it is better to leave some out. Because too much motion blurs the picture every act must mean something. No one on stage must move without a definite reason for doing so. Each actor must learn to use his imagination in determining the emphasis which he will place upon his character. In tracing the changes which are the core of every characterization, the actor must use subtlety, "so that the audience will only recognize them by looking back on them."<sup>1</sup> The actor must be able to feel the balance of the picture which is being presented, and must know when the attention of the audience is centered on him.

A complete knowledge of the background of the story is essential so that mannerisms, gestures, speech, may be correct. Especially significant actions may be pointed up when the actor realizes what they mean in connection with his role and with the rest of the play.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Bates, op.cit. p.86
2. Ibid. p.95

A cast needs "cooperation and consecration".<sup>1</sup>

There has to be team work or the play will lose any significance it might have had. This is the greatest challenge the director has to face.

The actor must remember to speak distinctly, not shouting, but using pure tones. He should watch his breathing, phrasing and pitch. It helps to practise aloud at home, to see that the voice is placed forward in the mouth; this will make it clear and resonant. He should learn to pause naturally, and to break up sentences to get the proper effect. The voice must not be dropped at the end of the speech, and no lines should be spoken that are not understood.<sup>2</sup> Facial expressions must be pronounced, as well as bodily action. "Make the audience see what you think before they hear what you think".<sup>3</sup>

The actor must under no circumstance drop out of character while he is on the stage. He is being noticed whether he is speaking or not, and to drop out of character would cause incongruity if not ludicrousness.

For those who do not know how to memorize, the director may give these hints: The part will be best learned if it is memorized by giving it. Trying to repeat the lines, or capture the thought of the lines with-

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1. Eastman and Wilson, op.cit. p.67

2. Bates, op.cit. p. 91

3. Ibid. p. 92

out the aid of the script is the best way, especially if done aloud while some other person gives the cues. The cues must be learned, too, in order that they may be taken up promptly to avoid dragging. The lines of the part must not be used in perfecting the diction, however.<sup>1</sup> Memorization is often facilitated by underlining the important words in each speech, or by making significant notes in the margin. If each actor keeps his mind on the play during rehearsals, he will find that he retains the lines more easily than if he forgets the play as soon as he is off the stage. On the final night, the whole play must be done with a freshness and spontaneity that gives the impression that it has not been memorized, but is natural speech. This can only be done if each actor is perfectly familiar with every phase of the play.

Gestures should fit in naturally with the lines. The mood of the play will be set by the tempo which is set by the actions and the speeches. This should be watched carefully. As a rule, lines should be said more slowly than ordinary speech demands.

Stage movement is most important, and there are certain conventions which must be followed. Among those

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1. Edland, Elisabeth, Principles and Techniques in Religious Dramatics, op.cit. p.25

generally followed are these:

1. Purpose must be seen in every movement.
2. Center of interest shifts with the scene.
3. Asymmetrical arrangements are preferable on stage.
4. Placement of characters shows relationship - friendly or unfriendly.
5. Mass, line, as well as color scheme, are important.
6. Movement during speeches must be planned. Usually, however, there should be no motion during a speech.
7. Movement creates anticipation or suspense.
8. No movements should be made to star the actor above the theme.<sup>1</sup>

Unless rapidity is necessary, movement should be in curves, suiting the tempo with the drama.

Other traditional stage rules include the following:

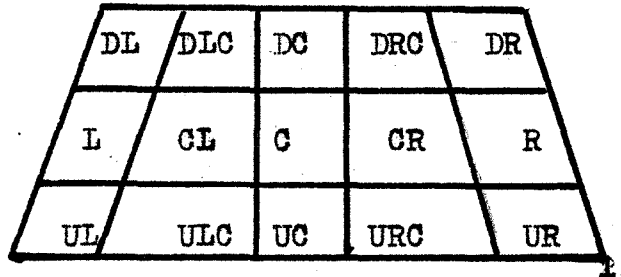
1. After entrance, actor should advance to be seen.
2. Important action should be played down-stage-center.
3. Most speeches should be directed to the audience.
4. The last of two entering characters speaks first.
5. If actor is standing right stage, should rest on right foot with left slightly advanced. When he moves, he should take short steps with the right and long with the left foot.
6. Actors should turn toward audience.
7. Actors should kneel on the down stage knee with the other advanced.
8. Character who talks ~~most~~ must should be upstage.
9. In an embrace, the down-stage arm should be under the woman's down-stage arm. The other arm should be over her shoulder.
10. When retiring from the stage, the short step should be taken with the stage-center foot, then a full step is taken to the exit.

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1. Wood, W. Carleton, Dramatic Method in Religious Education, p. 273, Abingdon Press, N.Y., Cinn., Chicago 1931

11. An interval between a spoken line and an exit should be avoided.

Audience



Stage business is most important in a play, for often most significant actions are injected in this way. Besides giving the actor something to do with his hands, such action helps to plant ideas and to reveal the actor's state of mind. It holds the audience through long speeches and helps depict the characters.

It is essential that the director know the significance of each motion, for she must see that the picture is not crowded with excess movement or elaborate gestures. Yet she must also see that there is enough action so that the whole moves along as a unity to the final climax. She must see to it that each detail of acting, speech, and stage business is in proportion, so that the play may be well balanced and the message be made most important.

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### E. Summary

There are certain preparations which must be made preliminary to the actual rehearsal time. A rehearsal schedule should be drawn up at the first meeting of the full cast. Each member should receive a copy which ought to include date, time, place of rehearsal, and the goal for that session. The date for the final performance should be definitely set at this time. Each actor should know specifically what is required of him in the way of attendance and general cooperation.

The first, or reading, rehearsal is an important one for coming into a fuller understanding of the play. The second rehearsal should be used to discuss the play in order to discover its message and to establish individual character interpretations. Action may also be planned at this time. Other rehearsals are the means to the perfection of the final production. The director should make notes each time a scene is rehearsed in order to suggest and correct any weak spots that she might detect. The rehearsal should not be interrupted every time a correction is to be made; the director should wait until the completion of the scene before she calls the actors together to make comments. Not more than two rehearsals should go by without going through the entire play, for the unity of the plot and the continuity of the action.

must be kept in view all the time.

There are suggestions which every director must make to her actors concerning their acting technique. These fall into certain categories. First is the complete mastery of the characterization of each individual part, not only in a personal sense, but as the character is related to the others in the plot. Second is the knowledge of the background of the story, so important for the stage business which may be made symbolic. Third is the importance placed upon team work among the actors. Fourth is the stress on diction and voice as one of the main means of conveying the idea of the play, the other being action and gesture. Fifth come hints on the study and memorization of lines. The director of the Seniors found that it aided the cast in memorizing lines by having them try to go through the play without their book, depending solely upon the prompter for what they did not know. Sixth is stage movement. Certain rules of convention have been cited above.<sup>1</sup> This is important in presenting a balanced stage picture, and in keeping the actions that are permitted, significant.

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1. Intra ch. IV, pp.59

CHAPTER IV

STAGING

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### STAGING

#### A. Introduction

No matter how carefully the play has been selected, no matter how well cast and rehearsed, if the stage effect is not taken into consideration, all the work may be lost. No message, though it be profound and moving, will reach farther than the footlights if the stage picture is imperfect and not in keeping with the spirit of the play. This does not mean that there has to be an elaborate set with every detail polished, but it does mean that all that is on the stage, whether a full set, or just a suggestion of the scene, should be in harmony with the time, occasion, theme, and mood of the play.

In religious drama, "the play's the thing" is the wrong emphasis, for it is the message, not the performance, that matters. But in an age when the standards are "Broadway standards", Church directors must think a bit about the whole effect of their productions. There must be nothing about the performance which would produce critical or mirthful feelings and thus destroy the mood which the cast, through the play, has tried to

produce. Therefore, it is necessary that the amateur director think about some of the technical aspects of play production. These will be discussed in this chapter, with practical hints given on the problems of color, stage and scenery, lighting, costuming, make-up, properties, and special effects. These suggestions will be given in the light of the writer's personal experience.

#### B. The Problem of Color

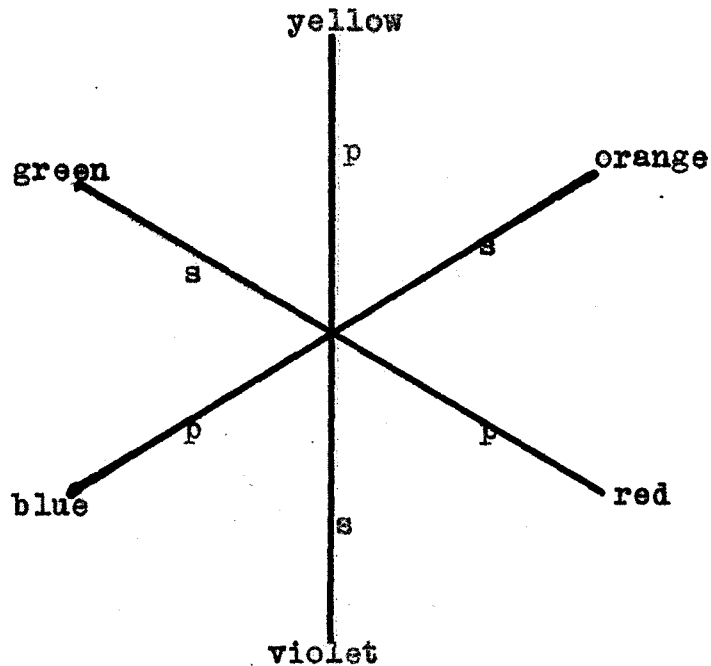
Color can be just as much of an emotional stimulus as music.<sup>1</sup> It must therefore be considered very carefully when planning the stage picture. Often certain feelings are associated with specific colors; for instance, a pale, soft color suggests something dainty and fragile, while a color that is deep and pure represents strength. A color that has been grayed or darkened strikes a somber note, whereas a light, brilliant color is gay and happy.

It is useful to have access to a good color chart when planning scenery, lights, and costumes. One or two simple essentials will help in dealing with this phase of production. The three colors which are con-

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1. Edland, Elisabeth, Principles and Techniques in Religious Dramatics, op.cit. p.38

sidered as Primary are red, yellow, and blue; and orange, violet, and green are called Secondary. Contrasted colors, that is, those that are opposite to each other on the color wheel, are said to be in complementary harmony; related colors, those next to one another on the wheel, are in analagous harmony.



When grouping colors for stage use, certain hints might be found practical. Usually, the major color is worn by the hero or heroine, while the minor color in harmony with that is worn by the person who plays the most scenes with the major actor. It will be well if these are contrasting colors. For instance, if blue is worn by the hero, the supporting character might be in a soft yellow-orange. Background charac-

ters are generally dressed in darker robes. It is important to watch the effect of color in a mob scene. If the colors do not blend well together, the crowd will stand out more than the individual characters who are intended to have the attention.<sup>1</sup> Usually colors should be toned down, especially with crowded scenes, for brilliant colors tire the eyes. This may be done by mixing the color with a touch of the complement.

Angels are rarely in all white; pastels are often used. But while pastels are delicate, and lovely to use, they are not historically accurate for a Biblical play and should therefore be limited to angels.

Many unusual and beautiful color combinations may be achieved upon the stage, but one must always be careful of the effect lights have on color. For the amateur, who must experiment always, neutral tones are the best to use in the beginning. Overton has a list of colors and the effect lights have upon them which will prove helpful to every amateur in the field.<sup>2</sup>

<u>Light</u>	<u>On</u>	<u>Makes</u>
Red	black	purplish black
	orange	red-orange
	green	red, black, gray
	blue	violet
	violet	deep purple

. . . . .

1. Bates, op.cit. pp.201 ff.
2. Overton, op.cit. p.172 ff.

<u>Light</u> Orange	<u>On</u> black red yellow green blue indigo violet	<u>Makes</u> brown scarlet yellow-orange yellow-green dull gray brown red brown
Yellow	black red orange blue indigo violet	yellow-olive orange yellow-orange yellow-blue orange-yellow yellow-brown-red
Green	black orange yellow blue indigo violet	green-black yellow-green (faint) yellow-green (bright) green green black-green
Blue	black red orange yellow green indigo violet	black-blue violet brown green black-green black-indigo black-violet
Violet	black red orange yellow green blue indigo	black-violet red-violet-purple light red brown light purple violet indigo-violet

If the costumes are nicely colored, the play will be greatly enriched. Unusual colors are good to use if the lighting shows them off well. There must be good background upon which to build a color scheme. The interpretation of the play determines the color scheme to a great extent. For color indicates mood, time,

place, and social status.

There are three categories which it is well to remember regarding color. The first is that of the symbolic interpretations of certain colors. They are:

Blue - Madonna, St. John, faithfulness, hope,  
truth, purity  
Purple - Passion, royalty  
Red - Love  
Orange - Hearth fire, benevolence  
Yellow - Sun, supreme good, knowledge  
Green - Spring, hope, potency  
Gray and)  
Brown -)- Withered hopes, renunciation  
Black - Mourning  
White - Purity, perfection

Then there are also liturgical interpretations which must be noted. Some of these are:

White and gold - Christmas  
Red and gold - Epiphany  
Purple - Lent  
Purple and black - Passion week  
Red - Holy Innocents, martyrs  
Green - Trinity

Last, there are several points which should be considered when choosing colors for Biblical costumes. For rough shepherds and workers, natural wook, gray, or tan garments. A first dyeing was done only by means of fruit juices, producing blue, black, and henna to supplement the former colorless clothes. More ways were discovered with which to dye cloth by the time of the Kings, and therefore, for that period, brilliant purple, and scarlet may be used as well as white linen, and fabric adorned with gold, embroidery, or stripes. All priestly robes

were white, scarlet, blue, or violet. All colors were used by New Testament times; yellow, orange, scarlet, red, violet, blue, blue-green, and green.<sup>1</sup>

No matter what period in history is being portrayed, the director should try to have rich jewel-like colors used if they are in keeping with the play. She must remember that the audience will be affected by the colors used, and that in turn will affect their attitude toward the whole presentation. Therefore, it may be realized that color is one of the most essential matters in production plans.

#### C. The Problem of Stage and Scenery

"Stagecraft requires less technical skill than almost any other worthwhile activity".<sup>2</sup> It is something that is enjoyed by any boy or man who attempts to do it, a fact which means much to the amateur director when she is in need of good crewmen. Besides making a valuable contribution to the success of the play itself, those who work on the stage gain experience in working with other people as a team. For the matter of constructing a stage-set is one that takes cooperation, as well as a

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1. Bates, op.cit. p.801 ff.

2. Nelms, Henning, A Primer of Stagecraft, p.1  
Dramatist's Play Service, N.Y. 1941

-willingness to work.

If the Church already has an adequate stage which may be used, things will be notably easier than they would be if one must be constructed, or if the Church chancel is used. Again it must be emphasized that to be effective, the stage set does not have to be elaborate. Simplicity is to be desired, especially if the stage itself has to be made. Actually, all that is necessary is accuracy. The period portrayed should be studied, both as to locality and mood, and the set made accordingly. Edland says that the set "must present the complete picture, minus only the actors and the text. It does not need to be elaborate, but merely harmonizing with the tone of the text".<sup>1</sup> Scenery has an important effect upon the actor, and even though it is just a suggestion of scenery, it will stimulate his imagination and urge him to put more into his role than he might otherwise do.<sup>2</sup> Besides this, it gives more people a chance to participate in the preparations for the presentation.

Nelms gives a concise explanation of the technical terms applied to the actual stage space:

"The large opening through which the audience views the stage is called the proscenium, and the wall surrounding it the proscenium wall."

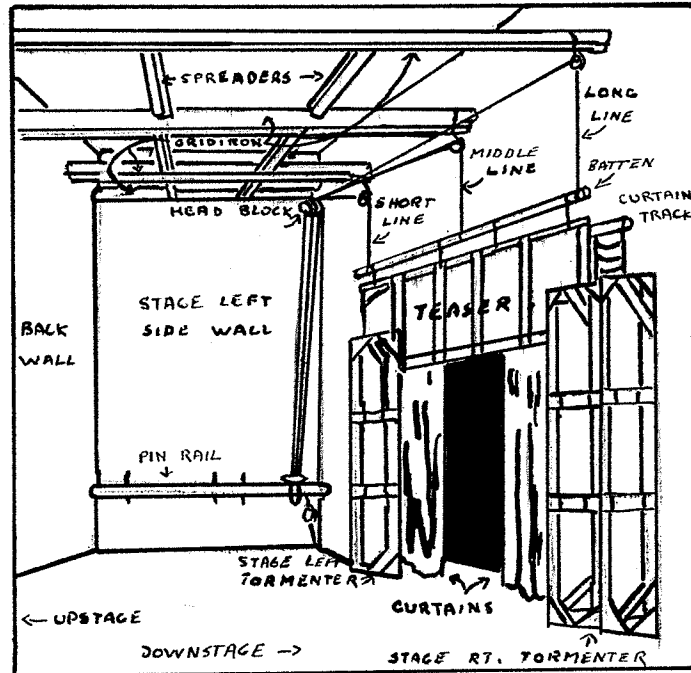
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1. Edland, Elisabeth, Principles and Techniques in Religious Dramatics, op.cit. p.31
2. Nelms, op.cit. p. 2

Directly opposite is the back wall. To the right and left are the side walls. The corresponding walls of sets are also known as back and side walls. The areas on each side of the stage between the side walls of the set and the side walls of the stage house are called the wings. The space at the top of the stage house that is normally hidden by scenery is termed the flies".<sup>1</sup>

There are certain pieces of equipment that are permanent for every stage, namely, front draw curtains on track and rollers, which are best when made of heavy velvet or velour and lined with black sateen to make them light-proof, and an inner proscenium in three parts. They are

1. The teaser, which is a horizontal panel made from wood and canvas, and heavily painted. It is hung from lines



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1. Ibid, pg.5

above the stage opening, or proscenium arch. 2. The tormenters, which are constructed in the same way as the teaser, but serve to mask the wings. The panels are hinged together like a folding screen. 3. The gridiron and spreaders which take the weight of the teaser. (As shown in diagram on p. 71).

If construction of a stage is necessary, there are several things to be kept in mind. The room in which it is to be built should be carefully chosen, for the stage must be visible to everyone in the room, and if an inclined floor is possible, that is a great advantage. The accoustics should be good, and there must be enough space at the stage end of the room to allow a good sized stage to be constructed, with plenty of "off-stage" space. The stage should not be too high from the floor of the room. Three or four feet are enough. If the proscenium arch can be made twenty to twenty-four feet wide, and twelve feet high, that is ideal. It should stop within a foot of the ceiling so that lights may be put behind it.

Once the stage itself is erected, the problem of constructing the sets arises. The most simple method of all is that of fashioning a three-part cyclorama curtain. This is a curtain, made of some heavy material, which hangs from a metal rod running around the sides and back of the stage space. The curtain is hung

in folds, with a two-inch sand hem to weight it and hold it open in proper place, thus masking the exits made by the overlapping of the three sections. It should be six inches longer than necessary to reach the floor. To this may be fastened all sorts of stage properties, making the completed picture appear very much like an expensively prepared set. The best color for the cyclorama curtain is light greenish gray. This will reflect most of the light thrown upon it without absorbing too much in the process.

If realistic sets are desired, equipped with doors, windows, fireplaces and the like, another procedure may be followed. "Scenery should be economical and simple to build. When built, it must be sturdy, rigid, light, easy to handle, and capable of being stored in a minimum of space".<sup>1</sup> Almost everything that is needed may be made from lumber and canvas. Basic to every set of this type is the flat. It is a panel made by covering a rectangular wood frame with canvas. These are lashed together in sets of two or three for each wall. Some may be perfectly plain, while others contain doors or windows. They are very light, and are easily stored as well as easily handled. Each flat should be approximately twelve feet high and five feet nine inches wide. Nine inches between top and ceiling should be left.

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1. Nelms, op.cit.p.13

Twenty-four flats are needed for most plays. These may be painted with tempora, dry colors, or calcimined. A good set of flats would be:

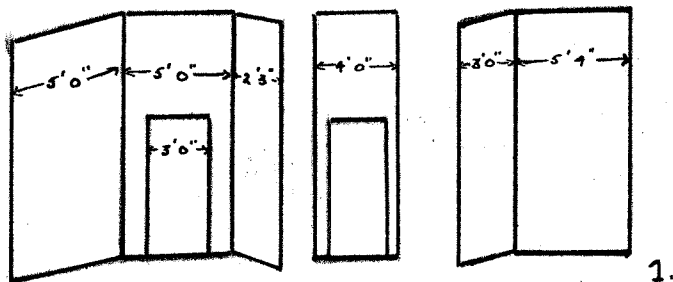
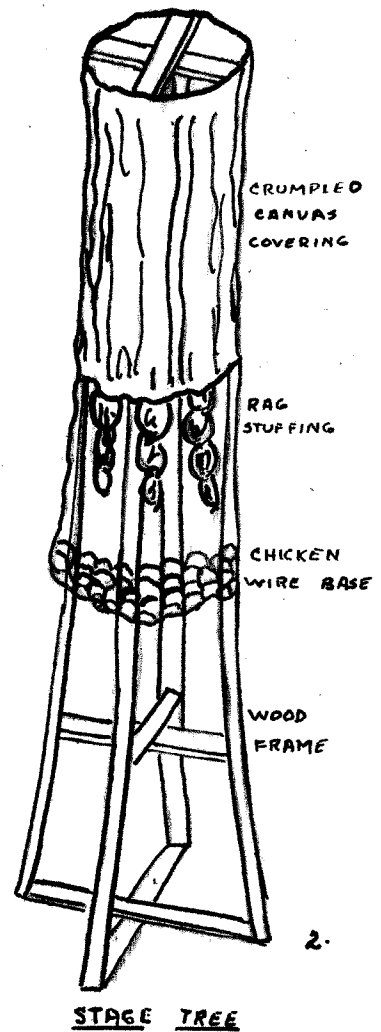
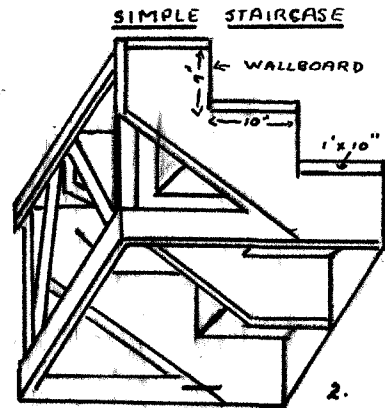
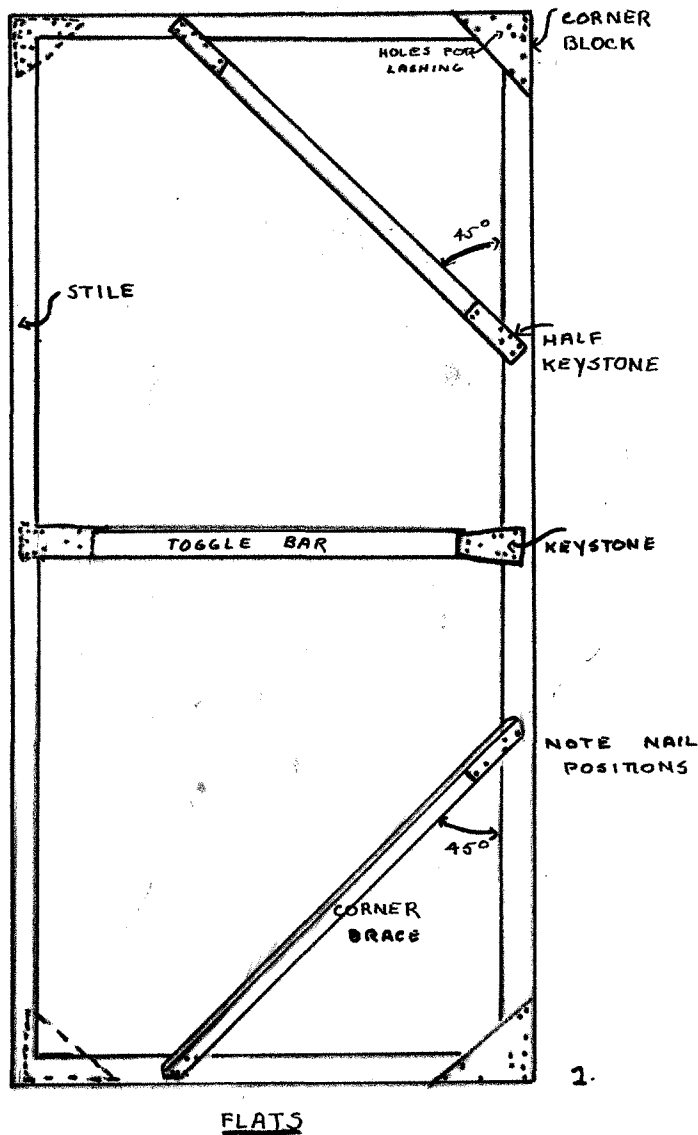
- 3 plain
- 2 single doors
- 1 double door
- 1 window
- 3 half-size
- 2 jogs

A door out into a flat should be three by seven feet to be practical. It should swing off-stage. Steps, ramps, and platforms should be kept simple if they are to be used on-stage. Steps should have ten-inch treads and seven-inch risers. Platforms are measured by the number of steps. A platform needs steps on the backstage side, so that the actors do not walk off into space.

All units should be numbered in order to facilitate assembling and shifting scenes.

It is important that all scenery be scaled to fit the size of the stage. Accurate measurements should be taken before any construction is begun in order that the stage picture as seen from the audience may be congruous.

If out-door scenes are required, a blue sky drop may be used, hung from the cyclorama rod. Green curtains on each side will give the effect of ground, while the back-drop may either be plain green or may be a curtain with a painted country scene. Foliage, real or artificial



1. Ibid. p.10

2. Webster, Glenn R. and Wetzel, William, Scenery Simplified, p.95 ff., Eldridge Ent. House, Inc., Franklin, Ohio, 1934

should conceal the line of the floors and the back and side drops. No flags of any kind should be used as a backdrop.<sup>1</sup>

If the proper materials are obtained in the beginning, the scenery will be durable and will repay the time, effort, and money expended. Drapes must be opaque and wearable. Cotton flannel or cotton velvet is suitable if a jack chain is used to weight the bottom. The canvas for the flats should be seventy-two inches wide.<sup>2</sup> As for suitable adhesives, casein glue is recommended for permanent work, while cold water paste is suggested for temporary use. All sorts of special nails, cleats, and other stage hardware may be procured at moderate cost.<sup>3</sup> Manila rope is the best of its kind to stand the weight put upon rope backstage.

There is a technique to scene painting which must be followed if the flats or walls are to look professional. If size is used when mixing dry color and water, it will keep the paint from rubbing off. It should be remembered that wet paint is a darker color than dry. When the flat

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1. Lobinger, Elizabeth Erwin Miller, The Dramatization of Bible Stories, p.82, Univ. of Chicago Press 1918
2. Flameproofed canvas may be obtained from Astrup Co., Inc.  
39 Walker Street, New York
3. J.R. Clancy, Inc., Syracuse, N.Y.

coat is applied, the strokes of the brush should go in all directions at random. This will keep the brush lines from being seen, and it will camouflage any defects in the flats themselves. The second coat should be composed of spatters of different harmonizing colors in order to break up the surface of the flat. The colors will blend into the color desired and again no brush marks will be seen. For instance, bright red and bright green spattered over one another will produce a most pleasing gray. All blending should be done on the canvas while the first coat of paint is still wet. Shadows may be reinforced with dark paint. Woodwork will look like a grained surface if the surface is gone over with an almost dry brush held at right angles to the wood. The effect of stone will be produced by blending brown, blue, and green. Mortar lines may be made with white or gray. The easiest way to make bricks is to draw white lines on a red wall. A thin spatter of dark blue over it all will weather the bricks.<sup>1</sup>

If the Church chancel must be used, screens may be made to form a proscenium arch. Curtains will serve effectively for a cyclorama. It is important that all the scenery made harmonize with the rest of the Church auditorium both as to design and as to size. Flowers, greens,

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1. Nelms, op.cit.p.75

banners, may be used for scenery. The problem with this arrangement is grouping and spacing a play in a small space never intended for drama.<sup>1</sup> There will not be any backstage space in this type of setting; hence the actors should be grouped at the steps waiting for their entrances. If necessary, the aisles may be used for entrances, especially for distance. Portable units of steps and platforms, made of frame and light wood may be employed to great advantage in this situation. A minimum of stage properties should be used in the chancel.

Nelms gives five rules for the novice:

1. Select a play requiring only one set, no shifting of scenes between acts.
2. Design scenery from stock units so that it may be added to.
3. Avoid curved walls and arches
4. Use simple paint patterns
5. Be sure the set and equipment at hand<sup>2</sup> can meet the requirements of the play.

The Senior Christian Endeavorers were fortunate in that they had the use of the Church house where there was a fairly well equipped stage. The set was to be that of a shoemaker's cellar-shop. The hardest problem was to be to set up a "sidewalk" under the window so that only the feet of the passersby would be seen. This was essential to the plot and dialogue. The set was arranged so

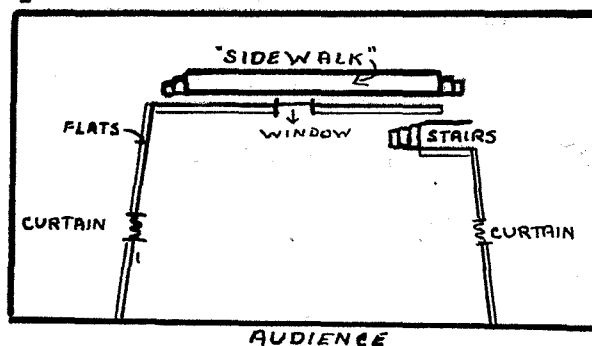
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1. Bates, op.cit.p.211
2. Nelms, op.cit.p.151

that there was a curtained entrance Right stage. This was not called for in the script, but it was the only way to have the four characters reappear for an instant at the end of the play. Since most of the action took place on the other side of the stage, this was scarcely noticeable. Center back was the window, almost the most essential part of the set. In the Left back corner, was the staircase leading down from the "street". Left front was another curtained entrance, not there because of its usefulness, but because there were not enough plain flats to make a solid wall.

The "sidewalk" was ingenious. Three wooden horses were used to support the Church's 30 foot ladder. On top of the ladder, to make a firm and solid walk were placed the planks ordinarily used for tables for Church dinners. Lower boxes were placed at each end so that there were steps up and down. When the Seniors walked across in front of the window, it did look as if the room were quite below street level.

The rest of the set will be discussed under section G., Properties.



#### D. The Problem of Lighting

Overton is of the opinion that lighting is the most important part of the staging of a play, for it not only gives atmosphere and the proper psychological effect, but it "reinforces the mood and meaning" of the play.<sup>1</sup> Here again, color plays an outstanding role in the whole production, for the careless selection of lights can change the whole picture until the hour, season, and weather depicted are not true and the actors seem flat and unreal rather than round and alive. Then, too, since there are symbolic meanings connected with color, the wrong impression may easily be given through the indiscriminate use of lights.

For most ordinary color effects, spots and gelatines are used, or special borders and strips. A spot light is merely a bulb in a metal shade which, when placed at a distance from the stage, illumines just one section of it. A baby spot is smaller, and usually situated in the wings. Although these are not expensive to purchase, one may easily be constructed by attaching a light socket to an empty tin can. Placed on a stand, or fitted with a handle, this becomes an effective spot light. If a stereoptican lantern is avail-

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1. Overton, op.cit. p.213

able, this also will serve the purpose well. For different color effects, pieces of colored gelatin may be fitted into a wire frame, and clamped over the light aperture. A border, or strip, is a shallow metal trough in which light sockets and bulbs are fixed at regular intervals. These give an even light. Usually they are hung lengthwise just off-stage in the wings. With the use of different colored light bulbs, the proper effects may be produced. The same type of arrangement may be fastened to the ceiling just behind the proscenium curtain, giving good overhead light. If this is done, however, the overhead borders should be counteracted by the use of footlights, in order to remove unwanted shadows. It is simpler in most cases to use just side borders and spots, falling back upon the others for special effects. These, together with mechanical dimmers for the stationary spots and with various colored gelatines, ought to be enough for an effective production.

Some suggestions about colors for different outdoor scenes might prove helpful. Of course, the colors must not detract in any way from either the complexion or costume of the actor. For daylight, light blue and straw gelatines should be used; for sunset, amber and rose; for twilight, rose and blue; for moonlight, blue and green; for night, dark blue.

If at all possible, there should be a spot in each wing, or from each side of the auditorium with a different gelatin in each. Cross lighting in this manner produces lovely effects.<sup>1</sup>

For a larger stage, or for a great deal of light, flood lights in each wing are best. These may be made simply by tying a bunch of lights into a dishpan, and fastening the pan on a stand of some sort. Gelatines may also be made to fit over these, and the same lighting effects may then be obtained.

The problem of a mechanical dimmer is a real one, for a dimmer is practically a necessity. Besides taking up valuable back-stage space, they are expensive. Some one versed in physics might be able to make one, but there is a simpler way than that, although not quite so effective. It is to have a large piece of cardboard, with which one may slowly cover the light opening of the spot or flood, thereby reducing the light on the stage. Since this is rather difficult to do, a few rehearsals are necessary to perfect the process. The cardboard should be moved from bottom to top; it is less noticeable that way.

Although white light should never be used, since it is too harsh, very dim light should not be employed either, for the faces of the players should be distinguish-

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1. Bates, op.cit. p.252

able at all times.<sup>1</sup> If darkness is called for, it should be for but a short period of time. All light changes called for during the action of the play should be produced imperceptibly and should change with the mood of the scene.<sup>2</sup>

Another important feature is the switchboard which should be located in the wings at a place where the electrician can see the stage. On this should be the house lights, and the stage lights. The stage light switches should be placed in rows, with a master switch at the end of each. There should be one row for each color, and the vertical sequence should be the same for each. For instance:

	FOOTS	OVER-HEAD	RIGHT SIDE	LEFT SIDE	SPOTS	MASTER
RED	.	.	.	.	.	.
BLUE	.	.	.	.	.	.
AMBER	.	.	.	.	.	.

The dimmers are placed above the board.

It is best to use three colors in each of the strip and border units, blue, red, and amber. By alternating or grouping, different effects may be obtained.

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1. Ferris, op. cit. p.87
2. Bates, op. cit. p.254

Some suggestions for the technicalities of using lights may be offered. First, light should be focused on the players, not the scenery,<sup>1</sup> yet not so centrally focused upon the player that the source of the light is visible. Second, red light should not be used directly upon the face, for it will give a splotchy appearance.<sup>3</sup> Third, when the lights are changed during the action of the play, first the concentrated sources should be dimmed out and then the borders, overheads, and foot.<sup>4</sup> Fourth, there should be enough light to see action and emotions and to preserve the roundness of the stage figures. Fifth, the sources of light should be so placed that all the streams of color will be blended together in a unity.<sup>5</sup>

The electrician should have a copy of the play marked with all the light cues, and he should have at least one light rehearsal, not only to come in on his cues smoothly, but to plan the colors according to time, mood, season, setting, and actor's costumes. These are all important in creating the right atmosphere for the message of the work.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Raine, op.cit. p.257
2. Hartmann, Louis, Theatre Lighting, p.66,  
D. Appleton Co., N.Y., 1930
3. Raine, op.cit. p.257
4. Hartmann, op.cit. p. 66
5. Raine, op.cit. p.258
6. Eastman and Wilson, op.cit.p.106

The Seniors were fortunate in having at their disposal a stage with adequate lighting facilities. But even so, there were a few difficulties. The scene called for lights that went from ordinary room lighting to black night. There were no dimmers available, nor was there any way to construct them, for all that were used were the two side borders, and the overheads. Neither of these could be dimmed by hand. Since two sets of overheads were being used, one immediately behind the proscenium curtain, and one fastened to the ceiling at approximately center stage, (and hidden by a border curtain), they could be switched off separately. The borders were on the same circuit. In each of these units were red, blue, and amber bulbs, with a predominance of blue since the shoemaker's cellar was dimly lit. Behind the set, lighting the "sidewalk", was a stereoptican lamp placed at such an angle that no tell-tale shadows were cast when the actors crossed the catwalk.

It was decided that each unit should be turned off separately as the room grew dimmer and dimmer. First to go off were the rear overheads. Then the side borders were switched off, as well as the outside light. Finally, the front borders (or overheads) went out, leaving the only light on stage coming from an oil lamp. Although it was noticeable when each of the units went

out, it was as smooth as the boys could get the lights to work. Later they were told that the audience had not noticed the dimming process at all, a compliment for the actors and stage-crew both.

Ray did not have a separate script with his light cues written in, because there were so few cues, that he was able to memorize them. Not having to depend upon the book for his place, he was able to watch the action, and time his work with the lines. Since there were no bells to ring, or noises to be made, Ray could concentrate full attention upon the lights. Each change was timed to be as inconspicuous as possible. For instance, the first set went out while the audience was watching the tussle between Ilya and the Applewoman. The second set went out when two exits and one entrance occurred within a few lines of each other. The last was not so subtle, for Ray had to wait until Martin had his lamp lit before he could cut out the last light.

Ray and Ken planned the lighting themselves, with no help from the director. Then they asked the advice of one of the men of the Church who usually takes care of the switchboard. Their arrangement could not have been improved upon and it proved very satisfactory. Ray had only two rehearsals with the lights, yet they were run as smoothly as if they had been handled by a professional.

### E. The Problem of Costuming

The most important thing about costuming a play is the congruity of the dress with the period portrayed. The director and the costume manager must know history, design, color, and materials. The first two may be looked up in a public library. As regards color, there are certain conventions to be followed. Blue stands for truth, loyalty, sincerity, education, while red symbolizes courage, sacrifice, passion, divinity. Green denotes strength, growth, jealousy. Bright yellow stands for fruitfulness, and happiness, but yellow that is dirty or dingy is symbolic of treachery. White signifies purity and black, mourning or hatred.

The choice of costume should never be left to the individual player, since everything must harmonize in color and design. When costuming the cast, the person to wear the clothing must be considered. It is better to have a slight discrepancy in the accuracy of things than to have a self-conscious actor.<sup>1</sup> A heavy person should be put in long lines and neutral colors. A tall person may be shortened by horizontal lines, and the use of contrasting colors. The whole picture must be kept in mind.

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1. Edland, Elisabeth, Principles and Techniques in Religious Dramatics, op.cit. p.35

As to materials, unbleached cotton and flannel are best.<sup>1</sup> Crepe, longcloth, sateen, silks, burlap, and sacking are likewise good. Sheets, drapes, couch-covers, and tablecloths are also acceptable if they are not flowered. Stripes are best, and can be used more readily than any other figures. It is most satisfactory to dye the cloth as the specific color is needed. Tie and dye is simple, as is stenciling a design upon the fabric. If the design is just to be used for one performance, poster paints are the ones to use, but if it is to be permanent, oil paints are best.<sup>2</sup> All dyeing should be done in the daylight. It dries at least one shade lighter than it appears when wet.

For materials having luster, sateen should be used. For dull materials, percale, and for velvet, flannel. But in no case should the counterfeits be mixed with the real, because side by side, velvet and flannel will not look alike.

There should be harmony and contrast in the costumes, and especially should the leading man and woman compliment each other in dress.<sup>3</sup> Impression is more important than detail. Noticeable from the audience are details such as cleanliness, smoothness, evenness of hem lines and secure fastenings. Safety

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1. Bates, op.cit.p.174

2. Temple, Inez, Pageants Past, p.25,  
Pub.by the Ruth Wyllys Chapter of the D.A.R.  
Hartford, Conn. 1940

3. Bates, op.cit.p.176

pins show as well as hair and feet. Both the hair and the feet should be as much in the style of the period and part as possible, for it is often the little details that spoil a whole effect.

As soon as Margaret discovered that she was to be Costume Manager, she went to the library to look up Russian costumes. She reported on her findings to the director, and together they planned the costumes. In the case of this play, it was not necessary to make anything, because a combination of the contents of the church's wardrobe room and a few personal belongings made presentable garments.

Martin wore a dingy white shirt turned backwards to appear Russian, dirty tan slacks with no creases, an elderly man's brown wool vest, and a shoemaker's apron. Around his legs were twisted the rags typical of that type of Russian peasant, and on his feet were carpet slippers.

Gerasim also wore his shirt backwards. He wore a long black Chesterfield coat with a wide black fur collar. Because he came in from the outside, he wore heavy black boots, and fur mittens.

The Soldier's Wife wore a peasant blouse, and a full, long skirt which was crumpled and dirty. She looked as if she had once been well-to-do, but had come into unfortunate circumstances. Although it was

winter, she wore only a light shawl. On her feet were wooly slippers which looked very much like the woven slippers worn by Russian peasant women. Her hair hung straight around her face, and she did indeed look forlorn.

The old Soldier, Stepanuitch, wore old trousers stuffed into boots, and a woolen vest. Around his neck was wound a woolen scarf. He wore an old sweater under the vest.

Ilya had a short blue skirt, and knee length socks. She, too, had rags around the socks, and wore wooly slippers. She wore a red ski suit jacket. Around the neck, and down one side was fastened black fur, disguising the modern jacket, and appearing quite Russian. She had bright red mittens.

Perhaps the Applewoman had the most attractive costume of all, although it must be understood that all costumes were exactly in character. She wore a long-sleeved peasant blouse and a full-length black skirt. Around her shoulders was a lovely Paisley shawl. She, too, wore wooly slippers. Her hair was braided and pinned to the top of her head in typically Russian fashion.

Since the boots and slippers were rather clumsy to use, especially upon the improvised sidewalk, it was necessary to have three rehearsals using costumes.

Ordinarily this is not necessary.

In this particular instance, costuming did not present any problem either in accuracy or financially. However, costuming the Biblical play is not quite so simple. That will be discussed in the Appendix.

#### F. The Problem of Make-Up

Make-up is one of the most difficult things for the amateur to use. If it is not used, the complete characterization is not given, but if it is used and done poorly, it can spoil the whole general effect. Often the problem is considered solved by the use of ordinary street-make-up applied heavily. This is almost no good at all, for it only tends to make the face appear mask-like, with no high or lowlights, or expression marks. Under stage lights, the human face loses all of its color and most of its expression; therefore, something must be done. Grease paint is the best solution to the problem. With a little practice, this is not hard to apply. But there is one cardinal rule concerning make-up. That is that there should be too little, rather than too much.<sup>1</sup> If the production is to be held in the chancel of the church, no make-up should be used at all.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ferris, op.cit.p.98
2. Kimball, op.cit.p.90

Character make-up does assist in the portrayal of roles. Elizabeth said that she did not actually feel her part until she looked at her make-up in the mirror. She looked so ill, that she was able to act as if she felt the same way she appeared.

The Make-up Manager must be able to distinguish between different skin types and tones. It is wise to have a picture to copy, or better yet, someone in real life, when applying character make-up. The environment of the character, his occupation, sex, and age all enter into the consideration of what type of make-up will be used.

Perhaps a basic kit would be as follows:

- Cold cream and tissues
- Powder, white and tinted
- Rouge
- Eye-brow pencils, black
- Lipstick, two colors
- Eye shadow, blue
- Lining colors, gray, brown
- 1/4 inch lining brush
- Powder puffs
- Soft powder brush
- Clown white
- Scissors
- Spirit gum
- Crepe hair
- Alcohol or witch hazel
- Comb and bobby pins
- Grease paint, two colors
- White mascara

The actual application of the grease paint is not difficult. If the stick base is used, the procedure is as follows: first, the cold cream is applied,

worked well into the skin, and then wiped off, all except a thin layer. Then the base is streaked on the face, neck, hands, and wherever bare skin will be exposed. This is smoothed on so that there is an even coat of color. Over this is applied the rest of the make-up, rouge, lipstick, eyebrows and lashes, and finally, powder.<sup>1</sup> If a soft base grease paint is used, the preliminary coat of cold cream is not needed. In this case, the paint is dotted on the areas to be covered, and then worked in well with hands that have been dipped into cold water. The rest of the procedure is the same. When using either base, it should be remembered that a thin layer is all that is necessary. The color should cover all exposed portions of skin, and should be worked into the hairline to make as natural looking complexion as possible.

Since in religious drama, and especially in Biblical drama, there are few "straight" characters, the make-up chairman must know something about character make-up. Perhaps the best way to learn how to do this is to watch people on the streets or public vehicles. Observation of elderly people, of peoples of different races or nationalities, of those who are ill, of those in professions, will serve as ample research material

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1. Raine, op.cit. p.308

for the types which will be required of the make-up committee.

There are certain principles which should be followed no matter what type of make-up is needed. In most cases, the base should be of a pinkish tinge. Orientals will need an orange base, while invalids and elderly persons will need pink of a very pale hue. Moist rouge should be used for women and children, while men should have dry rouge. When applying, a small spot should be placed on the prominent part of the cheekbone. Then it may be blended out in all directions with short straight strokes. Eyeshadow is used to give various effects, from illness to sparkle. It should be remembered that green is good only for use with a character of a "theatrical" temperament. Usually blue or blue-green is best, although it depends upon the character to be portrayed and upon the color of his costume. It is applied to the eyelid, and should be blended to almost nothing at the eyebrows and at the outer corners of the lids. A black line, made with eyebrow pencil, outlining the eye will accent and enlarge it. A tiny dot of red lipstick on the ~~inner~~ corner of the eye will give it extra sparkle. While the eyebrows should be darkened, it should be remembered that unless dealing with characterization, the lines should follow those of the natural brows. Powder sets the grease paint. It should be a

lighter color than the base. Usually, it is patted on liberally, and then dusted off carefully with a soft brush or rabbit's foot. After this, the lips may be retouched, and mascara may be applied to the eyelashes if they are too light to be effective. The hair can be changed into grey or white with the use of cornstarch or powder. Different hair styles may be achieved with the aid of brilliantine to hold the new coiffure in place.<sup>1</sup>

A thorough analysis of the character is necessary for effective character make-up. Heredity, sex, time, and environment are the basic factors to be taken into consideration. While it is wise to observe everyone, hoping to find the particular character typified in some passer-by, the make-up artist should not study other make-ups. Models and photographs are helpful, but if a character make-up is studied and copied, it will not be a copy of the real thing, but a copy of that which has already been copied by someone else. The make-up should be adapted to the actor and his portrayal of the role. If he spends some time with the make-up artist demonstrating the facial expressions which accompany his interpretation of the part, the artist will be better able to make his living portrait true to character.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Corson, Richard, Stage Make-up, pp.1-58,  
F.S.Crofts Col, N.Y. 1942
2. Ibid. p.59

Since there is a need for middle-aged characters in almost every play, that particular type will be discussed in more detail. The base color should be on the orange-pink tones, with less in the cheeks and lips than would be necessary for youth. The cheeks would be slightly sunken, therefore, the part under the cheekbones would be shadowed with corresponding lining color. Because there must be a highlight for every lowlight, the cheekbone above the shadowed area should be touched with a lining color lighter than the base. The temples likewise are slightly sunken, and should be shadowed. Wrinkles on the forehead should not be merely straight black lines, but again, should be shadows and highlights. The bottom edge of the wrinkle, which is really merely a depression in the skin should be shadowed, while the upper edge should be highlighted. If a lighter lining color is not obtainable, often a lighter base color may be used instead. The chin protrudes slightly, and should be heavily shadowed under the lower lip, and highlighted in the circle at the tip of the chin. Around the tip it should be softly low-lighted. Every wrinkle must have a soft and an hard edge, or a light and dark edge. The eyes, having become slightly sunken, should be shadowed, as should the sides of the bridge of the nose. The nasolobial folds, or those wrinkles which are on either side of the nose, should be accented by

making a deep shadow next to the nose, and highlighting the outer edge of the wrinkle. All these wrinkles and lines may be found by having the actor smile, frown, or raise his eyebrows. Then they will be in the proper places for his shape face.

In a middle-age characterization, dark rouge should be placed low on the cheeks. Dry rouge is most suitable. The eyebrows are not darkened, and the hair is grayed slightly. The hands should be lowlighted between the bones, and if possible, the veins should be accentuated. All these shadows may be done with lining color and a 1/4 inch lining brush.

Old age characterization is almost the same as middle age, except that all the shadows are more deeply pronounced, and the whole face is thinner and more sunken.

Since lighting affects make-up just as it affects the colors of costumes and scenery, it is wise to make up the characters under the same lights as will be used in the performance. In most cases it is not possible to have the dressing rooms equipped with facilities for the use of many colored lights, and often it is just as good to have the actors made up on the stage itself. Each person should be checked from the center of the house before his make-up is passed on. Red lights upon the stage completely ruin any make-up. Amber makes complexions orange, and yellow turns complexions yellow. It is

best to have multicolored lights in order that there may be a neutralization of glaring effects, and the whole may blend in to the desired stage picture. Because of the shift in lights between scenes, or even during scenes, it is wise to use make-up that will look good most of the time, for it will never look good under every light change.

Max Factor has a series of pamphlets on various phases of stage make-up which the writer would recommend as worthwhile for every director to possess.<sup>1</sup>

In Where Love Is, the only "straight" make-ups were Ilya and Gerásim. All the rest were character. This made it rather difficult, especially since the make-up committee consisted only of the chairman and the director. There were no other Seniors available to help Jessie with the task. Two weeks before the final performance, Jessie came to the director to learn how to use grease paint. She brought with her Betty, Elizabeth, and Edith as models. All three of the girls were made-up just as they would appear in the play. It was fortunate that Jessie was so adept at learning to apply the make-up, for she had to do three characters by herself while the director did the other three. At the dress rehearsal, the make-up was tried under the lights,

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1. Factor, Max, Make-Up Studios, Hollywood and London  
Max Factor's Hints on the Art of Make-Up  
series - 10 pamphlets.

and suggestions and criticisms were offered by the cast themselves. A make-up schedule was posted for the night of the final performance:

WHERE LOVE IS

Make-Up Schedule

<u>Director</u>	<u>Jessie</u>
6:00 Marnel	6:15 Edith
6:30 Jim	6:45 Betty
7:00 Elizabeth	7:15 Anthony

PLEASE BE PROMPT!

When formulating a make-up schedule, there is a certain order that should be followed. If it is a three-act play, the principals should be made-up first, and then the others in order of their appearance. But in a one-act play, where everyone must be made-up when the curtain rises, the order is different. The principals should be made-up first. Then those whose make-up is most difficult to apply come next. All the straight make-ups come last. Enough time should be allowed so that the make-up crew is not rushed at the end. Approximately a half hour for each one is sufficient.

There were two types of base color used by the make-up crew of Where Love Is. One was a stick base of an orange shade, suitable for outdoor complexions. The others were soft base paints; one was very pale, and

the other very dark. These three were sufficient for all the complexions called for in this play, for intermediate shades were obtained by blending the pale and dark soft base colors together. For instance, the soldier's wife had pale base, for she was ill. Martin, an old man, used to living in a cellar, would also be pale, but since his pallor was not illness, it was blended with a touch of the darker color. The applewoman, an outdoor person was given the dark base applied in a thin layer, giving her a rather wind-burned look. Ilya and Gerasim had the stick base make-up, for neither was anything but straight make-up. Stephanuitch had a blend of the pale and dark also, but it was a more intermediate shade than that which was used for Martin.

As for the rest of the make-up, there was nothing too difficult except making youthful faces appear old or middle aged. Martin was the hardest to manage, partly because his face was so free from any lines naturally, and partly because he was to be on the stage the whole time, and under constant scrutiny by the audience. There was no opportunity to retouch his make-up between scenes or appearances. It had to be perfect and had to remain that way throughout the whole play. There were so many high and low lights to be used for his old age that the effect away from the stage lights was not at all pleasant. But once under colored lights, the weird effect of light

and dark blended into very natural and convincing wrinkles and pouches. All those who needed gray hair had to be very careful of their costumes. For white baby powder was brushed into the hair, and it dusted out very easily. This is not the most satisfactory method of graying, for it has to be touched up continually. Liquid white mascara is best, but was unobtainable at the time this performance was given.

Because of limited facilities, the make-up crew worked on the stage under the lights which would be used for the performance. They had planned the schedule so that all the preliminaries could be finished and cleared away before the final touches such as the powdering of the hair needed to be done. Everyone, having been in costume before he was made-up, was ready to begin the play fifteen minutes before the service began. There was no last minute rushing. This is one of the things most important on the night of the performance. Because of this, the actors were given no undue cause to be nervous or anxious before it was time to begin the play.

The effect wrought upon the actors by the use of make-up is well worth the trouble and expense. Once they took the part, it is twice as easy for them to throw themselves into it wholeheartedly. Jim became

more stooped, Elizabeth acted very ill, Anthony became dignified and aristocratic, and Betty bounced over the stage when once they were made-up to fit their parts. Each one of them later said that they had not felt completely easy in their roles before they had the accompanying make-up.

#### G. The Problem of Properties

Without the proper stage properties, the whole play can lose its meaning, for the whole stage picture should be unified; this unity is often achieved by the use of props. When thinking about furniture and appointments for the stage, there are certain factors which must be considered. Date, country, economic level of occupants if it is to be a room scene, situation called for by the plot, and geography if it is to be an outdoor scene. There must be no incongruity or lack of harmony in the setting. This calls for rehearsal on the part of the stage-crew.

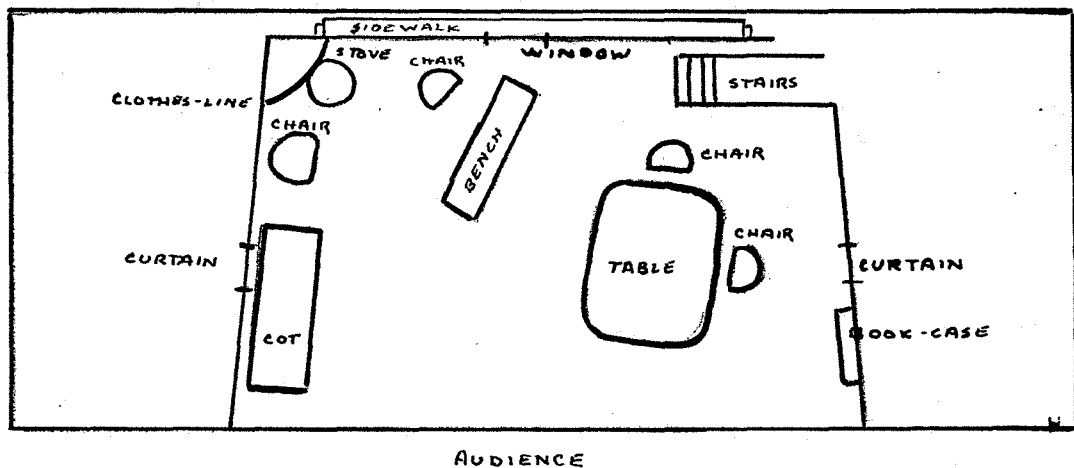
For Where Love Is, the setting had to be rough, simple, and dark. The cobbler's bench was made by putting three wooden planks on carpenter's horses. The boys brought shoemaker's tools from home, and no one knew that the awl was a screwdriver, or the boots just

ordinary riding boots. Martin's stool was found in a corner of the Church cellar, and was dilapidated enough to be just right. The cot in the corner was old and dingy, and the covering was an old faded portiere that had the proper moth-eaten look. The stove was a modern oil heater which had been designed expressly to give an old-fashioned appearance. Kenneth brought that from home. On top of it was a pan of soup. Over the stove was strung a clothesline on which were some very dirty rags and an old cape that Martin was to give to the soldier's wife. There were a table and two chairs opposite the cot. On the table was a Mexican tablecloth which looked very Russian. That, too, was brought from one of the homes. On the old bookcase, found back-stage, there was a tray with cups and saucers, and an oil lamp borrowed from Kenneth's summer home. There was also an old, worn Bible, and some other pairs of boots. (These were overshoes). The problem of a samovar was less easily solved. The word was looked up in the dictionary, and finally, after much hunting on the part of the cast and crew for the proper vessel, an old tarnished silver sugar bowl was discovered in someone's attic which seemed to fit the description. It was used and worked perfectly.

Various members of the cast were able to bring their own properties. Elizabeth had a doll which was a good substitute for a baby. Edith used a picnic basket

for her apple basket. Jim found an old snow shovel and used that. A gold headed cane was loaned to Anthony, and everyone brought overshoes which served as boots.

With everyone finding what he needed for his part, the work of the stage crew was considerably lessened. Not many extra articles were needed, and those found suited the play very well.



1 IN. = 6 FT.

#### H. The Problem of Effects

There are many special effects which are often required in religious drama. The amateur director should know how to achieve them artistically but with little trouble. One of the most impressive of all

special effects is the use of music. If it is put in the right place and is the right type of music for the purpose, it will serve to place the audience in the proper mood for what is to follow. But the music must be chosen with care, and as far as possible, the instruments should be correct, or at least should sound like the instruments they are representing. There are several collections which might be useful to the director:

Union Hymnal for Jewish Worship - Central Conference of  
American Rabbis

Music of the Bible - Sir John Stainer

Music of the Most Ancient Nations - Carl Engle

And many of the modern Christian hymnbooks and religious music are helpful. There are many beautiful oratorios which may be used in whole or in part. Often phrases of some of these works may be used as background music, or as anthems sung by Heavenly choirs. If nothing else is available, victrola records may be used in place of instruments. This has worked well in many cases. Usually, musical materials may be obtained at the various denominational boards.

Other effects which are often called for are of visions or illusions. Theatrical gauze is best suited for this purpose. If it is lighted from the front, it cannot be seen through. Then, when the vision is about to be revealed, the front lights are switched off, and

the scene is lit from the back. This may be best done when the gauze has been dyed dark blue. The front lights should be placed facing each other so that they throw a wall of light in front of the gauze. In this way, the audience will not be able to see any movement behind the curtain until the lights flooding the vision are on.

If an effect such as the shadow of the Cross, or some other object is desired, a stereoptican lantern may be used. A piece of cardboard fitting over the aperture of the lantern may have a very tiny Cross cut into it. When thrown on the wall, it will appear as a good sized Cross. Another way of achieving the same effect, a method also good for the Christmas star, can be used only behind curtains. A box is fitted with an electric light bulb. The cover of the box may have a Cross or a Star cutout. When placed behind a curtain, it shows through with a mistiness that makes it seem as if it were a vision.

For Where Love Is, two simple effects were needed. One was the illusion that it was winter and that there was snow outside. The stage-crew pasted cotton in the corner of each pane of the window through which Martin was to look. It seemed as if the snow had just drifted there, and from the audience, looked very real. Then, before each character came in from outside, some mica "snow" was sprinkled on his hair, shoulders, and boots.

The effect was good.

The other was a vision seen only by the audience. When Martin sat down to read his Gospel, he lit his oil lamp. At that moment, the lights, which had been turned off gradually, were completely shut off, and only the light of the lamp was left. It cast weird shadows on the back wall of the cellar room. As Martin hears the Voice of Christ, those whom he has befriended that day come in quietly at the rear of the room, and stand by the stove. Martin does not see them, but the audience can see that there are figures there. The light of the oil lamp was just enough to create awe-inspiring atmosphere, and it was effected by simply reducing the lights and bringing in a different source of light. Light is one of the best ways of achieving special and lovely effects.

## I. Summary

It is wise for the director to have a working knowledge of color and its principles. She should know how to use a color wheel so that the most effective and significant combinations may be made.

When considering a stage-set, the important things are accuracy and simplicity. Only the detail of scale is necessary; other details may be limited to mere suggestions. If the stage must be constructed, there are

certain technicalities which should be observed. For instance, the accoustics, the visibility, the size of the space which the stage will occupy. The stage should be low enough so that the floor may be seen from any spot in the building. Three or four feet from the floor is adequate. Ideally, the proscenium arch should be twenty by twelve feet in proportions.

There are two types of scenery, curtains or flats. While flats are more realistic, actually making a room on the stage, curtains are just as useful, and, if storage space is limited, more practical in keeping for future use.

All scenery should be painted carefully, for not only should the pieces harmonize, but they should be able to stand the scrutiny of the audience when under stage lights.

Lights are probably what will make a play live or not, for with the proper lighting, unusual and pleasing effects can be made which will enhance the meaning and mood of the play. The necessary equipment may be made simply; spot lights, bunch lights, overheads, and borders are all that are required, and these may be made at home with nothing more imposing than tin cans, dish-pans, metal strips, and light sockets. If these units are portable, they may be used in combinations or alone, thus varying the effects which may be produced. The only

piece that is difficult to make is the dimming apparatus, which is valuable for good effects. However, satisfactory substitutes may be worked out.

The crew which handles the lights must be skilled in their work. The lights should run smoothly throughout the various changes in the play without causing flashes of brightness or moments of dimness while changing from one effect to the other. At all times, except in special scenes, there should be enough light so that the actors' faces and actions may be seen.

Costuming can create a problem if there is not an adequate manager and committee. Colors must be watched carefully for symbolism, harmony, and reactions under stage lights. The period of dress must be in accord with the time and mood of the play. Simplicity is to be desired in most cases. Many excellent costumes can be made from old materials such as sheets, tablecloths, portieres and drapes. It is well to remember that often materials look better on the stage than they do off stage.

Make-up can be overdone, and this should be carefully guarded against. It should be used with care, and the crew should have practice before they make-up the cast for the final performance. It is possible to make even an adolescent seem like an old man; in this way, it helps the actors to enter into their parts with greater feeling and less embarrassment than if there

were no make-up. There is an order which must be followed in the application of stage make-up. First, the grease paint base, then rouge, lipstick, eyes, age lines, powder, and hair. The hands and other areas of skin which will be seen by the audience, are done last, for the paint wears off the hands and legs first. Make-up should always be applied under stage lights.

It is wise for the director to post a make-up schedule for the cast to follow on the night of the final performance, for there should be no hasty make-up done that night. Enough time should be allowed for each character to be done thoroughly.

The stage properties should be in harmony with the whole mood and theme of the play. They, too, should be simple, but significant and effective. There are many props which can be made from common household implements, and more which are transformed from the commonplace to the stage by means of paint or gilt. Paint, paper, wood, and clay are all that are needed as bases for most of the props that will be demanded.

Special effects may be produced through music and lighting, mainly. A play is always enhanced if the atmosphere for which it calls may be achieved in an unusual way. There can be no prescribed method of treating effects, for each one called for is different. The director must use her own ingenuity in creating the

desired illusions.

In all of the staging problems, the director must be well versed enough to give concrete advice to her managers. The final choice of color, costumes, set, lights, properties, make-up, and effects, rests upon her decisions.

**CHAPTER V**  
**PRESENTATION**

## CHAPTER V.

### PRESENTATION

#### A. Introduction

No matter how carefully planned the schedule of rehearsals may be for a dramatic presentation, there are always a few details which can only be taken care of at the last meetings of the cast. In this chapter, these will be summarized. An account of the final presentation of Where Love Is will serve as a guide in explaining the points.

#### B. Final planning

All rehearsals should find their culmination in the dress rehearsal. The performance should be rehearsed just as it will be done on the night of the presentation. Each committee should be present in order that, should last minute corrections need to be made, they may be there to help. This rehearsal should be the drawing together of all the small details which have been emphasized and stressed during the whole rehearsal period. The director should look for slight imperfections or flaws. For instance, the names in Where Love Is were

Russian and long. Since some of the boys were afraid they would stumble over them, they were shortened. At the dress rehearsal, the director had to listen carefully to see that all used the same form of each name, for it would not do to have the soldier called Stepan by some, and Stephanuitshh by others. If there are any serious flaws, they must of course, be corrected. But the director must try to correct them in such a way that the actors do not feel frantic and panic-stricken over an error so shortly before the presentation. Tact is necessary throughout the days of preparation, but especially at this final rehearsal, when everyone is in a state of suspense.

It is wise to have the dress rehearsal two nights before the play is to be presented. There should be no rehearsal at all the night before, for the actors will be too tired on the final night if they have had the strain of going through it just the night before. If the rehearsal is two nights before, then in case there does happen to be something that needs a drastic change at the last minute, the night in between may be used for this. But it must be remembered that there should be no feeling of urgency or pressure, even when changing something at the last minute, for it will create a feeling of panic in the actors which will not be overcome before the final presentation. This does not mean, however, that

the actors should be allowed to relax so that their performance is not effective. It usually is the case that where there is some tension, the performance is better. As the actors should not be so frightened that they fail to send the message beyond the lights to the audience, so also they should not be over-confident. The director should use praise, but use it intelligently at this rehearsal. She should use it so that each of her actors feel that at the final performance, they will be ready to do their best. But the praise should not arouse a feeling of complacency.

The dress rehearsal of Where Love Is was not ideal. The make-up was applied on schedule, the costumes were satisfactory but the stage was not quite complete. There was no snow in the window panes, and no tea in the pot. Neither was the soup on the stove. The difficulty lay in the fact that the stage crew was also the lighting crew and the properties crew, for there were not enough Seniors for all the jobs. However, the boys knew what was lacking, and had already planned to arrive very early on Sunday night in order to make final preparations.

The play itself went fairly well; too well to hold to the old superstition that the worse a dress rehearsal is, the better the performance will be. Very little praise was given, for the director had followed a

policy of praising whenever some part of the rehearsals had been exceptionally good. Each member of the cast knew his weak points, and knew where he still had to work before Sunday evening.

There were one or two spectators for the Friday night rehearsal. As long as the visitors are not the friends of the actors, this is a wise policy. For it gives the cast a feel of the audience, and it affords an opportunity for the criticisms and suggestions of persons who have not worked with the play before this time. One of the men of the Church gave the stage crew some helpful pointers, and the other visitors were asked to criticize make-up, costumes, and stage effects. In this way, the director was able to obtain an idea of what the audience reaction would be. The suggestions offered were very helpful.

After the rehearsal, each member of the cast and crews was told exactly what was required of him on Sunday night. Each was given the time when he should be present, and almost everyone was given some small detail to take care of. The actors were asked to see that their costumes were complete, and pressed, while the crews were given tasks about the stage. A few last minute directions were given: 1. "Come promptly Sunday night, we are working according to schedule".

2. "Make this a matter of personal prayer - the audience must receive our message".

Kenneth, who had charge of the worship service, was given the responsibility of the publicity. He had a notice put into the Church calendar two Sundays before the date set for the presentation. All the Seniors were instructed to invite their friends and families. Thus for two weeks, all the talk concerned Where Love Is. On the Sunday morning of the final performance, there appeared on the Church bulletin board a poster stating:

W H E R E   L O V E   I S

by

I den Payne

presented by the

Senior C. E.

Nov. 18th            8:00p.m.

our THANKSGIVING message

presented by special permission of  
W. H. Baker Co., Boston, Mass.

At the Church service that morning, the pastor urged that everyone attend the play. He made a strong appeal for the support of the youth activities, especially when so much time was spent in preparation. The response to this publicity was most gratifying.

C. Actual presentation

When the director arrived at the Church at 5:30 on Sunday evening, the stage manager, and several of the actors were already there. Since it was necessary to apply the make-up on the stage under the lights, the stage crew had to work around the people on the stage. This was rather difficult, especially in the manipulation of ladders and the like. While the cast was being made-up, the stage manager went over his light plot and curtain cues with as much matter-of-factness as if he had done it many times before. The snow was glued to the windows, and soup and tea in the form of clean water were put in their respective containers and placed in position. Ray saw to it that everything was in working order and looked as it should from the house. Then he sat on the cot, and viewed the process of make-up with much uneasiness, for he was sure that his stage would not be left the way he had arranged it.

After the make-up was applied, except for the final details of hair and powder, the cast and crew were called onto the stage. The whole period of preparation had been timed so that there were fifteen minutes in which the cast could compose itself, and the crews make final adjustments. In these minutes, the director talked with the group. She gave these directions:

1. "Do not look at the prompter for lines; she will give them as soon as they are needed.
2. Keep in character as long as you are on the stage. If you can keep in character backstage also, do so.
3. No talking backstage except for the cues Alexander has to give for crossing the 'sidewalk' and for the prompter.
4. No laughing or giggling.
5. Don't come outside the curtains until the make-up and costumes have been removed.
6. Stay on the sides of the stage to which you have been assigned.
7. We must start promptly, and keep the play moving.
8. Walk across the stage slowly.
9. Let the audience see your face.
10. Don't talk after the play is over.
11. Please return play books after performance.
12. Overemphasize your parts; act like you've never acted before; FORGET YOURSELVES.
13. This is the high point of the worship service; make it such. The audience will only see this once, and it is for them, so be sure the message reaches them."

The cast was told to remember that they were not putting on a show, but presenting a truth which could be meaningful to the audience or not, as they chose to make it.

After these reminders, the final costume and make-up check-ups were given, and at eight o'clock Kenneth stepped to the front of the room to begin the service. Four of the men from the Young People's group had been asked to usher, and they were still seating people when the service began.

The hymn "Now Thank We All Our God" opened the service. This was followed by the reading of the Scripture, which was taken from the One hundred seventh Psalm, verses 1-22. When Scripture is being quoted in the play, it should not be read in the accompanying service; therefore, the Seniors chose an Old Testament passage.

The minister led in prayer and then the congregation sang the hymn "Praise to God Immortal Praise". This was followed by a reading, LET US LIFT OUR HEARTS AND GIVE THANKS by Hal Borland. Another hymn "O God Beneath Thy Guiding Hand", preceded Kenneth's introduction of the play. During this hymn, the cast quietly gathered on stage, and prayed for the blessing of what they were about to do. In this worshipful mood, the curtains parted on the Thanksgiving message of Where Love Is. Kenneth had introduced it:

The true spirit of Thanksgiving is the spirit of giving. Without giving, there is no thankfulness, and life is meaningless. We wish to bring you our Thanksgiving message, made more powerful than we could express it through the words of Leo Tolstoy in his story WHERE LOVE IS, THERE GOD IS. This story has been dramatized by Iden Payne, and the Senior Christian Endeavor brings it to you now by special arrangement with the Walter Baker Co.

After the play, the offering was received during the singing of the hymn "Thine Are All The Gifts, O God". The service was closed with the benediction.

The response of the Church members was gratifying; the room was filled with an approximate one hundred people. Manuel, the Senior treasurer, proudly announced that the offering had been over \$32. He had been afraid that the society would not be able to meet the five dollar royalty on the play.

During the performance of the play, the director had stayed backstage to prompt on one side of the set while Margaret prompted the other. But neither was needed, for not a cue was missed, nor a line forgotten. As each character descended from the street to the shoemaker's cellar, the director poured Christmas snow (flaked mica) on his shoulders, hair, and boots. Everyone entered into his part perfectly, and Elizabeth even wept, something which she had not been able to do at rehearsals at all.

The audience was deeply impressed, and flocked to tell each member of the cast so. In this particular

Church situation there were no problems of audience reaction, but where there have not been many services of this type, there might be some difficulties. For instance, there might be applause, a factor which immediately destroys the worshipful atmosphere created by the mood of the play. There are two ways in which this might be avoided. To announce or print on the programs if there are any, "The audience is requested not to applaud," is one method. The other is to bring the actors to a realization that this is not something that deserves or requires applause; it is for the glory of God rather than for the glory of the actors. It is often the case that if the actors do not expect applause, they will not receive it, for the attitude in which they present the play will be felt across the footlights to the audience.

The same principle is true when it comes to sending flowers to the leading lady. This may be a problem, also. The cast must feel that they are rendering a service to God, not entertaining a group of people. In religious drama, there must be no acknowledgement of the audience at all. Young people like to take curtain calls and bows. This, too, is out of harmony with the spirit in which they are to present this message. It is the duty of the director to make these things plain when the rehearsals first begin.

As the curtain fell on the last lines of the play, there was a hush over the audience which told those backstage that their Thanksgiving message had reached those for whom it was intended. And the hush backstage showed the director that the cast, too, had received the message of love as Martin had sent it forth.

#### D. Summary

The dress rehearsal is the time for checking over the small details in connection with the play, and for seeing that everything is in order. At this time, any last minute instructions may be given, as long as they are not of a nature to throw the cast into panic. Even if there should be a major correction, it should be effected in such a way that all concerned remain calm.

Publicity may be achieved in many ways. The Seniors chose three methods. First, invitations by word of mouth. Second, through the Church calendar. Third, by means of a poster on the bulletin board. Other ways may be through the local town paper or through posters in other Churches. The room in which Where Love Is was presented could not have held any more people than were present; therefore, the publicity was limited to the Church.

Before the service begins on the night of the final presentation, the director should call the cast together for final instructions and reminders. These should be few and pertinent, for the actors should not be deluged with unnecessary details which might cause them to be distracted and upset. Just before the curtains part, the director may commit the presentation to the Lord. This not only puts the actors into the proper spirit, but it gives them a deep sense of their dependence upon the presence of God with them and makes them realize that, after all, as actors they are merely His channels.

## CHAPTER VI

## EVALUATION

## CHAPTER VI

### EVALUATION

#### A. Introduction

One of the most important parts of dramatic work is the evaluation which follows the production. It is at this time that the director may ascertain the extent to which the play influenced not only the audience but the cast as well, for it must be remembered that one of the main reasons for religious dramatics is the deepening of the spiritual life of the actors. Therefore, an account of the discussion which ensued at the meeting following the play, will be related.

#### B. Group Reaction to Their Work

The director asked for a few moments of the business meeting time, the week after the play was presented. She had prepared six questions which she wished to present for discussion. First, how do you think the performance went? Was it better than the rehearsals? The cast was of the opinion that it had been the best that they had done. They had been conscious of putting more feeling into it. One said, "I was shaking; that always helps me do better". Elizabeth expressed the opinion

that the make-up helped everyone to feel more in character.

Second, Did you each put into the performance what you felt, or were you self-conscious? All except Jim said that they forgot themselves under the lights, with make-up and costumes, and did their parts to their satisfaction. It is the director's opinion that this was true. Jim felt a bit unnatural in his part. This might have been due to the fact that Stepan was supposed to be a rather queer old man, and Jim was slightly embarrassed. The director felt that he did his part well, and that if he felt that he had acted unconvincingly, it had not been apparent.

Third, each person was asked to reflect back upon what his part did for the whole play. Each felt that his was a contributing part to the main stream of love which flowed through the play. The actors said that they could see just where each one of the parts fitted into the scheme of things.

Fourth, they were asked if they had heard any constructive criticism on the part of the audience. They had heard nothing except favorable and flattering criticisms. The costumes were especially commented upon as well as the make-up. Of course, it was generally agreed that the acting had been excellent.

Fifth, What could you have done to make the perform-

ance better? It was felt that if they had memorized their parts sooner, the acting might have been better. Some had learned their parts almost immediately, while some had long speeches which took more time. The director felt, too, that the parts should have been learned sooner.

Sixth, Is there any value in doing work such as this? The immediate response was that the message was the all-important thing in any work of this sort. They felt that this was the primary purpose in presenting a religious drama. Then too, they suggested that it was valuable in keeping the Christian Endeavor society vital and active.

The director felt that since this was the first experience of this sort for most of the Seniors their reactions might not be as critical of themselves as they should have been for real value. However, they benefitted greatly from the experience. Months later, they were heard repeating lines from the play and trying to re-enact the scenes. They continually refer to the play in some connection or another. It has made a lasting impression on them, and the message which they imparted to the audience has found its way into their own personal thinking. This has been evident in the group discussions which they have had since that time.

They voted that they could not keep the offering

themselves; consequently after taking out expenses, \$25. was given to the Presbyterian Rehabilitation fund.

Taken as a whole, it was unquestionably a most valuable experience for all of the Seniors.

### C. Audience Reaction to the Play

The director probably heard more comments from members of the audience, than did the cast. One boy was heard to remark, "I don't see how they did it; not one line was missed". A testimony to the make-up crew was the reaction of a little girl who exclaimed when she saw Elizabeth, "She looks awful". Many people expressed surprise at the acting ability of some of the Seniors who had never had an opportunity before to show what they could do. As a consequence, a number of them were used in the Christmas pageants which followed.

Many requested a repeat performance and when the cast heard of this request, they, too, were eager to do the play again. But this was not possible, for at best another performance, not originally scheduled, would have been an anticlimax. And, too, a repeat performance would have meant another royalty fee.

The servicemen's paper which is published by the Young People's Society had this to say about the play:

"Where Love Is -- This very simple and beautiful play was enacted last Sunday evening by the Senior C. E. Society. It is the story of a shoe cobbler who, besides mending the boots of his townspeople, does much also to patch up life's problems and sorrows for them. He is not conscious of the good he is doing for others, as his is the kind of life in which giving of himself is a part of living. Congratulations to all the cast for a wonderful performance."

The audience was definitely moved by the play. It was done in such an appealing way, and with such complete sincerity, that the spectator could not help but realize that these Seniors were feeling that Jesus-love of which they told.

#### D. Summary

The method of evaluating work is a valuable one. It brings to light many points which need to be stressed and clarified in the minds of those participating. For future use, it gives a basis on which to lay other works of the same sort, for once having evaluated a piece of work, the group will start a new piece of work with those ideals and objectives in mind. The best way to evaluate, is to encourage discussion of the play by the group. From this will emerge many interesting facts and suggestions for further study.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The field of Christian education is broad, and its scope includes many aspects. In order to carry on effective programs of Christian education, various means may be employed. One of these is the use of dramatization.

This manual has attempted to set forth, in a concise manner, some hints and suggestions for the amateur play director. It was not intended that it be complete or exhaustive but that it be a summarization of practical ideas and principles common to any venture into dramatization. It was written to meet a need; that of the leader who is afraid to try a new method because the results are uncertain. The manual, therefore, aimed to show that such an undertaking as play production may be handled skillfully by any one who is interested and moderately creative.

The writer has sought to lead the reader through an actual situation of preparation for and presentation of a religious drama. Iden Payne's adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's Where Love Is was used for this purpose. Details such as casting, rehearsal schedule, all aspects of staging, the accompanying worship service, and the final presentation were discussed with an emphasis

upon practical hints and suggestions suitable for the amateur director.

The choice of the play was discussed first, with emphasis on the importance of a thorough acquaintance with the group, particularly with their potentialities and their experience in dramatics, and of a clear conception of the occasion or purpose for the presentation of the play. It was found that there must be a definite goal in the minds of the group in order to motivate sufficiently the urge to present a message in this form. It is not enough to present a play just for the purpose of engaging in an interesting activity; there should be a definite value in the presentation, not only for the audience but, in the realm of spiritual growth, for each member of the cast. Therefore, each individual in the group should receive special consideration when casting, the director noting his Christian experience, his acting ability, and his need for growth or development. With some of these things in mind, the selection of the play should be made carefully, for it is important that this experience be a growing one for every participant.

Next, the preliminary preparations prior to the actual rehearsals were discussed. Considering that the group itself had a voice in the choice of the play, it may be concluded that the selection is one which is

agreeable to all concerned, and that it therefore will receive their best efforts. Several possible methods of presenting the play to the group were set forth, with the conclusion that the best method is that of a reading by the leader.

Since the director's task is all-important, certain requirements which are necessary for her to keep in mind were enumerated. She must know people and how to deal with them, she must understand the play and its background, and she must be able to guide her actors into an experience which will not only be a blessing for them, but will contribute a vital message to those in the audience.

It was suggested that the try-out method be used as a fair way of determining the parts in the play. Those who did not receive parts should be placed on the various committees necessary for the smooth performance of the play, either as managers or as committee-men.

The play rehearsals, the most important part of any dramatic venture, it was indicated, must be faithfully attended by each member of the cast. In order to make clear when they are to be held and what is to be accomplished in each one, a rehearsal schedule should be drawn up and posted, besides being clipped into each play book.

Several of the rules of stage convention were enumerated for the actors, as well as some of the simple

principles of stage movement, speech, and memorization.

Next, the problems connected with the staging of the play were discussed. Color, scenery, lighting, costuming, make-up, properties, and effects were all dealt with in brief. Practical hints for simple yet effective staging were given.

Essential factors in the actual presentation of the play, including the final preparations and the careful planning of details were then set forth. The final step was to consider the importance of group evaluation of their work, in the form of discussion following the public presentation of the play and of written statements by the members of the cast.

Appended to the manual are three appendices which, although not specifically related to the actual study, are, nevertheless, of interest to the amateur director. The first deals with costuming the Biblical play; the second consists of the reports which the Seniors made on the message for them of the play Where Love Is; and the third is an annotated list of plays which would be suitable for use in a small Church.

Throughout this study, the writer has become more and more convinced that the dramatic method of Christian education is an effective one for use with young people of the Church. The task is not a difficult one, and the

leader will be surprised at the facility with which the group will enter into their various roles. Not only is the experience a valuable one for director and players, but for all who participate in any way, no matter how actively or passively.

To be lifted to the heights and to return with a new message, a new song in the heart, this is the result of a worship experience. And the use of dramatics is instrumental in fostering that experience.

APPENDIX A  
BIBLICAL COSTUMING

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BIBLICAL COSTUMING

If a Biblical play is to be costumed, it must be done well, for nothing can spoil a play as much as a ludicrous stage picture. Therefore, it is essential that all details of costuming and effects be in keeping, not only with the period portrayed, but with the station of characters and with their occupations. Biblical dress is largely dependent upon these things. For instance, a shepherd would not be dressed as a publican, neither would Abraham appear as Peter. There is as much difference between Old and New Testament dress as there is between Greek and Roman. The director must recognize all these factors, and plan the costumes accordingly.

One of the best authorities upon the subject of Biblical costuming is Lucy Barton. Every director should possess a copy of her "Costuming the Biblical Play". The diagrams which are used herein are from that volume. Miss Barton deals with each period in detail, and notes the distinguishing features of each as reproduced in the costumes which may be used for each.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Barton, Lucy, Costuming the Biblical Play,  
Walter H. Baker Company, Boston and Los Angeles

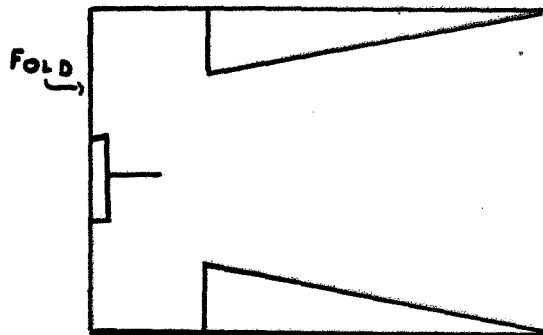
The writer wishes to give only some general suggestions in this appendix. They are practical hints which are readily adaptable to costumes of any period, for they are only for garments which are basic to a wardrobe of Biblical costumes.

Perhaps the most important thing to remember is that any materials used for Biblical costumes must be heavy enough to be opaque, but soft enough to fall in loose folds, and to drape easily. Solid colors, or those with a striped design are suitable; figured material must never be used. However, Roman or Greek motifs may be stencilled on if the costume is to be used in a New Testament setting. Almost any material such as old portieres, draperies, tablecloths, sheets, piano covers, scarves, etc. are acceptable for costumes. Most of these can be made to appear as rich fabrics under lights, but it must be remembered that if a piece of flannel is being used for velvet, a piece of real velvet must not be used with it, for the difference will be noticeable.

There are certain garments which are basic to all costumes. A shepherd needs a short tunic. This may be sleeveless or not, as desired. It is most effective when made of a burlap bag which has been washed until flexible. If it is cut at the bottom fold with an opening large enough for the head, and two armholes are cut from the

sides, the garment is ready for use. Cloaks, girdles, sleeves, sheepskins, may all be added as needed.

A man, be he rich or poor, also needs a basic garment. This is usually a long full garment with sleeves. It may be made very simply, and in one piece. Varied effects may be obtained by setting in sleeves of different colors, and by using girdles and headdresses of varying colors.



Over this basic tunic may be worn a coat which is made in exactly the same way, except that it is open down the front. It is worn this way in order that the tunic may show under it. Sandals would complete the outfit for a rich nobleman; fishermen would be barefoot. However, sandals would not be out of place for them if the actors insisted upon having their feet shod. These may be made from inner soles with two straps attached to the back. These are crossed over the instep, and tied to a third strap fastened at the front, and coming between the first and second toes.<sup>1</sup> A headdress may be merely a square of  
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1. Munkres, Alberta, Primary Method in the Church School  
p.50, Abingdon Press, N.Y., Cinn., Chicago, 1930

cloth draped over the head and held in place with a strip of the same or contrasting material.



1

The women, too, have a basic garment. It is very much like that of the men; however, instead of having just a slit for the head, it may be gathered on a string at the neck, causing it to fall with more grace and fullness. The women, too, has a robe which may be worn over the basic garment. It is styled as is the man's. Frequently, the undergarment is worn without the robe, but is used with a wide girdle and with many strands of beads at the neck, for Hebrew women used much

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1. Barton, op.cit. p. 43

jewelry. The headdress for the woman may be draped in a variety of ways. It should be approximately two yards long. Barton illustrates it thus:



1.

The soldier of the Roman period wore a short red tunic, over which was his leather or metal armor. The tunic is merely a close fitting undergarment with a short pleated skirt and short sleeves. Over this may be worn "armor" made of oilcloth which has been painted on the

. . . . .

1. Ibid. pp. 89,91

wrong side with radiator gilt. His boots may be old riding boots cut out in front, and laced together with gilded cord. Although the soldier's dress is short, the costume should not be so short that the actor is uncomfortable. It is better that he be at ease rather than be attired absolutely in the correct garb, for no actor should be allowed to be ill at ease because he is self-conscious about his costume.



1.

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1. Ibid. p.103

For the amateur in Church dramatics, these costumes are all that will be essential. Shawls, scarves, cloaks, headpieces, robes will be all that are necessary to vary the effect. Old Testament costumes may be made of heavier materials, and the colors will not be so bright as those depicting a later date.



1.

New Testament costumes will show a Roman influence in the draping of the headdress, which should be longer than the Old Testament headpiece. The colors will be brighter, and

. . . . .

1. Ibid. p.49

there may be a design on the borders of the robes or scarves. The design should be either Roman or Greek in pattern. The influence of Rome may also be seen in the use of the long toga-like drape for the men.



1.

Perhaps the Magi should receive special consideration in this summary discussion. They should be as richly clad as possible. Their undertunic should appear to be velvet or silk. It may be made as the other tunics have been described. The girdles which hold them in at the

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1. Ibid. p.93

waist may be long so that they will fall in folds to the floor. A long scarf will do for this. Old tapestry drapes or piano covers are excellent for cloaks. These, too, should be as rich as possible. They may be studded with paste "gems" in order to give them a still more expensive effect. Bare feet or sandals may be used. For crowns, there are many suggestions. One may have a gold crown made of cardboard and cheap jewelry. One may have a satin turban padded underneath with cotton. One may wear a gold circlet, or a coronet attached to a puffed crown. All three should present a rich appearance. This may be achieved by the use of applique, gilt paint, embroidery, and the dime store variety of jewelry.

Crepe beards and wigs are often necessary to give the Biblical play the atmosphere it needs. Wool crepe may be used for beards very satisfactorily. As it comes in a tight braid, it must first be stretched and combed out before using. To apply a full beard, such as is seen in many art interpretations of Biblical times, is very simple. Over the completed make-up, spirit gum is applied. (It will not stick unless the make-up is well powdered). Starting from under the chin, the hair should be pressed in thin layers to give the effect of having grown there. Next the sides should be completed, and finally the front. Care should be taken that the natural hair line is followed. It is important also, that the

hair be applied in thin layers. The beard should be carefully trimmed and groomed. It may be removed with alcohol. Crepe hair may be used time and again, and although it is expensive, it is worth the trouble and expense in the effect it produces.<sup>1</sup>

Biblical plays especially need the correct props. A few suggestions which could be carried out by any amateur group are worthy of note: A well may be made by covering a wooden frame with heavy gray paper on which stones have been marked with crayon. Outdoor altars may be made of several of these wood-and-paper stones piled up. The Temple altar is merely a large packing case covered with lacquered paper.<sup>2</sup> A camp fire may be a flash light covered with red paper and nestled among sticks or pine branches on a tray. Oil cloth turned on the reverse side and painted makes many things. When gilded, it makes soldier's armor and leggings. When painted, it can be made to look like marble or concrete walls, or might turn into columns and pillars.<sup>3</sup> A priest's censer may be a gilded sugar bowl and chain. His scroll is made of parchment or paper on portiere poles. The virgin's lamp may be an invalid's cupgilded, while a shepherd's tent may be a piece of burlap on a simple

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1. Corson, op.cit. p.95
2. Kimball, op.cit. p.20
3. Ferris, op.cit. p.89

frame. Many things can be made with little expense by the crew. The important thing is to keep the props simple, but in character, for from the audience, even home-made articles look authentic.

Costuming the Biblical play is not a difficult task. It only calls for ingenuity in using materials so that they appear to be something they are not. The skill lies in achieving the proper effect with the least amount of time, energy, and money. This can be done successfully by any amateur, and each costume manager, after a certain amount of experimenting, will soon find the task simple.

APPENDIX B

REPORTS ON THE MESSAGE OF THE PLAY

## APPENDIX B

### REPORTS ON THE MESSAGE OF THE PLAY

The message of the play is that we should all be thankful to God for what little we have. The shoemaker did not know it but God visited him in the way which He saw best to do. To me this play shows that we should love one another as Christ loves us. That we should try to express some of the love to others that He showed us by dying for us at Calvary.

Anthony Basta

I think the message of the play is the little things in life that count; good-will to your fellow man pays off, and it also shows that we have a living Saviour who helps us in our every day needs. Trust and the Lord will see that all comes well. No matter how small your work may seem to you, you have a purpose on earth and that is to show people the Lord's way.

Alexander McKnight

The message of the play is if you trust in the Lord He will help you. No matter how bad things look, trust in Him and everything will be all right. It means for me a chance to be with my friend while doing this play, and to show others how I and my fellow members of our C.E. feel toward our Lord.

James Cochran

The message of the play is love. To love God and to love one another. Help those who are less fortunate than you are. It means to me that you should help others.

Edith Reale

The play means to love everyone and do good to all. The play means to me that I should do good to all.

Margaret Harrington

The message of this play consists of love, thoughtfulness and kindness to others. This is brought out during the whole play.

Betty Szigety

The message of the play to me is to bring other people to Christ. It tells them what an old shoe-maker did in kindness for some poor old woman who needed help. The message of the play is to bring out love. You should never be mean to anybody and always have love in your heart. This play means to me as an individual to be kind to others and to show people that haven't any love in their hearts what it means. And surely anybody who hasn't any love in his heart would be glad to have it.

Betty Savage

**APPENDIX C**

**LIST OF RELIGIOUS PLAYS**

**SUITABLE FOR USE IN A SMALL CHURCH**

## APPENDIX C

### LIST OF RELIGIOUS PLAYS SUITABLE FOR USE IN A SMALL CHURCH

#### A. CHRISTMAS

ADORATION OF THE KINGS AND SHEPHERDS, THE, by Mildred Emily Cook. Cast flexible. Effective Nativity pageant. Simple to stage. Action may be fitted to any cantata. Would be good with Yuletide Memories. Pilgrim Press.

BLESSED VAGRANTS, THE, by Raymond F. Bosworth. One act. 4 m., 1 w. Christmas Eve in the city. A tough police chief is visited by Mary and Joseph, and his outlook on life is immediately altered. Different and effective. Abingdon-Cokesbury. (Seniors and Young People).

FOOLS STORY, THE, by Elizabeth Edland. One act. 3 g., 5 b. Unhappy princess finds a way to be happy at Christmas. Charming story for Intermediates and Juniors. Abingdon-Cokesbury.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD, THE, by H. Augustine Smith. Cast flexible. Pageant of dedication for missions, home and foreign. Good, but unless cast could be cut, too large for small Churches. Century. (All ages.)

LIGHT STILL SHINES, THE, by Grace McGavern. Three scenes. 5 m., 6 w., 5 ch. 40 min. A peasant woman with her child comes to a medieval town where she brings the message and spirit of Christmas. Music included. Very beautiful. Meigs. (Seniors and Young People).

ONCE IN BETHLEHEM, by Beulah Folmsbee. Two scenes. 13 m., 2 w., 1 b. Beautifully told story of that first Christmas and its effect upon an old blind man in Bethlehem. (Royalty \$5.00) Baker. (Seniors and Young People).

WHY THE CHIMES RANG, by Elizabeth McFadden. One Act. 2 b., 1 m., 1 w. One of the loveliest of all Christmas stories. The gifts of two small boys of the middle ages cause the chimes of God to ring on Christmas Eve. French. (Seniors and Young People).

B. EASTER

AS EASTER DAWNS, by Mary Bennett Harrison. Two scenes. 4 m., 3 w., 2 ch. Modern appeal for renewed faith and sense of Church responsibility. Baker. (Seniors and Young People).

BEARER OF THE CROSS, THE, by Mattie B. Shannon. Two scenes. 3 m., 3 w. Story of the transformation of a fanatical Jew into a son of God through Christ because he carried the Cross. Abingdon-Cokesbury. (Seniors and Young People).

BOY WHO DISCOVERED EASTER, THE, by Elizabeth McFadden. Three scenes. 1 m., 2 w., 1 b. Modern setting of a lovely and powerful Easter message. An underprivileged boy and a bereaved father discover together that there is an Easter. French. (Seniors and Young People).

BOX OF MYRRH, THE, by Esther Phelps-Jones. One act. 3 m., 2 w., 1 b. The box of Myrrh taken from the Manger by a shepherd is returned to Mary after the death of her Son. (Royalty \$5.00) Baker. (Intermediates, Seniors and Young People).

CROWN OF THORNS, THE, by Elliot Field. Two episodes. 3 m., 2 w. Story of the girl who plucked the thorns for Jesus' crown, and of her acceptance of His eternal crown. Baker. (Seniors, Young People and Intermediates).

FOR HE HAD GREAT POSSESSIONS, by D. C. Wilson. Five scenes. 5 m., 4 w., 1 ch. Story of the rich young man who is not willing to give up his riches. Through the power of the Easter story, he does forsake all for Jesus. Wordy, but effective if skillfully cut. Baker. (Seniors and Young People)

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA, by D. C. Wilson. Two scenes. 6 m., 4 w. (one man may be played by a woman) Joseph of Arimathea overcomes his pride to decide to tell others about Christ. Baker. (Seniors and Young People).

MESSAGE FOR PETER, A, by Margaret Nevius. 3 w., 2 m. Short, conventional dramatization of the Easter story. Might be used as a pattern for something longer and more elaborate. New York Federation of Churches. (Juniors and Intermediates).

Easter (cont.)

SIMON THE LEPER, by D. C. Wilson. Four episodes.  
4 m., 3 w. 45 min. Moving story of the  
realization on the part of one of the lepers  
whom Christ healed that complete surrender  
means going the whole way with Christ. Baker.  
(Seniors and Young People).

THY KINGDOM COME, by Florence Converse. One scene.  
3 m., 2 w., 6 ch. A beautiful interpretation  
of Easter message, but too heavy for audience  
including large number of children. Baker.

C. PEACE

PARTING AT IMSDORF, by N. Richard Nusbaum. One act.  
4 m., 1 w. in verse. Moving story of an  
English Rabbi, who, having lost his faith,  
becomes a soldier, and who, having met his  
death, once more finds his God. French.  
(Seniors and Young People).

RETURN, by D. C. Wilson. One act. 3 m., 1 w., 1 b.  
A son returns from the war in spirit only.  
Powerful appeal to count the cost of human life  
above wealth. Baker. (Seniors and Young People)

THREE OF US, by Edwin Meiss. One act (7 episodes)  
12 m., 2 w. 50 min. A Jew, a Protestant, a  
Catholic, war buddies, deal with the intolerance  
of a peace time America. Cooperative Publishers.  
(Seniors and Young People).

D. MISSIONS

AT ANY COST, by Grace Smalley Murray. Three acts. 8 m., 9 w. Story of struggle for freedom and religious liberty in Persia. Costumes and props will be difficult. Slightly idealistic. Board of Foreign Missions of the Pres. Church of the U.S.A. (Seniors and Young People).

BA THANE, by Edna A. Baldwin. One act. 4 m., 3 w. A young Burmese Christian discovers the real meaning of Christianity when the missionary shows he is willing to give even his own life in order that Ba Thane understand Christian love. Student Volunteer. (Seniors and Young People).

HOW MUCH OWEST THOU THY LORD? by R. C. Douds. Five scenes. 9 w., 2 m. Pageant of the need of mission fields. Stirring portrayed pageant of life dedication. Modern dress. Board of Foreign Missions of the Pres. Church of the U.S.A. (Intermediates, Seniors and Young People).

IF I BE HIS DISCIPLE, by Elliot Field. One act. 7 w. Dorothy Dalton, society girl, accepts the challenge of the Lord to serve in the Southern mountains. Modern setting. Board of National Missions of the Pres. Church of the U.S.A. (Seniors and Young People).

A NEW STAR IN THE EAST, by Elizabeth Edland. Cast flexible. The four religions of the East and Christianity contrasted in short scenes. Easy, educational, effective. Abingdon.

PLUM BLOSSOMS, by Elizabeth Edland. Two scenes. 5 w. Story of courage. Not specifically Christian emphasis, but well done and with a message. Abingdon.

STREET OF IVORY, THE, by Helen L. Wilcox. 4 m., 1 w. A Chinese factory owner discovers how to help his employees and, incidentally, China, by Christian methods. Abingdon-Cokesbury, in Plays to Live By. (Young People)

E. GENERAL-BIBLICAL

GIFT, THE, by Marie A. Foley. One act. 2 b., 2 m., 1 w., 1 g. Lovely story of a blind man and a lame boy who find healing in Jesus. French. (Seniors and Young People).

HE CAME SEEING, by Mary P. Hamlin. One act. 3 m., 2 w. Story of the blind man Jesus healed on the Sabbath. Too wordy; must be cut to be used. French. (Seniors and Young People).

JOASH, by Lillian Dunlap George. 5 m., 1 w., 2 ch. Old Testament story of one of the kings of Judah and his return to the service of Jehovah and His Temple. Fitzgerald. (Seniors).

WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS, THE, by Elizabeth Edland. Simple and effective. However I would omit Bridegroom. Abingdon. (Seniors, Intermediates and Juniors).

F. GENERAL-MODERN

GIFT TWICE GIVEN, A, by Marion Wefer. One act. 4 w. Mrs. Brown finds a way to give her daughter the joy she feels Ellen missed by growing up in a tenement. Moving. French. (Seniors and Young People).

HOUSE ON THE SAND, THE, by Elliot Field. 4 m., 5 w. Gripping and human story of what might happen in the 20th Century to any family which has lost its hold on God for a time. Powerful ending, realistic situations. Baker. (Seniors and Young People).

KNIGHTS OF THE SILVER SHIELD, by Elizabeth McFadden. 8 m., and extras. Medieval and unusual. Large cast and many special effects make it difficult. Worth looking into. French. (Seniors and Young People).

SILVER TRUMPET, THE, by Elliot Field. One act. 9 m., 7 w., 1 b. Modern minister's family and its problems in a small-town parish. Good message, but long and involved. Could be cut to advantage. Baker. (Seniors and Young Peoples).

General-Modern (cont.)

THING SIGNIFIED, THE, by Leonard Young. 2 m., 1 w.  
The Lord's Supper becomes real to Mickey and  
Mrs. Higgins, both of whom are hungry and hard-  
worked, but eager Christians. Religious Drama  
Council. (Seniors and Young People).

THIS THINE HOUSE, by Marion Wefer. 9 m., 3 w.  
Powerful story of faith in action - city minister  
vs. neighborhood gangs. The minister finally  
succeeds in extending the arms of his Church to  
include all in his area. Friendship Press.  
(Seniors and Young People).

WHERE LOVE IS, by Iden Payne. One act. 3 m., 2 w.,  
1 ch. Dramatization of Tolstoy's story of same  
name. Martin finds that Christ has visited his  
humble dwelling in the form of those Martin has  
helped. Baker. (Royalty \$5.00) (Seniors and  
Young People).

G. PAGEANTS

LAMP, THE, by Anita B. Ferris. Large cast. Pageant  
of religious education in episodes which in them-  
selves are complete units. Helps and music in-  
cluded. Pres. Board of Christian Education.  
(Seniors and Young People)

PAGEANTS FOR SPECIAL DAYS IN THE CHURCH YEAR, by  
Mary Russell. Flexible casts. Effective,  
workable. Doubleday. (Seniors and Young People).

SHORT PAGEANTS FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL, by Laura Scherer  
Copenhaver. Simple, effective, to point to  
Christian living. Directions, hints about produc-  
tion. Doubleday. (Intermediates and Juniors).

STRAIGHT WHITE ROAD, THE, by D.C. Wilson. Six episodes.  
7 w., 2 b., 1 g. 40 min. Pageant of a boy's life  
in connection with Christian education. Baker.  
(Seniors and Young People).

## H. CHILDREN'S PLAYS

### Christmas

BIRD'S CHRISTMAS CAROL, THE, by Alden Carlow. One act. 2 w., 8 ch. This is the scene from Kate Douglas Wiggin's famous book, which depicts Mrs. Ruggles getting her dinner ready to have dinner with Carol Bird. Not strictly "religious" as such, but lovely and moving. (Royalty \$3.00) Baker.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS, THE, by Esther Willard Bates. One act. 3 w., 16 ch. After the Magi depart, the children bring flowers and thorns to the Manger. Prophetic in spirit, it is an unusual and effective Christmas message. Written in verse. (Royalty \$5.00) Baker.

JOYFUL AND TRIUMPHANT, by Mary Richmond Davidson. Three scenes. 2 g., 2 b., 2 w., 4 m. Touching story of how two little girls gave a Christmas gift to their mother and how one saw the Christ anew. Fitzgerald.

LITTLE BROWN PATH TO BETHLEHEM, THE, by C. Ruby Combe. Three scenes. 7 ch., 5 g. 45 min. Some children decide to make a Christmas tableau for Mother, but they quarrel so about their parts that nothing is accomplished. Their guardian angels help them see the real meaning of Christmas, and they present a moving tableau. London Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

SAINT, THE, by A. Beatrice Knowles. One act. 1 m., 14 b., 15 g. The story of how the Wise Men first called Nicholas "Saint", Giver of Gifts. He helps all who come to his shop to see that Christmas is "in His name". The cast is large, but many of the parts are small enough to allow for doubling up. French. (Royalty \$5.00)

STREET OF HEARTS, THE, by Marie Dorothy Davis. One act. 9 b., 6 g. Fantasy for Children. Mary and Joseph come to each heart for admittance on that first Christmas Eve. Quite different and effective. Not too difficult to stage. Pageant Publishers.

**Children's Plays**  
**Christmas (cont.)**

WANDERING CHILD, THE, by Mary Richmond Davidson.  
One act. 1 w., 2 m., 3 ch. A little runaway orphan becomes the Christ-child in the eyes of Margery and Tommy. Touching story of Christmas Eve. French.

**Easter**

HOSANNA, by A. Beatrice Knowles. Two scenes.  
At least 6 g., 3 b. Simple, yet inspiring presentation of the Easter story through the eyes of some children in Jerusalem. Religious Drama Council.

DOOR, THE, by Martha Race. Three scenes. 5 g., 3 b., 1 w. The children of Jairus, especially Adah, whom Jesus raised from the dead, discover that He lives! Pilgrim Highroad (magazine) Feb. 1937 issue, obtainable at The Religious Drama Council of the N.Y. Federation of Churches.

**I. COLLECTIONS**

BIBLE DRAMAS, by Wm. Ford Manley. Collection to be used as radio plays. Good. Seniors, Young People, Adults.

BIBLE PLAYS, by Mary Ellen Whitney. Very short plays, good for impromptu performances. Not well finished. Revell.

TWELVE MONTHS OF DRAMA FOR THE AVERAGE CHURCH, by D. C. Wilson. Twelve excellent plays and accompanying worship services. Miss Wilson's plays always need to be cut somewhat, but are about the most valuable in content of any. Baker.

Collections (cont.)

PLAYS TO LIVE BY, by Harold Ehrenspeiger, includes  
The Blessed Vagrants by Raymond Bosworth.

PEUM BLOSSOMS and other stories, by Elizabeth  
Edland, including: The Fool's Story, A New  
Star in the East, Wise and Foolish Virgins.  
Abingdon.

PUBLISHERS

- Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 150 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y.  
810 Broadway, Nashville, Tenn.
- D. Appleton-Century Co., 35 West 32d St., New York, N.Y.
- Walter H. Baker Co., 178 Tremont St., Boston, Mass.
- Doubleday, Doran, Garden City, Long Island, N.Y.
- Dramatic Publishing Co., 59 East Van Buren St., Chicago, Ill.
- Dramatists Play Service, 6 East 39th St., New York, N.Y.
- Samuel French, Inc., 25 West 45th St., New York, N.Y.  
811 West 7th St., Los Angeles, Calif.
- Harper and Brothers, 49 East 33d St., New York, N.Y.
- Houghton, Mifflin Co., 2 Park St., Boston, Mass.
- Longmans, Green and Co., 55 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y.
- Macmillan Company, 60 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y.
- Missionary Education Movement, 150 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y.
- Oxford Press, 114 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y.
- Pilgrim Press, 14 Beacon St., Boston, Mass.
- Random House, 20 East 57th St., New York, N.Y.
- Religious Drama Council of the N.Y. Federation of Churches,  
71 West 23d St., New York, N.Y.
- Charles Scribner's Sons, 597 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y.
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