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THE PLACE OF APPEALS TO COMMITMENT TO CHRIST  
IN THE SENIOR MATERIALS  
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A.

By

Gail Maynard

B. A., Wheaton College  
Wheaton, Illinois

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
A. A Statement and Delimitation of the Problem . . . . .	2
B. The Significance of the Problem . . . . .	3
C. The Sources of Data . . . . .	5
D. The Method of Procedure . . . . .	6
I. THE MEANING OF COMMITMENT TO CHRIST AND ITS RELATION TO THE TOTAL CHURCH PROGRAM . . . . .	7
A. A Definition of Commitment to Christ . . . . .	8
1. Commitment as the Goal of Evangelism . . . . .	8
2. The Components of Appeals to Commitment . . . . .	9
3. The Preparation for and Follow-up of Commitment to Christ . . . . .	11
B. The Place of Commitment to Christ in The Total Church Program . . . . .	12
1. Commitment in the Program of Christian Education . . . . .	12
2. Commitment in the Young People's Society . . . . .	14
3. Appeals to Commitment in the Total Church Program . . . . .	15
4. Methods of Appeal to Commitment . . . . .	16
5. Principles to Follow in Appeal to Commitment . . . . .	18
C. The Senior and Commitment to Christ . . . . .	20
1. Important Characteristics of the Senior . . . . .	20
a. As an Adolescent . . . . .	20
b. Physical Development . . . . .	21
c. Mental Development . . . . .	22
d. Emotional Development . . . . .	23
e. Social Development . . . . .	24
f. Vocational Interests . . . . .	25
g. Moral Development . . . . .	26
h. Religious Development . . . . .	26
i. Personality Development . . . . .	28
2. The Importance of Appeals to Commitment for the Senior . . . . .	29
D. Summary . . . . .	34

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September 15, 1946

Chapter	Page
II. AN ANALYSIS OF THE MATERIALS FOR SENIORS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A. TO DISCOVER THE PLACE OF APPEALS TO COMMITMENT TO CHRIST . . . . .	36
A. Factors to be Considered . . . . .	37
B. Analysis of Westminster Fellowship Manuals . . . . .	39
C. Analysis of Westminster Graded Lessons . . . . .	44
D. Analysis of Westminster Uniform Lessons . . . . .	51
E. Analysis of <u>The Society Kit</u> . . . . .	58
F. Other Available Materials . . . . .	66
1. <u>A Manual of Faith and Life</u> . . . . .	66
2. <u>Leaflets for Personal Work</u> . . . . .	69
3. <u>A Mission to Teachers</u> . . . . .	72
III. A COMPARISON AND EVALUATION OF THE FINDINGS . . . . .	77
A. Comparison of the Materials . . . . .	78
B. Evaluation of the Materials . . . . .	82
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION . . . . .	87
APPENDIX . . . . .	92
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	100

## INTRODUCTION

THE PLACE OF APPEALS TO COMMITMENT TO CHRIST  
IN THE SENIOR MATERIALS  
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A.

INTRODUCTION

A. A Statement and Delimitation of the Problem

This study deals with the place of appeals to commitment to Christ in the materials for seniors of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. An analysis of the materials will reveal the particular values or limitations of the Presbyterian materials for seniors in leading them to a personal decision for Christ.

It is not the purpose of this study to compare the older idea of "conversion" with the newer one of "commitment" as to their theological implications or validity as tested by the Bible. The initial Christian decision is to be considered as defined by writers in the field of religious education and that definition is to be the basis of evaluation of commitment to Christ as found in the materials. Nor is it the purpose of this study to determine finally what the place of appeals to commitment ought to be in the total program of the church or in the program for high school youth. The general concensus of opinion among prominent writers in the field of religious

education will be the basis upon which the materials for seniors of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. will be judged.

Many appeals to commitment made by local Presbyterian churches are necessarily outside the scope of this study. Only those will be under consideration which are made with the use of printed Presbyterian materials for seniors. The materials surveyed will be a selection which is likely to reach the average Presbyterian high-school youth through the Sunday school, the Society, and other young people's organizations. Survey of the materials rather than study of one or two local churches will give a broader picture of what is being done in the Presbyterian Church as a whole.

This study will be generally pertinent to adolescence, but middle adolescence is its particular scope, since that period is for so many the most important time for making decisions.

#### B. The Significance of the Problem.

An important trend of the twentieth century has been that away from evangelism and the theory that Christians become Christians by an act or decision, to the idea of Christian nurture, that Christians are made by a process of growth and development. An important

counter-trend is illustrated in two recent books: Faith and Nurture, by H. Shelton Smith (1941), and Choose Ye This Day, by Elmer G. Homrighausen (1943). These authors, while seeing the value of and need for Christian nurture, lay great stress upon the need for definite decision for Christ and commitment of all of life to him.

The importance of decision in the growth of Christian personality has been recognized in theory by other leaders in the field of religious education, but the emphasis has been so largely placed upon nurture that the need for decision has largely been neglected. There has been real danger that curriculum-makers would fail to give an adequate place to decision for Christ. Such a failure would place an undue burden upon leaders of youth in the local church, many of whom are untrained volunteer Sunday school teachers and counselors of young people's societies. Hence, such a failure would indicate an immediate need of revision, no matter how fine the material might be from every other standpoint. On the other hand, if the materials put in the hands of the leaders of youth give an adequate place to commitment, or the primary Christian decision, they will help the leaders to see the importance of commitment for youth and use the best means to appeal to youth to make this decision.

The appeal to commitment to Christ is unquestionably the primary purpose for the churches' existence.

The conflicting trends mentioned above make the subject one of particular interest at the present time. Since the present study must of necessity be limited, it has been confined to study of the senior high school age youth, because that age is so often the time for decision.<sup>1</sup>

### C. The Sources of Data

Publications of leading authors in the field of Christian education will be used for the purpose of defining more completely commitment to Christ and deciding concerning its place in the program of the church, and recent books in the fields of psychology and Christian education will be studied in order to make a brief summary of the characteristics of the senior.

The material of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America designed for use with senior high school youth is the matter to be surveyed and analyzed. Material has been selected which would reach a representative high school youth in one year. In addition, since the Sunday school is one of the most universal agencies for reaching the youth and the two types of lesson material are quite widely used, both sets of Presbyterian lesson material for seniors, the Graded and the Uniform, will be surveyed and analyzed as

. . . . .

1. Herbert C. Mayer: The Church's Program for Young People, p. 297.



to their values in respect to the churches' appeal to commitment to Christ. Other materials to be surveyed are the Commission Manuals for Westminster Fellowship; The Society Kit, for use in the Sunday evening young people's program; A Manual of Faith and Life, for the communicants' class; and special materials for use in making appeals to commitment.

#### D. The Method of Procedure

Since this study is dealing with a term variously used and interpreted, the first task will be to discuss more fully the term, commitment to Christ, and to discover the relationship of appeals to commitment to the total program of the church, and to individuals in the church. Since this study deals with senior high school youth, the characteristics of that group will be described and a study made of the place of commitment for this age group, as seen by psychologists and religious educators who have made adolescents their special field of study.

The materials will then be studied as to the place of appeals to commitment to Christ. Each set of materials will be analyzed separately and a statement made as to its contents relating to commitment to Christ, particularly direct appeals. Next the materials will be compared and evaluated and finally a summary of the study will be made.

CHAPTER I

THE MEANING OF COMMITMENT TO CHRIST  
AND ITS RELATION TO THE TOTAL CHURCH PROGRAM

## CHAPTER I

### THE MEANING OF COMMITMENT TO CHRIST AND ITS RELATION TO THE TOTAL CHURCH PROGRAM

#### A. A Definition of Commitment to Christ

##### 1. Commitment as the Goal of Evangelism.

The securing of personal commitment to Christ is the goal of all Christian evangelism, whether it be the older form of special evangelistic meetings or the newer one of educational evangelism. This goal is described by Norman E. Richardson as "leading an individual to accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior and as Lord of his entire life."<sup>1</sup> Other terms which have been used for this initial act of faith are: conversion, and acceptance of Christ. The terms decision and commitment are often used together to mean collectively, "acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Savior and as Lord of one's entire life," by such writers as Richardson and Homrighausen.<sup>2</sup> The term commitment will be used throughout this study with this meaning.

. . . . .

1. Norman E. Richardson: The Teaching Evangelist, Study Unit No. I. The New Emphasis Upon Evangelism, p. 4.
2. Cf. Elmer G. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, Chapter 4, pp. 57-74.

While the educational evangelist often includes all of Christian education in his program, this study is concerned primarily with direct appeals made to commitment to Christ.

2. The Components of Appeals to Commitment.

The first component part of an appeal to commitment to Christ is an appeal to repent. This was the appeal made by John the Baptist (Mark 1:4) and by Jesus Christ in his early ministry (Matthew 4:17). Repentance involves recognition that one has done wrong and recognition of one's responsibility before God for that wrong done, desire for forgiveness, and desire to turn about and do right. Repentance is recognition of one's personal need of a Saviour and must come before one will accept Jesus Christ as Saviour. As Homrighausen has stated, "Only in repentance can real decision and commitment come."<sup>1</sup> Concerning sin Homrighausen has written:

"To meet Christ involves an experience of guilt for sin. . . Sin, in the Christian sense, centers in the ego, the motivating self. . . Sin is living contrary to God's purpose for us; it is a denial of the true intention in and for which God has created us."<sup>2</sup>

Another component of an appeal to commitment is appeal to accept Christ as Saviour. This acceptance

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 62.

2. Ibid., pp. 89, 90. Cf. also following pages to 95.

involves asking for forgiveness through the mediatorship of Jesus Christ and recognition of Christ as Saviour from sins of the past, present, and future. Only through Christ can we come to God. "He is the Mediator who brings God to us and us to God."<sup>1</sup>

Then, there should be an appeal to accept Christ as Lord. No one can call Him by his true name, the Lord Jesus Christ, unless he has personally and decisively made Him Lord over his whole life. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."<sup>2</sup>

The last component part of an appeal to commitment to Christ should be an appeal to make a public profession of this new faith. In the words of Richardson:

"Whenever a decision to become an out-and-out follower of Jesus Christ is made, there should be some record of it. . . . One of the best ways of making it a matter of record is to let one's friends and classmates know about it. A public profession of one's faith lets one's friends know that from that time on, they will know where one stands. . . . Teacher evangelists help their pupils take this step of making their decision a matter of public record."<sup>3</sup>

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 75.
2. Holy Bible, Revised Version, Romans 10:9  
Cf. Homrighausen, op. cit., pp. 59, 60.
3. Richardson, op. cit., Study Unit No. VII. How Teachers Evangelize, p. 16.

3. The Preparation for and Follow-up of Commitment to Christ.

Perfect knowledge and understanding are not necessary to commitment. No one could be saved if they were.<sup>1</sup> But, it is obvious that all evangelistic appeals must of necessity be preceded by some education. No one can accept Christ without knowing something about Him.<sup>2</sup> Christian education is a necessary preparation for any commitment to Christ as well as a necessary follow-up after the initial decision has been made.<sup>3</sup>

Christian education or educational evangelism which follows the initial commitment to Christ should lead to other decisions. And this one right decision ought to make a person stronger to make other right decisions and "to face other situations frankly and fearlessly."<sup>4</sup>

Very important to the senior and older young person is his choice of vocation. According to Samuel M. Cavert the major emphasis related to vocation during the high school period should be placed on entering one's life work from Christian motives.<sup>5</sup> This may well be an

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1. Cf. Richardson, op. cit., Study Unit No. II. What is Educational Evangelism?, pp. 8, 13.
2. Richard L. Ownbey: Evangelism in Christian Education, pp. 58, 59.
3. Richardson, op. cit., p. 7.
4. Ibid., Study Unit No. VII, p. 14.
5. S. M. Cavert: Securing Christian Leaders for Tomorrow, p. 81.

important decision subsequent to commitment to Christ. As one grows spiritually other areas of life unsundered will be discovered and decisions made to surrender these in turn to Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Commitment to Christ, then, is the primary Christian decision. It initiates the individual Christian life.

B. The Place of Commitment to Christ  
in the Total Church Program

According to the Foreword to Homrighausen's Choose Ye This Day, this book is a direct result of recognition on the part of members of the Department of Evangelism of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America of the need for study upon the matter of decision and commitment. A Committee on Decision and Commitment was set up with this author at the head to study the whole matter.<sup>2</sup> This is an indication of the growing sense of the importance of commitment to Christ in the program of the church.

1. Commitment in the Program of Christian Education.

According to Paul H. Vieth, all religious

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1. Kenneth L. Cober and Esther Stricker: Teaching Seniors, pp. 42, 43.
2. Homrighausen, op. cit., pp. 9, 10.

education must make appeals to personal commitment to Christ.

"No religious education which understands itself will seek to accomplish its work without direct appeal to individual persons, without leading them into the experience of being saved from sin, without bringing them into clear expressions of loyalty to Christ and his ideals of life. Such personal decision for Christ is a necessary part of Christian living and must therefore have a place in Christian teaching."<sup>1</sup>

Growing up in a church school and even in a Christian home does not guarantee that one will become a Christian. The experience of a church school superintendent reported by Richardson illustrates the truth of this statement:

"Said a church school superintendent of wide experience, 'I have seen pupils attend our church school throughout the elementary department, join the communicant's class, unite with the church, and continue for awhile in the secondary division of the church school. Then they drop out. During all these years of nurture they have acquired a promiscuous amount of knowledge but no commitment. They have not deliberately surrendered their wills to God's will. They seem to be illiterate with regard to the problem of sin and God's forgiving grace.'<sup>2</sup>

Knowledge about God, the Bible, Jesus Christ, the church and social problems is all fine, but a person does not become a Christian merely by acquiring knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

. . . . .

1. Paul H. Vieth: Objectives in Religious Education, pp. 161, 162.
2. Richardson, op. cit., Study Unit No. V. Faith as an Educational Objective, p. 13.
3. Ibid, p. 12.



Richardson has brought out clearly the need for definite appeals to commitment in the church school.

"The evangelistic efficiency of the church school will be increased only when its officers and teachers realize more clearly that faith in God as revealed in Jesus Christ involves repentance, decision, commitment, and a deep desire to move forward toward the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14)."<sup>1</sup>

The class group is often one of the best avenues for appeals to commitment to Christ. There should be careful planning and tactful urging with the need for commitment always in mind as the group program moves forward. During the year there should also be special worship services of commitment for the entire youth group.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Commitment in the Young People's Society.

The church young people's society ought to be made up of young people who have already made their commitment to Christ and "are eager to belong to a group of young people with the express purpose of serving him."<sup>3</sup>

The aim of the young people's society may be summed up as "Training Young Christians for Service." The training should be done "through an intelligently

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 13.
2. Percy R. Hayward and Roy A. Burkhart: Young People's Method in the Church, pp. 122, 123.
3. Catherine A. Miller: The Successful Young People's Society, p. 1

guided practise of worship, work, and giving."<sup>1</sup> In a list of objectives from another source, "To lead us to make other disciples of Jesus," is listed as one of the objectives.<sup>2</sup> Winning others to Christ is an important part of the work or service of the members of the young people's society. They should be the evangelists winning others to commitment to Christ, instead of being in need of such commitment themselves. However, this is a splendid opportunity for individual appeal to commitment to Christ and ought not to be overlooked.

### 3. Appeals to Commitment in the Total Church Program.

The work of the church is not to make religious people but to make Christians. Homrighausen has said: "Decision for and commitment to Jesus Christ is of the very essence of Christian personality."<sup>3</sup> And in another connection:

"Such decision is involved as an absolute necessity in the Christian life. Persons do not ooze (Wright) into the life of fellowship with God. They must choose. . . . No one inherits Christianity biologically. Nor does one become a Christian by proxy. Likewise, it is impossible to receive the offer of God by merely adhering to the Church, or mentally assenting to the creeds of Christianity, or by taking a course of studies in preparation for Church membership, or by 'deepening the spiritual life,'

. . . . .

1. Edwin Phelps: The Pathfinder in Church Work with Young People, pp. 28, 33.
2. Harry T. Stock: Better Meetings for the Young People's Society, p. 1.
3. Homrighausen, op. cit., p. 75.

or by engaging in mystical exercises, or by being interested in religion, or by doing good works."<sup>1</sup>

Enthusiasm or skillful practicing of a religious cult is not necessarily a sign of a true Christian. There must be "decision and commitment that inaugurate a new way of living and guarantee a new quality of personality."<sup>2</sup>

"Ye must be born again." (John 3:7)

It seems clear that appeals to commitment to Christ must have a central and important place in the regular program of the church if the church is to have a Christian constituency.

#### 4. Methods of Appeal to Commitment.

Some methods of appeal to commitment as given by Herbert C. Mayer are:

a. The revival or evangelistic meeting. This method is more for adults. Mayer's opinion is that this method "does not take into consideration the special needs of young people."

b. Decision day. This method if safeguarded from use of too much social pressure may well be used, but it should not be the only one, since the matter of commitment to Christ is a personal one and there is no one appeal to all adolescents.

. . . . .

1. Ibid., pp. 63, 64.

2. Richardson, op. cit., Study Unit No. II, p. 13.

c. Confirmation class. This method may be of great value if properly safeguarded against becoming mere routine and against inadequate consideration of the individuals. There ought to be individual attention given as to who is taken into the class and as to making personal appeals to commitment to Christ.

d. Pastor's class, or Communicants' class. The work that is usually taken up in these classes could very well come after the decision rather than before.

e. Special campaigns. The "Win-One" and "Win-My-Chum" and similar plans are valuable both to the young people who participate and those who are reached by them. Caution must be used to see that the social pressure used is not heavy and that the campaign does not become a game to see who will win, so that the beauty and the serious nature of the step are lost.

f. Inner Circle and Secret Service. These methods avoid most of the troubles of the campaigns. "There will be dignity and respect for personal feelings," A wise leader is needed to guard against the danger of a "holier-than-thou" attitude toward others.

g. Personal work. According to Mayer, this is "the Christian way and in fact the only truly effective way. It capitalizes personality." This personal

work can best be done by those who know the individual young person best. "A stranger can do little with young people."<sup>1</sup>

5. Principles to Follow in Appeal to Commitment.

a. Appeals to commitment should be part of the regular program of the church. "The leader should not depend upon a special campaign for evangelistic effort." This does not rule out special campaigns entirely, but emphasizes the need for appeals to individuals and emphasis of the necessity for commitment from time to time in every youth group.<sup>2</sup>

b. It should be remembered that decision is necessary for each individual. Homrighausen has stated:

"It is to be questioned whether those who have experienced a gradual growth into the Christian life have received their full share of God's proffered grace. Many Church members do not feel the compelling power of Christ; they have nothing which they regard as distinctive. We must insist that those who grow up in the Church and the Christian home should have experienced at least some measure of 'illumination' upon one or more occasions."<sup>3</sup>

c. Appeals should be effective. As the church school superintendent mentioned above learned and as Richardson has stated, most people need urging to commit

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1. Mayer; op. cit., pp. 302-309.  
2. Hayward and Burkhart, op. cit., pp. 123, 124.  
3. Homrighausen, op. cit., p. 22.

themselves to Christ.

"It takes heroism to make decisions that run counter to one's usual manner of living. Most people have to have encouragement and the aid of strong social suggestions to take such a step. The first plunge into a swimming pool may be a shock that is not felt so keenly in subsequent plunges. Without effective urging to make a first out-and-out decision, many persons will never launch themselves with an incentive that is strong enough to guarantee the beginning of a new life."<sup>1</sup>

d. Appeals should be personal and individual to be most effective. There should be consideration of the personality of the one appealed to.<sup>2</sup>

e. The appeal should be made to the reason as well as the will.

"The challenge which will last and produce results is the one which appeals to the person's reason. The young person who rationally decides to become a Christian has the conviction grown from quiet thinking. . . . A Christian decision ought to be consciously the result of hard, searching thought and wilful choice."<sup>3</sup>

f. Appeal should be made for a whole-hearted decision. It is always hoped that the decision will be whole-hearted and complete.

"The most rewarding initial decision is whole-hearted and thorough-going. . . . A resolve to bring only a part of one's personality under the sovereignty of God or to postpone a decision until some future date may keep one forever from realizing what God can do in one's life. The will to make a complete surrender and to do it without

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1. Richardson, op. cit., Study Unit No. VII, p. 14.
2. Mayer, op. cit., p. 310.
3. Ibid., p. 310.

delay may require the utmost of one's exertion and self-propulsion. It takes an act of will to make up one's mind."<sup>1</sup>

g. Appeal should be made for a public stand as a part of commitment to Christ. This is the natural conclusion after the decision and helps to fix the decision in the individual's own mind, as well as to let others know what they may expect from him from that time.<sup>2</sup>

### C. The Senior and Commitment to Christ

#### 1. Important Characteristics of the Senior.

a. As an Adolescent. Adolescence as known in modern psychology is the product and problem of modern society. It arises with the ideals and the economic necessities of the modern world, with the necessity of prolonging the period of education and delaying employment and entry into adult life. It not only creates problems but offers opportunities for special preparation in meeting the manifold problems of present-day society.<sup>3</sup>

The adolescent faces a number of problems in passing from childhood to adulthood. In the years approximately from twelve to twenty-three:

"He must develop heterosexual interest, he must become free from home supervision, he must achieve

. . . . .

1. Richardson, op. cit., Study Unit No. VII., pp. 14, 15.
2. Mayer, op. cit., p. 311.
3. Luella Cole: Psychology of Adolescence, pp. 3-6.

economic and intellectual independence and learn how to use his leisure time, he must make new emotional and social adjustment to reality, and he must begin to evolve a philosophy of life. If he fails in any of these achievements, he fails to gain full maturity. To put the matter in a nutshell, the main business of the adolescent is to stop being one!"<sup>1</sup>

At the same time the adolescent is experiencing an awakening social awareness, he is also becoming increasingly aware of himself as a person.<sup>2</sup>

That adolescence is an influential time in the life of an individual no one will doubt. According to Richardson, adolescence

"includes the very heart of life. Childhood looks forward to it and prepares for it. From it adulthood takes many of its permanent and important characteristics. This is the time when 'a little good will go farther for good and a little evil for evil, than any other time in life.'"<sup>3</sup>

b. Physical Development. The senior years, approximately ages fifteen through seventeen are a period of declining rate of growth. Many, particularly girls, reach nearly their full growth even near the beginning of this period.<sup>4</sup> The senior has more control over his muscles and quicker and more accurate response from his senses than the intermediate. Like the intermediate, the senior is likely to be abounding in energy and vitality,

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1. Ibid., pp. 13, 14.

2. Richardson: The Religious Education of Adolescents, p. 3.

3. Ibid., p. 1.

4. Cober and Stricker, op. cit., p. 7.



which, however, he expends in a different way. There is much danger of overexertion and overstrain. He is often unduly fatigued.<sup>1</sup>

The high school boy or girl is physically attractive as a result of his or her developing body.

"There is perhaps no time in life when the individual is so attractive physically. The bloom and flush of youth plus a promise of maturity are to be found in almost every boy and girl at this time."<sup>2</sup>

c. Mental Development. "The most outstanding fact of this period is the discovery of mental powers."<sup>3</sup> There seems to be an increase in judgment, reasoning, comprehension, speed of performance, memory, concentration, and other mental functions.<sup>4</sup> Appreciation of beauty is deep at this time because of keen powers of sensation.<sup>5</sup>

In discussion the high school and college age Ernest M. Ligon writes:

"During adolescence, intelligence reaches its peak. . . The most important mental ability which comes during this period is what may be termed the capacity for philosophical reasoning. . . Discussion groups are extremely popular at this age level. . . All along the line mental capacities are increasing. Imagination not only increases in quantity, but changes considerably in quality.

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1. Cole, op. cit., p. 76.
2. Mayer, op. cit., p. 34.
3. Ibid., p. 34.
4. Cole, op. cit., p. 433.
5. Mayer, op. cit., p. 34.

The romance which is the colorful center of the adolescent's social life is likely also to be the guiding motif of his imagination. . . . The capacity for organization now reaches maturity. Its usefulness in study habits is, of course, large."<sup>1</sup>

d. Emotional Development. Emotionally, middle and later adolescence is the most unstable age.<sup>2</sup> The senior age is a period of intensity and extremes. In adolescence generally, the causes of anger are primarily social. Adolescent fears often include:

"Fear of school examinations, automobile accidents, and disease; worry over inadequate funds, getting a job, loss of work by parents, or appearance of the home; fear of being sinful, being led astray by bad companions, or being tempted to cheat; worry over being unsuccessful, over hurting other people's feelings, over making a bad impression upon others; fear of growing up, of social incompetence, of sexual experiences, of disappointing one's parents."<sup>3</sup>

"The constant falling in and out of love is entirely normal. Both boys and girls do a good deal of sampling and experimenting."<sup>4</sup>

It is easily seen that seniors need to learn control and direction of emotions. Leaders can help them learn to respond to the whole, real situation, instead of to that part of it first seen by "prejudiced sensitiveness." Seniors need to learn to plan ahead a useful channel for the excess energy of emotions that may be unexpectedly

. . . . .

1. Ernest M. Ligon: Their Future is Now, pp. 264, 265.
2. Ibid., p. 266.
3. Cole, op. cit., pp. 94, 99.
4. Ibid, p. 108.

aroused.<sup>1</sup>

e. Social Development. The business of the adolescent is pre-eminently that of social development and adjustment. He is acutely aware of social pressures and relationships and this sensitivity leads to the conformity characteristic of the period--in dress, in language, and in all activities.<sup>2</sup> It is natural for adolescents to form into "crowds" or cliques, but it is not necessarily beneficial.<sup>3</sup> Seniors will insist upon choosing their own friends and consider themselves mature enough to select wisely. Their frequent mistakes are largely due to placing too great weight on externals, such as fine clothes.<sup>4</sup>

In middle and later adolescence genuine leadership comes to the fore and needs extensive training. The fears that keep so many young men and women from learning to be leaders and particularly to be able to speak in public can be overcome better during this time than they ever can again.<sup>5</sup>

The senior loves a "good time." This usually means a social time which includes both sexes. "It may be a wholesome, happy occasion; or it may be a riotous

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1. Mary E. Moxcey: The Psychology of Middle Adolescence, pp. 71, 72.
2. Cole, op. cit., p. 217.
3. Ibid., p. 226.
4. Ibid., p. 238.
5. Ligon, op. cit., pp. 291, 292.

spree of indulgence." A "good time" is the driving urge of this age. "The dance craze, the movie mania, the literary or dramatic 'bug,' give significance to the term."<sup>1</sup>

f. Vocational Interests. According to Ligon, middle and later adolescence is preeminently the age of vision.

"A corollary of this idealism is found in ambition. . . . There is hardly an adolescent boy who does not secretly imagine that he is going to be a great man. Nor are there many girls who do not have equivalent dreams."<sup>2</sup>

Vocational choices of high school youth are more likely to be determined by social factors than by a recognition of one's particular aptitudes or abilities. The professions and "fad" choices in harmony with the time are chosen by a large percentage because of the social advantages they offer.<sup>3</sup> Occupational opportunities are likely also to be a negligible factor in the vocational interests of seniors.<sup>4</sup> There is great need for vocational guidance, including self-analysis and information concerning various occupations. Christian vocational guidance for high school youth should emphasize service as one of the first tests of a vocation. It should discourage the "money-

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1. Mayer, op. cit., pp. 34, 35.
2. Ligon, op. cit., p. 271.
3. Karl C. Garrison: The Psychology of Adolescence, p. 419.
4. Ibid., pp. 420, 421.

grabbing" and prestige-getting aims in vocational choice. It should teach seniors to think of even common tasks as opportunities for Christian service.<sup>1</sup>

g. Moral Development. Seniors' standards of honesty and truthfulness often seem inconsistent to the adult. "A youth, scrupulously honest and truthful in all his general customs and habits, when discovered in some form of dishonesty in examination," may say, "'Oh, well, I was only 'cribbing just a bit,'" or . . . hold emphatically to a falsehood in order not to involve his crowd."<sup>2</sup>

Often the same individual of this age displays high moral development at one time and low and base passions at another. Conflicts also arise frequently in the home over ethical and moral situations. During this period, youth are rapidly establishing their own standards of conduct and developing their own personal ideals. "If properly guided, the same keenness of interest and consistent regard for practice or training shown in physical and mental achievements may characterize the attitude toward moral standards of living."<sup>3</sup>

h. Religious Development. High school youth may seem to be irreligious, when the truth is that they are

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1. Mary Anne Moore: Senior Method in the Church School, pp. 252, 253.
2. Ibid, p. 87.
3. Ibid, pp. 88-90.

shy about showing their deepest feelings.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, their religious experiences are apt to be highly emotional because their religion is becoming increasingly personal. Personal influence of others becomes a powerful agency in forming religious habits and ideals of conduct, particularly the example of others.<sup>2</sup> There is often a new mystic reality in communion with God because of new appreciation of personality. The enjoyment of worship is deepened at this period because of awakened aesthetic appreciation and the emotional quality of the period.<sup>3</sup> Ability to deal with abstract ideas and new powers of imagination also bring new spiritual appreciation.<sup>4</sup> Heightened intellectual abilities may bring a rediscovery of the value of the Bible, the church with its sacraments and services, and private devotions. "These come to have a vital, personal meaning."<sup>5</sup> Intellectual powers may also lead to doubts. But according to Moore, "grave doubts and questions as to matters of faith and belief" are not necessary. "Those which arise, as a rule, come from the lack of consistency in the Christian life of the group and from irreligious teachings."<sup>6</sup> According to

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1. Cober and Stricker, op. cit., p. 8.
2. Moore, op. cit., p. 97.
3. Moxcey, op. cit., p. 190.
4. Mayer, op. cit., p. 35.
5. Richardson: Religious Education of Adolescence, p. 168.
6. Moore, op. cit., p. 98.

Albert C. Wyckoff, genuine intellectual unbelief comes later--during the college age. High school youth may feign intellectual unbelief because of the natural psychological problem arising from a desire for independence. If religious authority is felt to impinge upon what the high school youth considers his rights, he may seek this avenue of escape.<sup>1</sup>

The senior age is for many "the peak of religious idealism. The demands of religion are more keenly felt and more willingly answered."<sup>2</sup> The idealism of the senior is extremely practical in that it desires and must have a workout in action if it is to be preserved. He wants religion and life to be consistent. His idealism awakens a consciousness of his own failure and shortcomings.<sup>3</sup> It also makes him conscious and deeply concerned about the wrongs he sees in the world about him.<sup>4</sup>

1. Personality Development. According to Richardson, early adolescence is the period of the awakening personality. Following this period, middle adolescence is that of the integration of personality.

"During middle adolescence, the youth faces the task of assembling all of the desires, sentiments, ideals, impulses, habits, preferences, loyalties,

. . . . .

1. Albert C. Wyckoff: Acute and Chronic Unbelief, pp. 15-17.
2. Mayer, op. cit., p. 35.
3. Moore, op. cit., pp. 98, 99.
4. Cober and Stricker, op. cit., p. 8.

interests--all of the parts of his personality which he has realized during the preceding years. He must find and cherish the true center of his own selfhood. Centripetal forces are at work. He needs to discover some method of achieving integrity or a plan of organizing all of the component parts of his character. The parts must be assembled according to some plan.

"It is because his religion is the supreme value--the natural center around which all else should be organized that religious education is so important during these years. Any attempt to integrate all of the parts about some other center such as pleasure or a career, group loyalty or chivalry, will fail to bring ultimate harmony, simplicity and greatest strength."<sup>1</sup>

2. The Importance of Appeals to Commitment for the Senior.

Adolescence is supremely the time of decision.

Many will say the high school age is the peak of this time of decision.<sup>2</sup> Many factors indicate the necessity of appeals to commitment to Christ during the senior years.

Here are some of those factors:

a. Among the twenty-seven million American youths between the ages of five and twenty years who are under no religious instruction whatever are millions of high school youth. If the church is to make Christianity vital to them it must appeal to them to commit themselves to Christ.<sup>3</sup>

b. It is the opinion of some that the majority

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1. Richardson: Religious Education of Adolescents, p. 164.  
2. Mayer, op. cit., p. 297.  
3. Richardson; op. cit., p. 183.



within church circles make their primary Christian decision while juniors or intermediates. Whether this is true or not, this opinion makes it easy to forget the need for evangelism in dealing with seniors.<sup>1</sup> There is some indication, however, that the statistics concerning conversion which indicate high peaks earlier than the high school age were based upon objective factors, such as the time of joining the church.<sup>2</sup> Thus appeals to commitment have often been neglected at the senior level because of inaccurate statistics or inaccurate interpretation of statistics.

c. Development of the capacity for abstract thinking and philosophical reasoning comes during the high school age. Because of this, high school youth are for the first time able to understand the Christian philosophy of life. They are better able to grasp the meaning of commitment than ever before.<sup>3</sup>

d. Ligon has spoken of the high school and college age as preeminently the age of vision. "Idealism reaches its peak. It has never before been so prominent nor will it ever be again. . . . It is important that all its values to the mature personality be gained while it is prominent."<sup>4</sup> This is the supreme time for presenting

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1. Cober and Stricker, op. cit., p. 3.
2. Edmund Smith Conklin: The Psychology of Religious Adjustment, pp. 109, 110.
3. Ligon, op. cit., pp. 264, 274.
4. Ibid., p. 271.

the ideals of life lived in harmony with God and the need for launching that life through commitment to Christ. This peak of idealism is a relatively short period. The church ought therefore to make every reasonable effort to lead these youth, while they are youth, to intelligent and enthusiastic commitment to Christ.<sup>1</sup>

e. The idealism of the high school youth naturally leads him to a sense of personal guilt and condemnation because of failure to live up to his ideals.<sup>2</sup> This sense of guilt is necessary before commitment to Christ can come.

f. Life is still plastic at the senior level and conversion or commitment will never again take place with as little difficulty and personal pain, though it usually affects the feelings profoundly.<sup>3</sup>

g. The studies of Starbuck showed the sixteenth year as the peak of the wave of conversion.<sup>4</sup>

Another study reported by Mayer indicates:

"During the years of early adolescence, 20.5 per cent made their decisions, and 29.1 per cent decided in middle adolescent years. In the last six years of adolescence, 32.3 per cent made decisions. Only 4.9 per cent made decisions after the twenty-fourth year."<sup>5</sup>

. . . . .

1. Ownbey, op..cit., pp. 110, 122.
2. Moore, op. cit., p. 99.
3. Richardson: Religious Education of Adolescents, p. 166.
4. Mayer, op. cit., p. 297.
5. Ibid., p. 297.

The summary of early studies of the age of conversion made by G. Stanley Hall indicates that:

"One quarter of the conversions reported occurred before the age of fourteen years and two months, that one half occurred before the age of sixteen years and seven months, and that three quarters occurred before the age of nineteen years and one month."<sup>1</sup>

Some studies, such as that of the Indiana Sunday school teachers and the Indiana survey seem to indicate that the median age of conversion comes earlier, in the fourteenth year. Conklin explains this, however, by pointing out that while the early studies were made largely from some sort of questionnaire method, these Indiana studies used the ages at which the individuals involved actually joined the church.<sup>2</sup> The comparison between the age of conversion and the age of joining the church may indicate that many church members need appeals to commitment to Christ.

h. Many high school youth are about to leave home and go to a college or university where science and other subjects are taught in a way which undermines faith. If the youth merely has the teaching of the church behind him and no vital, personal faith, he is almost certain not to stand the test. "Many students who have come to college

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1. Conklin, op. cit., p. 109. Conclusions taken from table in G. S. Hall: Adolescence, Vol. 2, p. 290.
2. Conklin, op. cit., pp. 109, 110.

with a deep religious home training and church attendance in their earlier years have had their whole religious life undermined and destroyed."<sup>1</sup> According to Wyckoff, acute unbelief reaches "epidemic" proportions during college years.<sup>2</sup> It is not too much to assume that if the individual made a vital, personal commitment to Christ before his college years his religious make-up would be resistant to this disease.

Then, too, it has been recognized by college authorities that the two greatest problems of our colleges, intemperance and poor scholarship, can best be dealt with through religion. Religion "is able to marshal all of the resources of personality, moral, physical, psychological, and intellectual, and to command these in service, as no other power at the disposal of personality." Yet college authorities have largely been indifferent to the development of the religious life of the student.<sup>3</sup> If the college youth is to have a vital, personal faith, he must come to college having it already.

i. Finally, according to Homrighausen:

"Nothing less than a fearless, intelligent, and passionate presentation of the Gospel will get a hearing from young people these days. They do not care for a presentation that is condescending,

. . . . .

1. Wyckoff, op. cit., p. 28.
2. Ibid., p. 17.
3. Ibid., pp. 18, 19.

that is unrealistic, or that is couched in hackneyed words and phrases."<sup>1</sup>

From all of these statements it seems clear that the church must appeal to high school youth to commit themselves to Christ. Appeals to commitment should be a regular part and a vital part of the program of the church wherever it touches high school youth.

#### D. Summary

Commitment to Christ is the initial Christian decision. An appeal to commitment should include appeal to repentance, to acceptance of Christ as Saviour and Lord, and to making a public profession of faith. Christian education should both precede and follow this decision. Throughout the life of the individual other Christian choices or decision should follow the initial one as one grows in the Christian life.

Appeals to commitment to Christ should be a part of the regular, on-going program of the church, through the church school, the young people's society, and other regular organizations within the church. Evangelism should be made an important part of the service of members of the young people's society.

. . . . .

1. Homrighausen, op. cit., p. 133.

Personal work is the best method of appeal to commitment to Christ but should not be the only one used. Those who know the individual young person best are the ones who can most easily reach the person with an appeal to commitment to Christ.

The senior age is a peak in the time for decision. Appeals should be made for commitment to Christ at this age level. The method of appeal needs to take into consideration the nature of the senior and of the individual personality. The church should capture the idealism of the senior while it is still at its peak.

CHAPTER II

AN ANALYSIS OF THE MATERIALS FOR SENIORS  
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A.  
TO DISCOVER THE  
PLACE OF APPEALS TO COMMITMENT TO CHRIST

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The materials for seniors to be analyzed are: The Westminster Fellowship Manuals, a year's lessons each in the Westminster Graded series and the Westminster Uniform series, The Society Kit, Volume III, A Manual of Faith and Life, and ten leaflets or tracts suitable for use in personal work with seniors. A chart study of each of these sets of materials and a summary chart are included in the Appendix. A brief study of "A Mission to Teachers" will also be made.

A. Factors to be Considered

A preliminary scanning of some of the materials revealed that the matter concerning commitment and particularly appeals to commitment grouped itself naturally in the following categories:

1. Facts needed as a basis for intelligent commitment to Christ.
2. Aims concerning commitment to Christ.
3. Prayers relating to commitment to Christ.



4. Suggestions to teachers to make appeals to commitment to Christ.
5. Direct appeals to seniors to commitment.
6. Evangelism and commitment.

The facts considered as needed as a basis for intelligent commitment to Christ are, teaching concerning sin, man's responsibility to God, salvation through Christ, the cross, the atonement, and the Lordship of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Also under this heading have been noted examples of commitment to God or Christ as they occur in the materials, since these are important means of building attitudes favorable to commitment.

Under items 4. and 5. the analysis is broken up in order that the relative importance in these materials of the four components of commitment may be seen. The appeals studied, therefore, are: appeal to repentance, appeal to accept Christ as Saviour, appeal to accept Christ or God as Lord, and appeal to make a profession of faith in Christ. The summary and evaluation of each set of material is made particularly as to the place of suggestions to appeal or appeals made to commitment to Christ which include all four components of commitment. In the case of material for the young people's society,

. . . . .

1. Historic Christianity recognizes these as essential to the faith of a Christian.

however, evaluation is made more in the light of the help given to young Christians to help non-Christians toward an initial commitment to Christ.

#### B. Analysis of Westminster Fellowship Manuals

The experimental material for Westminster Fellowship, which includes What and How of Westminster Fellowship, and the four commission manuals, Faith and Life, Stewardship, Christian Fellowship, and Christian Outreach, is surveyed and analyzed here.

Some quotations from What and How of Westminster Fellowship will clarify the meaning of Westminster Fellowship for the purposes of this study.

"It is a fellowship of all Presbyterian young people.

"It is the common name by which all Presbyterian Young People shall know each other.

"It works through organization in the local church, the presbytery, the synod, and soon organization will be developed on a national level. . .

"It is the young people's division of the church."

The manuals were designed as aids in establishing Westminster Fellowship in the local church, in setting up a Westminster Fellowship Council, and in getting started with the commissions in the four areas of Christian life. They do not provide material for worship, study, or discussion for any meetings of young people, except for those planning for various phases of Westminster

Fellowship work. The feature most important for this study is the statement of aims for Westminster Fellowship and for the four commissions.

There is, however, some mention of the facts of sin, salvation through Christ, the cross, and the Lordship of Christ, particularly in Faith and Life. The other facts are not mentioned.

Noted as aims for Westminster Fellowship are the following: "Westminster Fellowship calls all Presbyterian Young People

To Commit Their Lives to God as He is Seen in Christ  
To Understand What Christianity Means  
To Become Christians Who Accept Responsibility  
To Foster the Spirit of Fellowship in the Church."

The first of these can be considered as an aim of commitment to Christ as Lord. The "Purpose" adopted by young people at a conference in 1943 is also an aim of commitment to Christ as Lord. It is proposed that this "Purpose" be adopted by the local group. It is stated as follows:

"OUR PURPOSE as we unite in Westminster Fellowship is to become such complete disciples of Christ that we will discover God's will for our lives and do it. Therefore:

"We commit ourselves to Christ and purpose to acquire a dynamic faith through Christian experience, worship, and study;

"We dedicate our lives to the expression of this faith by word and deed, seeking to work with those of like purpose and inviting others to join with us in building today for a Christian world."

This purpose is stated at the beginning and end of What and How of Westminster Fellowship and also at the end of each commission manual, so that at least one aim concerning commitment is found in each.

The statement of purpose of the Faith and Life Commission is as follows in that manual:

"The purpose of the Faith and Life Commission is to help each young person in the church to achieve an ever clearer understanding of the Christian answer to questions about God and Life. In other words, your Commission is to revitalize all methods and activities that contribute to the development of a meaningful relationship to God so that the members of your Westminster Fellowship are challenged to think and act as 'all out' Christians."

This is considered an aim of commitment to Christ, and places particular emphasis on commitment to Christ as Lord.

The other commissions aim at commitment to Christ in particular areas of the Christian's experience.

There are no prayers in these manuals and therefore no prayers of commitment.

The first of the "Fields for Exploration and Action" of the Faith and Life Commission is the field of commitment to Christ. In the discussion of this field in the manual there is appeal for members of this commission to accept Christ as Saviour and Master, without clarifying, however, just what it means. Accepting Christ as Lord is made most important in the discussion. There is

also suggestion to plan a meeting or meetings "to discuss what it means to be Christian," and suggestion that such a discussion be closed "with a period of guided meditation and silent prayer giving each individual an opportunity to search his own heart and commit himself anew to Christ." Here, too, commitment to Christ as Lord is made most important. This is the only place in any of the manuals in which appeals to commitment to Christ are made, except for appeals to commit a particular part of one's life to Christ, which are found in each commission manual.

References are made to evangelism in What and How of Westminster Fellowship and in Faith and Life, but they are most prominent, naturally, in Christian Outreach. In this manual, evangelism is made one of the four areas of outreach. Evangelism is defined as, "reaching out to bring not just new members to your group, but new converts to Christ and to the work of His Kingdom." There are ten suggestions of possible activities in this area of outreach. Four are for study, two for cooperation and friendliness, and the last four suggest special campaigns or cooperation in campaigns of evangelism--a "Win-my-Chum-Week," the annual evangelistic emphasis of the church, the "Christian Mission to Teachers," and a "team" or teams "to talk with others about their commitment to Christ and to the work of His Kingdom." As evangelism is defined here commitment to Christ is its goal.

The other areas of outreach are Social Education and Action, The Christian Mission, and Christian World Order, and are not concerned particularly with commitment.

Because of the nature of these manuals, appeals to commitment to Christ have a very small place in them. Appeal to commitment to Christ as Lord is the most prominent of the appeals which do appear in Faith and Life.

Since this material is organizational rather than educational or devotional, one would not expect to find many appeals to commitment. For persons who have made an initial commitment to Christ and understand the meaning of that commitment, this material would be a real challenge and aid to putting that commitment into action, as individuals or as a group, so that Christ would truly be Lord of their lives. No doubt these are the persons for whose use it was written. But for many seniors the statement, "Christian living begins with a sincere personal decision to accept Christ as Saviour and Master," would need clarification. In the discussion of commitment to Christ there might well be a suggestion to plan a meeting or meetings to discuss what it means to accept Christ as Saviour and Lord. The suggestions should bring in the reality of sin, individual responsibility to God, the need

for repentance, and Christ's sacrificial death, as well as the Lordship of Christ.

C. Analysis of Westminster Graded Lessons

In the Westminster Graded series, Leaders of Seniors and Seniors in the Sunday School for April 1945 through March 1946 are here analyzed. This material teaches all the facts needed as a basis for initial commitment to Christ except the fact of the atonement. There is no clear-cut statement to indicate the relationship of the cross to salvation through Christ. References to sin are found in thirteen lessons, and to salvation through Christ and to the Lordship of Christ in twelve lessons each. Examples of commitment to Christ are found in more lessons than any of the facts needed as a basis for commitment, nineteen lessons in all. Only three of the main facts relating to commitment are main features in any of these lessons--sin, responsibility to God, and the Lordship of Christ.

In two of the lessons there are aims stated in the teacher's quarterly related to commitment. The first has to do with repentance.

"The purpose of this lesson is to help the pupils to understand their own need of forgiveness and to see the necessity for their having a forgiving spirit. . . God is willing to forgive the ones who come seeking. He even provided the way before we became penitent, as Paul says to us in Rom. 5:8."

Repentance is, therefore, one of two emphases in this lesson. The second aim stated relating to commitment calls for rededication of one's life to Christ. This statement is in the introduction to the unit, "Being a Good Church Member."

"These lessons will afford a timely opportunity for re-examination, revival, and rededication. After the summer we often need a revival of our Christian purpose and rededication of ourselves to the 'high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'"

Also within the first lesson of this unit is the following:

"Study your class, person by person. . . Ask yourself such questions as these about them: Is John a member of the Church? If not, why not? What does his Church membership mean to him if he is already a member? What are the deepest needs in Mary's life? What does she yet lack to become an aggressive and yet gracious Christian? . . ."

These aims related to commitment then may be said to concern recognition of the need of forgiveness, rededication of oneself to Christ, and meeting the needs of the individuals in the class, whatever they may be.

There are two prayers related to commitment in the teacher's quarterly and none in the pupil's quarterly. There are very few prayers of any kind in these lessons, except in the unit "The Church at Worship and at Work," and this unit contains just one prayer related to commitment.

There is no actual appeal to repentance, but the lesson "Forgive Us Our Debts" brings out so forcefully



the universality of sin and lists so many concrete sins which no one could deny, that it can be said to include an appeal to recognize one's sin and seek forgiveness. This cannot be said to be an appeal to non-Christians, however, since there is no explanation of how a just God can forgive sin which deserves the "wages" of death. Both teacher's and pupil's quarterlies do make sin and the need for forgiveness clear.

In two lessons there are statements which might be considered as suggestions to appeal to make an initial commitment to Christ. These are noted on the chart by checking the columns Saviour and Lord in the first instance, and Saviour, Lord and Profession of faith in the second. In the lesson "Wanted: Christ in the Direct Service of the Church," there is this statement:

"If your class is like most, there will be one or two who have never yet caught the real meaning of the Christian life, even one or two who may not be Christians in any sense. . . You will have to do some more spadework with such young people."

In the lesson "The Sacraments in the Worship of Our Church," there is the following statement:

"Possibly some seniors have never been baptized. In that case, you will of course, encourage them to faith in Christ, leading to acceptance of the sacrament of baptism and the privileges of the Lord's Supper."

Since there is no mention of the need for forgiveness in either of these statements, the column repentance is not checked.

Besides the suggestions to appeal mentioned above, five other suggestions to appeal to accept Christ as Lord are noted. One is simply a suggestion to have every member of the class write a statement of creed or purpose, and then to remind them of the purpose of Westminster Fellowship. This purpose is printed in the teacher's quarterly. The other four suggestions to appeal to commitment to Christ each correspond to such an appeal in the pupil's quarterly and both quarterlies are studied together here.

The appeal in the lesson "Christ Lives in His Church" is an appeal to be a good church member by being in some real way a member of Christ's body--"his hand, his mind, his voice." The question is asked in the pupil's quarterly, "Are you a dead hand, a paralyzed voice, a missing foot?"

The appeal in the next lesson, "Christ and Our Vocation," is worded as follows in the pupil's quarterly:

"Read Rom. 12:1-3. . . In modern words Paul might say, 'Give all that you have and are to God.' . . here what is sacrificed to God is to be used by him and for others. . . Other things being equal, choose the work in which your whole personality with all its powers will be of most use to God in the service of mankind."

This is noted as an appeal to accept Christ as Lord because of the use of Romans 12:1-3.

The lesson "Thy Will be Done on Earth" in the next unit seeks commitment to God's will in relation to

personal conduct, helping others, selection of lifework, home conditions, Church work, and unchristian conditions in community, nation, and the world. This perhaps should not be called an appeal to commitment to Christ as Lord, but it is so noted because of its completeness.

The first lesson in the unit "Being a Good Church Member" contains strong appeal to commit oneself wholly to God as Lord. There is reminder of the profession made upon uniting with the church, followed by the suggestion:

"Raise the question of how strictly we hold ourselves to these promises. . . Do we let ourselves off easily by comparing ourselves with other Church members rather than with Christ?"

The teacher's quarterly contains this suggestion also:

"Make clear, either by discussion or by your own statement, that being a Christian is not the signing of some articles of belief, the adoption of a moral code to the letter of the law; but rather that it is the commitment of all we have and are to God, so that we live by the guidance of the Spirit."

In the pupil's quarterly is this appeal:

"We cannot hope to perfect ourselves in every detail of life. That is beyond our capacity. But we can commit ourselves utterly to God in the confidence that, if we commit our ways unto the Lord, he will direct our paths.

"Entering through the narrow gate, we ourselves become the door whereby others enter the life abundant and eternal; but standing before it, unwilling to travel the straitened road that lies beyond, we block the passage and turn others through the wide gate and down the road leading to destruction."

There are two suggestions to appeal to seniors to profess their faith in Christ. The first is in these words:

"If there are members of your class who have not yet made their profession of faith, your lesson may bring them to that decision. . ."

The second has been mentioned previously, and is suggestion to appeal to profession of one's faith by baptism.

There is just one further appeal in the pupil's quarterly. It is in the following words:

"You can have God if he can have you. If you will put yourself in line with his purposes, if you will take his aims as your aims, if you will 'think his thoughts after him,' then you can discover his power. Not otherwise!"

A poem appealing to commitment follows these words, making this appeal to accept God as Lord more effective.

References to evangelism are noted in eleven places in the teacher's quarterly and in ten lessons in the pupil's quarterly. These references occur, therefore, in eleven lessons in all and in the introduction to one of the teacher's quarterlies. The references include the need for recruiting young people, missionary lessons which refer to evangelism as part of the work of missionaries, a challenge to young people to speak to others about Jesus, and one lesson on "Bring Another to Christ," which includes suggestions on how to bring others to Christ. These references might challenge teachers and seniors to be evangelists in a broad sense, but not

necessarily to appeal to others to commit themselves to Christ.

Commitment has only a small place in the Westminster Graded lessons surveyed in this study. There are fourteen lessons in which none of the facts needed for commitment to Christ are found, nor any aims or prayers related to commitment, nor appeals or suggestions to appeal to commitment in the four areas studied, nor any references to evangelism. There are only ten lessons in which any appeal or suggestion to appeal to commitment in any of the four areas studied is made. These lessons are designed to give instruction as to choice of vocation, prayer, church membership, church history, worship and the churches' work. There is almost no place for instruction as to initial commitment to Christ or appeal to make such commitment.

The instruction given in these lessons is important for all Christians, but it is not realistic to assume as these lessons seem to, that all the seniors being given this instruction will have made an initial commitment to Christ. The material would be strengthened by further suggestions in the teacher's quarterly such as those referred to on Page 46, which indicate that some seniors will not as yet have made an initial commitment to Christ, and by statements to indicate what such a commitment involves.

D. Analysis of Westminster Uniform Lessons

The Westminster Uniform Teacher and the Westminster Intermediate-Senior Quarterly for April 1945 through March 1946 are analyzed here. They teach all the facts needed as a basis for intelligent commitment to Christ. All the facts considered except atonement are mentioned in both the teacher's and pupil's quarterlies. Atonement is mentioned seven times in the teacher's quarterly only. Three of the facts relating to commitment are main features in one or more lessons--sin, man's responsibility to God, and salvation through Christ.

Not noted on the chart, but printed in each lesson is a question from The Shorter Catechism. The questions included in the material surveyed are Questions sixty-six through one hundred seven and one through thirteen. The questions in the Catechism include all of the facts here stated as needed as a basis for commitment, together with the need for repentance and faith. Those questions not printed in the material surveyed are printed in the material for the subsequent lessons.

The aims which are noted as relating to commitment to Christ are stated or implied in the following words:

"lead others into life eternal"

"capture the love and loyalty of your teen-age pupils for the Christ who lived and died for them."

meet the individual's personal problem and also  
"lead him to a committal of himself to God."

"a well-timed evangelistic opportunity."

The last aim noted in the chart relates to one particular commitment which would be one follow-up of commitment to Christ. "Aim. . . to lead to commitment to observe devotions and to witness our devotion to him."

The prayers noted as relating to commitment include prayers of repentance, prayer which recognizes Christ as Saviour and Lord, prayer for help to be true followers of Christ, and a prayer-hymn of surrender to Christ as Lord. This last is the only prayer concerning commitment in the pupil's quarterly. It is suggested for use in private devotions. There is no prayer suggested for use with a pupil making an initial commitment to Christ, or for teacher's use to pray for enabling to lead pupils to Christ.

There is only one suggestion in the teacher's quarterly to appeal to pupils for repentance. It is in these words: "Improvement must begin with individuals who acknowledge themselves to be sinners and plead for mercy and forgiveness." The appeal to repentance in the pupil's quarterly is first an appeal to pledge one's life to service. Then an appeal to truly repent and make a fresh start when one does go wrong is made. The appeal to pledge one's life to service is by far the strongest.

There is just one hint of suggestion to appeal to accept Christ as Saviour in the teacher's quarterly. In a listing of ten points under "The Teacher's Task" are included the two following:

"A new working philosophy of educational evangelism must animate the Sunday School until it functions so that souls are won for Christ.

"Teachers need a clearer understanding of all that is involved in accepting Christ as Lord and Savior."

There is no appeal to accept Christ as Saviour in the pupil's quarterly. Lesson XI of the unit "The Unfolding Drama of Bible History" does emphasize the importance of Jesus as Messiah and Lord. One statement is, "The ministry of Jesus is understood only in its relationship to him as the Saviour of the world." Jesus' ministry of redemption is brought out clearly and it is pointed out that this is the only way of redemption, but the lesson fails to bring out the need for personal acceptance of the ministry of redemption.

Suggestions to appeal to commitment to Christ or God as Lord appear in eight of the lessons in the teacher's quarterly and in eight of the lessons in the pupil's quarterly. Five of these correspond, so that this type of appeal is found in eleven out of the fifty-three lessons. The appeals which are noted under this section include: (1) A suggestion to use Hunt's The Light of the World, and bring home "the duty and privilege



of surrender to Jesus Christ"; (2) A suggestion that "Above all, every intermediate and senior should be brought face to face with personal decision." The decision to be sought is "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"; (3) Appeal to dedication to service as a disciple and a good soldier; (4) Appeals on the basis of Romans 12:1, 2; (5) Other appeals for complete surrender to Christ or God; (6) Appeal on the basis of all that God has done for us; (7) Appeal for "Complete dedication of life to God and for world-building"; (8) and personal dedication to God such as Lincoln reported in the words: "I promised God that if he would stand by me, I would stand by him; and he did, and I will."

The appeals to accept Christ or God as Lord are not connected with appeals to accept Christ as Saviour. Only once do appeal to dedication for service and appeal to repentance appear in the same lesson. Only once do appeal to dedication of life to God and appeal to profess Christ occur in the same lesson. It seems clear that all of the appeals noted under this heading are made with the assumption that there has been previously a partial commitment to Christ, acceptance of Christ as Saviour.

There is one hint of appeal to profess faith in Christ in the teacher's quarterly. "If your pupils

have confessed Christ, they are ready for the guidance in these lessons. If they have not united with the Church, then here is your opportunity, with the help of the lessons which are adapted to the enlistment of youth for Christ." Uniting with the church is here made equivalent to confessing Jesus Christ, or profession of faith.

There is also one statement as to the value of public profession of faith in the pupil's quarterly.

"It is not only worth-while to make our peace with God; it is very much worth-while to do it publicly. This confirms and strengthens our own resolution on the one hand; on the other hand, it gives an example and incentive to those about us."

The heading evangelism includes suggestions to teachers to be evangelists, suggestions to enlist pupils in the work of evangelism, information concerning evangelism and helps for teacher evangelists, and statements concerning the need for evangelism and the duty of all Christians to spread the Gospel.

There is one lesson on "The Outreach of the Church." The early church is used as an example of what the church ought to be today, something is told of modern work on various foreign fields, reasons are given as to why the church should reach out. There is suggestion that teachers should be evangelists in these words:

"We, as a Church, no longer count on revival meetings to increase our membership. We count almost entirely on our young people from the Sunday School to confess Christ and on personal work done by pastors and a few Church workers."

In this same lesson there are two hints in the pupil's quarterly that pupils of this age should help in reaching out. The question is asked, "Who, in your Church, helps the pastor to win people for Christ and for Church membership?" The statement is made: "The best way to help the great Church to reach out is to help our own Church to reach out, first to the community, then across the seas."

There is an article in the December teacher's quarterly concerning "Conversion Experiences." It stresses "special conversion." ". . . evidence is that we must be converted on each individual point where we are at fault."

An article in the Superintendent's Section of the January Teacher's quarterly is entitled "About Teaching as Evangelism." It emphasizes example and guidance rather than appeals for decision, and is directed more toward teachers of children than toward teachers of adolescents. A Mission to Teachers is recommended at the close of the article.

A Mission to Teachers is recommended in the teacher's quarterly six times during the year.

In the lesson for March 31 there is this suggestion for the next quarter:

"Teachers should take a bit of time in all classes to say that the course for next quarter will be on 'Jesus and His Friends.' . . This is a strongly evangelistic course, which can be used to great profit to reach new pupils for Christ and to enlist present pupils in Christ's work."

This amount and variety of material concerning evangelism makes clear to teachers the importance of evangelism in the work of the church and the importance of being teacher evangelists, but evangelism is used in a broad sense. It includes more than initial commitment to Christ as its goal, and the abundance of references does not necessarily imply the sort of appeals to commitment needed to gain commitment with most seniors.

Appeals to commitment or suggestions to appeal have a place in fourteen of the fifty-three lessons surveyed. In eleven other lessons there are references to evangelism. By these repeated references and by definite statements it is made clear to teachers that they should be teaching for decisions. "The kind of teaching that takes hold is that which compels pupils to come to a decision." "When the learner has received the idea you have conveyed, try to get him to act on it immediately and to make it his own." Nowhere in this year of lessons, however, is there any clear-cut statement which would indicate that many intermediate and senior pupils will need to make the initial decision which involves repentance, acceptance of Christ as

Saviour and Lord, and public profession of faith. There is no suggestion that the teacher do personal work with those in her class who have not yet accepted Christ as Saviour and Lord.

The Westminster Uniform Lessons surveyed may be considered to contribute much to the understanding of the teacher by stressing teaching for decisions. But they fail to give sufficient help to meet the need for making a decision which is of prime importance for many in this age group, initial commitment to Christ.

#### E. Analysis of The Society Kit

The Society Kit, Volume III, contains discussion topics and program suggestions for young people of high school and college age. It is designed primarily for use in the Sunday evening meetings of the young people's society. There are four sections in The Society Kit: A. General Plans and Ideas for a Successful Youth Program; B. Fifty-four Undated Topics, grouped according to the four commissions of Westminster Fellowship; C. Eleven Special Day Programs; D. Recreation Suggestions.

All of the facts needed as a basis for commitment to Christ are mentioned in The Society Kit. Topic 25, "What Are the Basic Beliefs of a Christian?" takes

up all of these facts. Two of the topics, both in the subsection "Main Street Bible Characters," each give extended consideration to sin, one of these facts needed as a basis for commitment. Four topics under the subsection "Christian Outreach" give extended consideration to outstanding examples of modern day people living lives committed to Christ. Sin is mentioned more than any other of the facts considered, and atonement less than any of the other facts considered. Mention of sin is included in seventeen topics and programs, while mention of atonement is included in only two of the topics and in none of the programs. The topics which include mention of atonement are "What Should We Know About the Life of Christ," and "What Are the Basic Beliefs of a Christian?"

Because of the nature of The Society Kit, there are only occasional statements of aims or purposes. The three-fold purpose stated in the topic "O Jesus, I Have Promised" is one of these statements. It reads:

- "1. To remember the nature of our pledged loyalty to Jesus.
- "2. To remind ourselves of the words we used in pledging that loyalty.
- "3. To make a rededication of ourselves to Christ."

As is readily seen, this last purpose has to do with commitment, though not with the initial decision to commit oneself to Christ. This topic is designed for Christians.

The prayers noted as relating to commitment include prayers of repentance, of dedication of life to Christ, of dedication of heart, mind and soul to Christ as Guide, Brother and Saviour, of rededication to discipleship and to serving Christ, of commitment to the cause of Christ and his Kingdom, of commitment to building one's life as a Christian, and a prayer for help to choose Christ's way. There is no prayer suggested for use with a person making an initial commitment to Christ, though there are prayers other than those noted which ask for help to spread the Gospel of Christ.

There is only one topic which might be considered to include an appeal to repentance. The topic is "Adam on Main Street in Our Time." In the worship suggestions is included an interpretation of Holman Hunt's The Light of the World, which points out the symbols for sin, conscience, eternal forgiveness, salvation, Christ's suffering for our sins, His kingship and the need for choice. The interpretation ends with these words:

"So Jesus stands forever at the door of our hearts, seeking entrance. Shall we hide in fear, or rush off to other business which we feel is more important? Shall we make excuses, not wanting the light of that lantern to fall upon our sins, or shall we know the privilege of entertaining such a guest and open wide the rusty door and let him in?"

After the Picture Interpretation the hymn "O Jesus, Thou Art Standing" is suggested for use, then John 3:16-21, then a period of silent meditation, closing with reading of Philippians 3:12-14. The hymn "Fight the Good Fight with All Thy Might" is to be used next and the service closed with the Benediction.

It is difficult to know how to classify the appeals made in these worship suggestions, but appeal for repentance, to trust Christ as Saviour and to accept Christ as Lord in one's personal life are probably included. This is, however, not necessarily an appeal exclusively to persons who have not made an initial decision for Christ, but might well have great meaning for those who have already made public profession of faith.

The single appeal to accept Christ as Saviour has been considered above.

There are appeals to accept Christ as Lord in four of the topics and five of the programs in The Society Kit. This appeal is a main feature of two of the topics and one of the programs. The worship service in Topic 1 is a service of dedication around the verse, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23) The topic "O Jesus, I have Promised" calls for a rethinking of the



questions asked and the promises made at the time of uniting with the church, and a rededication of oneself to discipleship and to serving Christ.

The appeals in the topic "Adam on Main Street in Our Time" were considered above. Appeal to acceptance of Christ as Lord is included there. In Topic 48, "Where Will Youth Count Most?" there are suggestions made for working out group resolutions. The first suggestion is: "We will commit ourselves to Jesus Christ and seek to discover what this means to us in our own lives. We will study our Bibles to find the will of God for our lives." This is noted on the chart as an appeal to commitment.

Special Program No. 1 is entitled "God's Will for My Life in the New Year." There is definite appeal here first for the leader to make a recommitment of his life to Christ. Questions for discussion related to commitment are: "What do we have to give to others? . . . Can we expect to win other young people in this community this year for Christ if we don't have him ourselves? . . . What first step can we take in this sort of thing in our group this year?" There is more an appeal to the group to seek the way to commitment or recommitment, than actually to make such a commitment. In other words, this program is an appeal to Christians to make Christ Lord

over unsundered areas of their lives.

The appeal to commitment in Special Program No. 2 is a call to service:

"We would serve Thee with all our might; therefore, to thee we come. Lent is a time set apart for pledging ourselves to serve. Here, now, let us pledge all that we are to help to bring in the Kingdom of love and peace in our own time. Here, now, let us sing 'Just as I Am, Thine Own to Be,' and make those words our closing commitment."

The Easter program includes appeal to dedicate oneself anew to Christ. The Service of Youth Dedication uses the Hymn, "Rise Up as Men of God," and includes dedication to Christ as Guide, Brother, and Saviour, to all mankind, to classmates, neighbors, and fellow citizens, and to the church. The program for Pledge Sunday includes appeal to give oneself to Christ, as well as one's possessions.

There is just one topic which might be said to include appeal to profess one's faith in Christ. Matthew 10:32, 33 is quoted without comment in the topic "O Jesus, I Have Promised." It is evident that the topics and programs in The Society Kit are designed for those who have already made their profession of faith in Christ.

The other appeals to commitment which have been noted include dedication of the group to meeting the needs of church and community, dedication to the task of promoting Christian brotherhood, dedication of

possessions to the service of Christ, dedication to the cause of Christ in the world, pledge to follow Jesus, the Master Workman of the race, and dedication of home to the building of the Kingdom of God. These are all appeals to Christians.

Besides the appeals to commitment studied above, hymns of commitment are suggested for use in twenty-four of the fifty-four topics, and in four of the eleven programs in The Society Kit. Among those suggested are "Take My Life and Let it Be," "O Jesus, I Have Promised," "Give of Your Best to the Master," and "Take Thou Our Minds, Dear Lord."

Under the heading evangelism are noted suggestions for starting a Youth Evangelism Project, quotation of the great commission, a litany consecrating one's gifts to the evangelization of the world, a statement as to the meaning of church membership, a topic on the work of a missionary evangelist, a suggestion for a group resolution of evangelism, discussion questions concerning the personal needs of youth as evangelists, and appeal to live and share the Gospel. Evangelism in these references includes more than initial commitment as its goal.

Some form of appeal to commitment other than commitment hymns is found in nine of the topics and six of the programs, but there is only one topic which might

be considered as appealing to persons who have never made previously some sort of commitment to Christ. Hymns of commitment are distributed throughout the topics and programs. References to evangelism appear in nine of the topics and in two of the programs. Several of these indicate that Christian youth should be evangelists. These references appear in all except the Christian Fellowship topics.

Since these topics and programs are for the Sunday evening meetings of seniors and those who come have ordinarily already made their initial commitment to Christ, appeals to make such a commitment need not have such a large place as in church school materials. The Society Kit, then, needs to be evaluated more from the standpoint of evangelism. No assistance is given for a young Christian to help him to do personal evangelism. In the topic "Let's Not Just Talk About It!" a Youth Evangelism Project is just one of seven possible projects for which suggestions are made. More space might well be given to practical suggestions for carrying on a Youth Evangelism Project. The topic, "How Does an Individual Know Christ?" might well give assistance for both personal evangelism and a Youth Evangelism Project, but it stresses instead learning to know Jesus by learning about him, by knowing his friends, by working for his

purposes, and by talking with him as a Friend. There is no mention of the need for repentance or acceptance of Christ as Saviour in this topic. The Society Kit as a whole fails to give adequate consideration to the need and duty of being evangelists and to give adequate practical helps to Christian youth for leading others to commitment to Christ.

#### F. Other Available Materials

##### 1. A Manual of Faith and Life.

A Manual of Faith and Life is a guide for individuals or communicants' classes. It is interpretive of the "Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith" and studies the sixteen articles of that statement.

All of the facts needed as a basis for commitment to Christ are included in this Manual. There are, however, no examples of commitment to Christ, unless some of the scripture quoted from Paul, or Christ's surrender of his will to God, could be taken as such.

The aim of the Manual is stated in the Foreword:

"This volume is presented to the Church with the prayer that it may be useful in bringing into the Church many who will fulfill the counsel of the apostle: 'Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear: having a good conscience.'"

It is evident from this statement of aim that the Manual was written for those already having made at least a partial commitment to Christ.

There are no prayers relative to commitment to Christ, and just a few other prayers.

Four of the articles may be considered to contain appeals to commitment. Article I contains the following appeal:

"We are at our best, not when we discuss God or argue about him, but when we give ourselves to him in glad surrender. True worship is the highest act of the soul. In it we give ourselves to God and God gives himself to us. . ."

Article III contains the following, which might be called an appeal:

"This, then, is the meaning of life, namely, to do the will of God. It was the supreme motive in the life of our Lord. . . What, then, is the will of God for my life? This is the question which is always first in the life of a Christian."

Article XI contains the following appeal:

". . . He is at hand who has in his keeping abundant life for all. Let us reach out our empty hands and take him! Let us open our empty hearts and receive him! Let us surrender our unsatisfied lives and the living Christ will come in. . ."

These three are noted as appeals to commitment to Christ as Lord.

Article IX contains an appeal to repentance in the words of the hymn, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." This could be an appeal to Christians or non-Christians.

The other three appeals are made to those already having made at least a partial commitment to Christ.

References to evangelism occur three times in the Manual. The great commission is presented as the duty of the church and of every Christian. Evangelism is presented as proclaiming the Gospel, but there is no clear-cut statement of the goal as individual commitment to Christ.

Appeals to commitment have very little place in A Manual of Faith and Life, though each article treats some of the facts needed for commitment. Whether or not the Manual is adequate from the standpoint of appeals to commitment would depend upon the manner of enlistment of members for a communicants' class in the local church. If the program of enlistment is evangelistic in emphasis, then the Manual gives adequate instruction for those already having made their initial commitment to Christ. The Manual would not be adequate where this were not the case.

Other Presbyterian materials for the communicants' class which are suitable for seniors might be just listed. These are newer booklets and briefer treatments of the subjects.

The Communicants' Class, by Alfred J. Sadler

Manual for Communicants' Classes, by J. R. Miller

The Communicant Member, published by the Board of  
National Missions

Preparing Young People for Church Membership, by  
Walter David Knight

A glance through each of these shows that appeals to  
commitment have little place in any of them.

## 2. Leaflets for Personal Work.

The ten leaflets which were surveyed are not  
particularly for use with seniors, but could well be used  
with seniors to gain various decisions.

The leaflet "I Believe" is suitable for use  
with the skeptic who says he cannot believe in God since  
his existence cannot be proven. The only appeal made is  
to faith. This is necessary in such a case, but is not  
adequate by itself.

"Five Reasons" includes statements concerning  
most of the facts needed for commitment to Christ and  
appeals to accept Christ as Saviour and Lord. There is  
not adequate recognition here of the need for repentance,

"How to Become a Christian" includes statements  
concerning only three of the facts needed for commitment  
to Christ but makes appeal in all the areas of an initial  
commitment to Christ. It could be used with seniors to  
gain an initial commitment to Christ.

"What Christ Means to Me" includes statements  
concerning most of the facts needed for commitment and



makes all the appeals except that to repent. It is the only one of these leaflets which contains a clear-cut statement concerning the atonement. For most seniors the need for repentance would need to be made more clear than this leaflet makes it.

"Why Join the Church" is for those who already claim Christ as Saviour but have not made a public profession of their faith by joining the church. It also appeals to accept Christ as Lord. This might well be used with the few seniors who would need such an appeal.

"My Commitment" is a different type of leaflet. It helps to clarify the meaning of commitment and the aids to carrying out commitment to Christ in all of life. It could well be used with seniors upon their uniting with the church.

"My Decision" is a card to be signed by a person making one or more of the following decisions:

"I accept Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour and Lord and will become His disciple.

"I desire to unite with the Church.

"I reaffirm my faith in and my loyalty to Jesus Christ.

"I will endeavor to carry the spirit of Christ into all the areas of my life."

This card is suitable for use with a communicants' class whose members have received instruction as to the meaning of their decisions.

"My Certificate of Church Membership" contains the same material as "My Commitment" and also a "Covenant with God and the Church," to be signed, which includes acceptance of Christ as Saviour and Lord. It would be a real challenge to seniors uniting with the church.

"I Am Not Good Enough" and "I Don't Know Enough" might be used with seniors who make either of these excuses. The only appeals they make however, are to unite with the church and thus acknowledge one's need. Further appeals would have to be made with a person accepting either of these challenges if the person were to become Christian.

Because of the nature of these leaflets, there are no aims stated or references to evangelism made.

All of these leaflets contain appeals. Six of the ten contain appeals to accept Christ as Saviour and Lord. Four contain appeals to profess one's faith in Christ. Only one contains appeal relative to all four components of commitment to Christ.

All of these leaflets could be used to advantage in personal work with seniors, but there might well be others which would contain appeal relative to all four components of commitment to Christ.

### 3. A Mission to Teachers.

A Mission to Teachers is designed to help all teachers, and not just teachers of seniors, but it is surveyed here because of references to it in the materials for seniors. The main guidance materials are the leaflet, A Mission to Teachers, and the booklet, "Guiding Boys and Girls to Christ", and these are the materials surveyed here. Since this material is quite different in purpose from any of the rest, the outline given at the beginning of this chapter is not being followed here.

The following statement from the leaflet will clarify this part of the Presbyterian program.

" . . . A Mission to Teachers occurs in the local church, if it occurs at all. National church agencies and committees of Presbytery and Synod endeavor to inform and give counsel about the plan, but it can be put into use only in each individual church."

The aims are stated also in this leaflet.

- "1. To stimulate the teachers' sense of responsibility to win boys and girls to Jesus Christ.
- "2. To deepen and enrich the spiritual life of teachers to this end.
- "3. To assist teachers in finding materials and developing techniques required to accomplish this within the compass of the work of their specific age groups.
- "4. To help teachers to build boys and girls into the historic Church as living members of the body of Christ.
- "5. To create in pupils and teachers alike a concern for the unreached boys and girls in their midst--a concern that will lead to definite action."

A Mission to Teachers includes a suggested procedure for carrying out such a mission. The specific elements in the procedure are as follows:

- "1. A Series of Conferences with Teachers.
2. An Every Home Visitation.
3. Communicants' Classes Each Year.
4. A Decision Day Service.
5. Parent-Teacher Contacts and Conferences."

The threefold purpose for the conferences is: "first, deepening the spiritual life of the teachers themselves; second, increasing their evangelistic zeal; third, coaching them in wise and effective procedure with their pupils." The booklet Guiding Boys and Girls to Christ has been prepared for use in the conferences to meet the last two aims.

Concerning the communicants' class, the statement is made: "The value of classes in preparation for a personal commitment to Christ and church membership needs no argument." This statement seems to shed a different light on the purpose of the communicants' class than was seen in the aim of A Manual of Faith and Life. It is suggested that at least two communicants' classes will be needed each year.

Two types of decision day are recommended. One plan is a Decision Day Service "in which decisions that have been reached in a communicants' class or in personal conference with parents, pastor, or teacher are publicly

acknowledged. . ." Another is a Decision Day "when decision to enroll in a communicants' class is registered."

These are the items in the leaflet which have particular pertinence to the evangelistic aim.

Of interest in Guiding Boys and Girls to Christ is Section II, "What It Means to Be a Christian--at the Goal." The answer includes repentance, acceptance of Christ as Saviour and Lord, and profession of faith in Christ, as well as other items. A Christian who has arrived at the stage presented here is certainly at the goal.

Section III lists the chief traits of each age group, from preschool through intermediate. There is also a brief paragraph concerning the senior age, which indicates that the senior is much like the intermediate.

Section IV stresses the point that teachers are to do educational or "depth" evangelism. This is described as "the steady week-by-week deep planting of the Life and Person of our Lord in the lives of children."

Teachers are not to do pastoral evangelism, which includes:

"personal work, special meetings, invitation committee, workers' training, and bringing people into Church membership classes and public confession of their faith in Christ."

In other words, teachers are only to lay the groundwork for full commitment to Christ, according to this booklet. This preparation may include, especially with older ages,

"conversation with your pupils about decision and commitment." Stress is put upon the fact that evangelism "is never something that has to be 'dragged in.'" "It would be wrong for the teacher to turn every lesson into an appeal to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour." Educational evangelism here is a very broad term. Initial commitment to Christ is only one part of its goal.

In the discussion of "Spot Guidance" for each age group, it is evident that according to this booklet the junior-high age is the first in which full commitment to Christ as personal Lord and Saviour should be sought. Mention is also made here of the communicants' class and of the need for teacher and pastor cooperation in what is taught in the church school during this period.

In discussing the senior age the following statements are made:

"It is important to recall that different personalities will mature at different speeds. For some, decision and commitment may not be reached until they are eighteen or nineteen years of age. In most cases, however, fruition will occur before this."

One general suggestion for all age groups is made concerning decision or commitment:

"Provide times of quietness after your class conversation when your pupils will be guided into reflection on what they have just learned and want to do because of it. Do not force expression, but draw it out. Skillfully interpret all right decisions as decisions for Christ. And prayer at such times is always in order--quiet, thoughtful prayer leading to further action."

Commitment to Christ has a very large place in the aims of teachers according to the material of A Mission to Teachers. Full commitment to Christ as Saviour and Lord has special place at the intermediate and senior levels. But appeals to commitment and especially appeals to make a full commitment to Christ should have a very small place in the ministry of the teacher, according to this material.

It is true, however, that the teacher, as a person who knows her pupils personally, is often the ideal person to make appeals to commitment to Christ in personal conference and in quiet moments at the close of a lesson which naturally leads to such an appeal. The teacher is hardly an evangelist unless he does this, and the material of A Mission to Teachers, does not greatly help him to be an evangelist in this respect.

CHAPTER III  
A COMPARISON AND EVALUATION  
OF THE FINDINGS



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A. Comparison of the Materials

Because these materials have been prepared for a variety of uses, it is difficult to make a fair comparison of their inclusion of matter concerning commitment to Christ. But since the Graded Lessons, the Uniform Lessons, and The Society Kit are the most alike in the amount and variety of material, comparison of these three will be of most value. These sets of material are compared, therefore, with only occasional reference to the others. The Graded and the Uniform series each contains fifty-three lessons. Counting the topics and programs together, there is material for sixty-five meetings in The Society Kit.

As to the facts concerning commitment in these three sets of material, the Graded Sunday school material surveyed contains the least number of lessons in which there are statements about the facts of commitment, and is the only set which omits entirely any one of the facts studied. The Graded Lessons omit any statement concerning atonement. The Uniform series surveyed contains the greatest number of lessons in which statements about the

facts of commitment are found. Nevertheless, there are only seven lessons which mention the atonement. This set contains fewer mentions of the Lordship of Christ than the others. Only five lessons contain statements concerning the Lordship of Christ, whereas the other sets have twelve mentions of this each. The Society Kit with its sixty-five topics and programs has more which include statements concerning some facts of commitment than the Graded series, but less than the Uniform series. It has only two topics and no programs which mention the atonement. Each of the series contains more units in which statements concerning sin are found than any other fact of commitment. The Uniform series contains the most, and the Graded series the least number of such lessons.

Comparison of the number of examples of commitment is here made separately for the sake of clarity. Nineteen of the fifty-three lessons in the Graded series contain examples of commitment, and twenty-three of the fifty-three lessons in the Uniform series. Only ten of the sixty-five topics and programs in The Society Kit contain examples of commitment.

Only two aims concerning commitment to Christ are found in the Graded series, six in the Uniform series, and one in The Society Kit. Eight such statements of aims are found in the Westminster Fellowship Manuals and

one in A Manual of Faith and Life. It should be noted that most of the aims recorded have to do with commitment to Christ as Lord.

Prayers of commitment occur in the series of materials about in the proportion in which prayers in general are found. There are at least two prayers with each lesson of the Uniform series. Twenty-two of the lessons contain prayers of commitment. Written prayers appear only occasionally in The Society Kit, and even less frequently in the Graded series. Prayers of commitment appear in eight of the topics or programs of The Society Kit and in only two of the lessons in the Graded series. As to the Uniform series, however, it should be noted that many of the prayers are for the teacher himself and there is just one prayer of commitment printed in the pupil's quarterly. There is just one prayer of commitment outside of these three series. It is in one of the leaflets.

Appeals to commitment to Christ or suggestions to appeal appear in each of the sets of material studied. In each appeals to accept Christ as Lord are the most prominent, with very few appeals other than these. The Graded series contains just one lesson in which appeal to repent is made, two in which suggestions to appeal to accept Christ as Saviour are made, seven in which

appeals to commitment to Christ as Lord are found, and two in which there are suggestions to appeal to profess one's faith in Christ are made. The Uniform series surveyed contains two lessons in which suggestions to appeal to repent are made, one in which suggestion to appeal to accept Christ as Saviour is found, eleven in which there are appeals to accept Christ as Lord, and two in which there are suggestions to appeal to profess one's faith in Christ. Appeal to repent, to accept Christ as Saviour and to profess one's faith in Christ each appears in one topic or program of the sixty-five in The Society Kit. Appeals to accept Christ as Lord occur in nine topics or programs.

The Westminster Fellowship Manuals contain four appeals to commitment to Christ, one to accept Christ as Saviour, two to accept Christ as Lord, and one to profess faith in Christ. A Manual of Faith and Life also contains four appeals to commitment, one to repent, and three to accept Christ as Lord. The leaflets surveyed contain eighteen appeals to commitment to Christ, one to repent, six to accept Christ as Saviour, seven to accept Christ as Lord, and four to make a public profession of faith. Thus, the leaflets have more appeals to accept Christ as Saviour and to profess one's faith in Christ than any other set of materials surveyed.

Evangelism has the most prominent place in the Uniform series, being mentioned in twelve of the lessons. References to evangelism appear in eleven of the lessons of the Graded series and eleven of the topics or programs in The Society Kit. It is also mentioned six times in the Westminster Fellowship Manuals and three times in A Manual of Faith and Life. Only the Westminster Fellowship Manuals indicate clearly that initial commitment to Christ is the goal of evangelism. In most cases the term is used in a broader sense.

#### B. Evaluation of the Materials

Study of the Presbyterian materials for seniors has revealed that a program of Christian education using them would give a fair amount of the knowledge needed to make an intelligent commitment to Christ. It would also give ample help for a young Christian to go on in the Christian life, and to make other right decisions. The Uniform series and A Manual of Faith and Life were found most adequate in the first respect and each set of materials studied gives help concerning the latter. But the materials do not make sufficient appeals to an initial commitment to Christ to meet the requirement for religious education set up by Vieth.<sup>1</sup>

. . . . .

1. Vieth, op. cit., pp. 161, 162.

The materials for the young people's society indicate that winning others to Christ is an important part of the service of the members, but they do not give sufficient practical help to perform this service.

Commitment to Christ does have a part in these materials for the regular program of the church with seniors, but appeals to an initial commitment do not have sufficient place.

Some help is given as to methods of appeal to commitment. Decision day and special campaigns, such as "Win-My-Chum," are merely suggested. There are printed courses for the communicants' class, but the course studied was found to be more suitable for a group of those having already made an initial commitment to Christ. There are leaflets printed for personal work, and some suggestions, such as those in the lesson, "Bring Another to Christ." There are a very few casual suggestions in the church school material that some seniors may not as yet be Christians. There is suggestion to seek to meet the personal needs of pupils but no suggestion to speak personally to seniors concerning initial commitment to Christ. There could be more suggestions to teachers and leaders concerning this very effective way of appeal to initial commitment to Christ. There is also suggestion in Guiding Boys and Girls to Christ for frequent use of

a quiet time for decision at the end of the class session. Specific suggestion could be made for such a time for initial commitment to Christ.

All of the appeals studied, except those in the leaflets would be made as a part of the regular program of the church. But they do not meet the need which Homrighausen has stated for a "fearless, intelligent, and passionate presentation of the Gospel."<sup>1</sup> The urging which Richardson said most people need is almost entirely lacking in the regular materials for seniors.<sup>2</sup> The appeals which are made do follow the other principles stated in Chapter I, but there should be more and more effective appeals to an initial commitment to Christ.

In many ways the Presbyterian materials for seniors would be very appealing to the characteristics of seniors and meet their needs. Studies which clarify the beliefs of Christians would be attractive to seniors because of their increasing mental powers. High ideals are placed before these idealists in concrete form in the examples of commitment, and they are challenged to live up to those ideals. Because of their own sense of failure and sin, the prominence of references to sin in the materials would seem natural to them. But the

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1. Homrighausen, op. cit., p. 133.
2. Richardson, op. cit., Study Unit No. VII, p. 14.

materials fail to show clearly and frequently how sin can be dealt with, or how it was dealt with at the cross.

One would naturally suppose that a person growing up in the church would have made his initial commitment to Christ before reaching the high school age. It is true that many do, and this certainly is ideal. The materials surveyed would be very acceptable in the matter of commitment to Christ were the ideal situation the real one. It is recognized, too, that a survey of just one year does not give a complete picture, particularly in surveying Sunday school materials, which are written in a three-year cycle. But regardless of what comes before or after, the importance of the initial decision for Christ and the needs of seniors in regard to this decision, as shown in Chapter I, would seem to demand that teachers and leaders of seniors be helped to make very clear the meaning of initial commitment to Christ and to make forceful, effective appeal to seniors who have not yet made this decision. Such help ought to be given more than once during a year. There is ample help to point the way to seniors to go on in the Christian life by making subsequent decisions, but initial commitment to Christ is given little consideration in these materials. This need of seniors is recognized in A Mission to Teachers, but little practical help is given



to meet it. The leaflets give more help than any other Presbyterian materials with regard to an initial decision for Christ, and of these, "How to Become a Christian" is the most valuable for its appeals concerning all four components of commitment.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The initial decision for Christ has been called in this study commitment to Christ. Such commitment was found to involve repentance, acceptance of Christ as Saviour and Lord, and public profession of faith in Christ. Since such a decision must come as the beginning of any truly Christian life, appeals to commitment should have a vital and prominent place in the regular, on-going program of Christian education and in the total program of the church. The service of Christians should include evangelism, and the young people's society should reach out to bring others to an initial commitment to Christ.

Personal work is said to be the best method of appeal to commitment to Christ, but decision day, the communicants' class, special campaigns, and other methods are also of value if properly used. Appeals to commitment should be a part of the regular program of the church, they should be personal and individual, they should appeal to the reason, but should also forcefully appeal to the will. A whole-hearted decision should be sought, and it should be sealed with public profession of faith.

The characteristics of the senior which need to be considered in developing any program for seniors were studied. Because of the senior's increased mental

powers, his idealism, his sense of failure and sin, and other characteristics, the senior age is a time when many make an initial decision for Christ. The senior needs the help of "a fearless, intelligent, and passionate presentation of the Gospel"<sup>1</sup> in order to make this initial decision while his idealism is at its peak.

Analysis of the Presbyterian materials for seniors has shown that if all the materials surveyed were used effectively with or by a senior, generally speaking, such a senior would be well informed at the end of the year as to the facts needed as a basis for commitment to Christ. If the Graded series were used in the church school, he would have rather scanty knowledge concerning the atonement, but would be better informed if the Uniform series were used. A good many examples of commitment to Christ would be held before him during the year. Reading the Westminster Fellowship Manuals would give him cause to think about commitment to Christ as Lord because of the aims stated there, but on the whole he would not gain the impression that an initial commitment to Christ for each individual has a central place in the whole purpose of the church. These materials would hardly challenge the senior to see his need to repent. There are very few

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1. Homrighausen, op. cit., p. 133.

appeals or suggestions to appeal to repent. Several of these are for those who have already made an initial commitment to Christ, and the others do not measure up to Richardson's requirement of forceful, effective urging. The senior might be confronted with nine or ten appeals to accept Christ as Saviour, depending upon the church school materials used. In none of these is it made perfectly clear what it means to accept Christ as Saviour, and several of them fail to meet Richardson's requirement.

The senior would be challenged to commit his life to Christ as Lord, whether the Graded or the Uniform lessons were used in the church school. He would know quite clearly what it means to receive Christ as Lord. Each set of material has some challenge of this kind. The senior would also be challenged to commitment of various parts of his life, such as choice of lifework, use of leisure time, and time for daily devotions. There are not many appeals to profess one's faith, eight in all, but the need is made quite clear and a senior who had not yet united with the church would no doubt be challenged to do so. The meaning of church membership is made quite clear in the Graded series, and is also discussed in some of the other materials.

The number of references to evangelism would make the senior realize its importance in the work of

the church, but there is little help to make the Christian senior an evangelist. The need is suggested but there are few practical aids to help him show others the way to commitment to Christ.

In the light of the foregoing study it is evident that while the Presbyterian materials meet most of the needs of Christian seniors, they fail to meet adequately the needs of non-Christians. The study indicates that the church cannot afford to neglect the many non-Christian seniors. It should not only teach them the knowledge needed for intelligent commitment to Christ, but effectively appeal to them to make their personal commitment to Christ.

APPENDIX

The Material	Facts Needed for Commitment							Prayers of Commitment	Suggestions and Appeals				
	Sin	Responsibility to God	Salvation thru Christ	The Cross	Atonement	Lordship of Christ	Examples of Commitment		Aims of Commitment	Repent	Accept Saviour	Accept Lord	Profess Faith
WESTMINSTER FELLOWSHIP MANUALS				1				3					2
What and How of Westminster Fellowship													
Faith and Life	2		2			1		2		1	2	1	1
Stewardship								1					
Christian Fellowship	1		1					1					
Christian Outreach			2	1				1					3



The Material	Number of Lessons	Facts Needed for Commitment								Aims of Commitment	Prayers of Commitment	Suggestions and Appeals				
		Sin	Responsibility To God	Salvation thru Christ	The Cross	Atonement	Lordship of Christ	Examples of Commitment	Repent			Accept Saviour	Accept Lord	Profess Faith	Evangelism	
GRADED BIBLE LESSONS FOR THESE TIMES April 1945 through March 1946 Unit	13				1		3	1		1	1	1	4	1	1	
Christ Using Our Lives to Challenge the World					1		3	1		1			3	1		
Leaders of Seniors							3	1					3	1		
Seniors in the Sunday School							3	1					3	1		
The Lord's Prayer	10	2*	2*	1	1		2*	5	1				1*	1	1	
Leaders of Seniors		2*	2*	1	1		2*	4	1				1*	1	1	
Seniors in the Sunday School		2*	1*	1	1		2*	4					1	1		
Being a Good Church Member	4	3	2	1	2		2	3	1				1	1	1	1*
Leaders of Seniors		3	2	1			2	3	1				1	1	1	1*
Seniors in the Sunday School		1			2		1						1	1		1*
The Church Through the Ages	13	1	1	3	1		2*	5								1
Leaders of Seniors			1	2	1		2*	4								
Seniors in the Sunday School		1	1	3	1		2*	5								1
The Church At Worship and At Work	13	7		7	2		3	5		1			1	1	1	7
Leaders of Seniors		6		5	1		1	3		1			1	1	1	8
Seniors in the Sunday School		5		4	2		2	5								7
TOTAL LESSONS	53	13	5	12	7		12	19	2	2	2	1	7	2	11	

\*A main feature in one or two lessons.  
 A This line records lessons in which these things are found.  
 e This line may include mentions in introduction or close of quarterly.

The Material	No. of Lessons	Facts Needed for Commitment								Aims of Commitment	Prayers of Commitment	Suggestions and Appeals					
		Sin	Responsibility to God	Salvation thru Christ	The Cross	Atonement	Lordship of Christ	Examples of Commitment	Repent			Accept Saviour	Accept Lord	Profess Faith	Evangelism		
WESTMINSTER UNIFORM LESSONS																	
April 1945 through March 1946																	
<u>Unit</u>																	
The Unfolding Drama of Bible Hist.	13	9	4	7*	6	2	2	4	1	5	1	1	1				A
Westminster Uniform Teacher		2	2	7*	4	2	2	2	2	5							B
Intermediate-Senior Quarterly		8	3	3	4	4	2	4			1	1	1				
Studies in Genesis	14	12*	6*	3	6	2	2	8		2	1	3	1	1	1	1	A
Westminster Uniform Teacher		10*	5*	2	6	2	2	5		2	2	2	1	2	1	1	B
Intermediate-Senior Quarterly		9*	2*	2	1	1	1	7			1	3	1	3	1	1	
The Christian and His Relationships	13	9	3	6	1	2	2	4		5	1	1	1	1	1	8*	A
Westminster Uniform Teacher		9	2	6	2	2	2	4	2	4	1	1	1	1	1	9*	B
Intermediate-Senior Quarterly		2	2	5	1	1	1	1								1	
A Nation in the Making	13	7*	7*	2	2	1	1	7	2	10		7	1	7	1	2*	A
Westminster Uniform Teacher		7*	7*	3	3	1	1	7	2	10		6	1	6	1	4*	B
Intermediate-Senior Quarterly		5	5*		1			1		1		4		4		1	
TOTAL LESSONS	53	37	20	18	15	7	5	23	6 <sup>c</sup>	22	2	1	11	2	12		A

\*A main feature in one to three lessons.

A This line records lessons in which these things are found.

B This line may include mentions in introduction or close of quarterly.

C Total aims concerning commitment, including one in introduction to a quarterly.

The Material	No. of Topics	Facts Needed for Commitment								Aims of Commitment	Prayers of Commitment	Suggestions and Appeals						
		Sin	Responsibility to God	Salvation thru Christ	The Cross	Atonement	Lordship of Christ	Examples of Commitment	Repent			Accept Saviour	Accept Lord	Profess Faith	Hymns of Commitment	Evangelism		
A. General Plans and Ideas				1														
B. Topics - Total	54	15	7	10	8	2	9	8	1	5	1	1	4	1	24	9		
I. Faith and Life - Total	25	10	6	7	5	2	6	4	1	4	1	1	3	1	15	5		
A. Philosophies of Youth	16	4	2	2	3		2	3	1	4					11*	3		
B. Main St. Bible Characters	5	3*	3	2				1							2	1		
C. If We Were to Explain X'ty	4	3	1	3	2	2	4								2	1		
II. Stewardship	6	1		2	2		1								2	2		
III. Christian Fellowship	7	2	1		1		1								2			
IV. Christian Outreach	16	2		1			1	4*		1					5	2*		
S. Special Day Programs	11	2		3	2		2	2		3					4	2		
D. Recreation																		
TOTAL	65	17	7	14	10	2	12	10	1	8	1	1	9	1	28	11		

\*A main feature in one to four topics or programs.

The Material	Facts Needed for Commitment								Prayers of Commitment	Suggestions and Appeals					
	Sin	Responsibility to God	Salvation thru Christ	The Cross	Atonement	Lordship of Christ	Examples of Commitment	Aims of Commitment		Repent	Accept Saviour	Accept Lord	Profess Faith	Evangelism	
Forward															
The Christian Faith	1		1	1		1								1	
I. God														1	
II. Revelation	1		1												
III. The Eternal Purpose	1	1		1											
IV. The Creation		1													
V. The Sin of Man	1*	1*		1											
VI. The Grace of God	1		1*	1											
VII. Election	1														
VIII. Our Lord Jesus Christ	1		1	1	1*	1*								1	
IX. Faith and Repentance	1	1	1*												
X. The Holy Spirit	1														
XI. The New Birth and the New Life	1		1												
XII. Resurrection and the Life to Come	1	1	1	1											
XIII. The Law of God	1	1	1	1											
XIV. The Church and the Sacraments	1	1	1	1											
XV. The Last Judgment	1	1	1	1	1.										
XVI. Christian Service and Final Triumph	1	1	1	1	1	1								1	
TOTAL	15	8	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	3

1 Appears in this section.  
 1\* A main feature in this article.

The Material	Facts Needed for Commitment							Prayers of Commitment	Appeals				Evangelism
	Sin	Responsibility to God	Salvation thru Christ	The Cross	Atonement	Lordship of Christ	Examples of Commitment		Aims of Commitment	Repent	Accept Saviour	Accept Lord	
I Believe							1						
Five Reasons	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1		
How to Become A Christian	1		1			1			1	1	1	1	
What Christ Means to Me	1		1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	
Why Join the Church			1	1	1	1		1					
My Commitment	1		1			1				1	1		
My Decision			1			1				1	1	1	
I Am Not Good Enough	1												
I Don't Know Enough													
My Certificate of Church Membership	1		1							1	1		
TOTALS.	6	1	7	3	1	7	2	1	1	6	7	4	

The Materials	Number of Units	Facts Needed for Commitment								Prayers of Commitment	Suggestions and Appeals						
		Sin	Responsibility to God	Salvation thru Christ	The Cross	Atonement	Lordship of Christ	Examples of Commitment	Aims of Commitment		Repent	Accept Saviour	Accept Lord	Profess Faith	Evangelism		
Summary with Graded Bible Lessons for These Times																	
Westminster Fellowship Manuals	5	3		5	2									1	2	1	6
Graded Bible Lessons	53	13	5	12	7									1	2	7	11
The Society Kit, Volume III	65	17	7	14	10	2	12	10						1	9	1	11
A Manual of Faith and Life	16	15	8	10	10	2	10	1						1	3		3
Leaflets	10	6	1	7	3	1	7	2						1	6	7	4
<b>TOTALS</b>		54	21	48	32	5	42	31	12	11	4	10	28	8	31	8	51
<b>Summary with Uniform Lessons</b>																	
Westminster Fellowship Manuals	5	3		5	2												
Westminster Uniform Lessons	53	37	20	18	15	7	5	23	6	22	2	1	11	2	12		
The Society Kit, Volume III	65	17	7	14	10	2	12	10	1	8	1	1	9	1	11		
A Manual of Faith and Life	16	15	8	10	10	2	10	1					3		3		
Leaflets	10	6	1	7	3	1	7	2					6	7	4		
<b>TOTALS</b>		78	36	54	40	12	35	35	16	31	5	9	32	8	52		

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The Teaching Evangelist

Study Unit No.

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  - II. What Is Educational Evangelism?
  - III. The Biblical Basis
  - IV. Jesus, the Teaching Evangelist
  - V. Faith as an Educational Objective
  - VI. The Curriculum of Educational Evangelism
  - VII. How Teachers Evangelize
  - VIII. Evangelists Who Teach Children
  - IX. Evangelists Who Teach Youth
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