

A SURVEY OF THE SITUATION AND NEEDS WITH CONSTRUCTIVE
SUGGESTIONS FOR A PROGRAM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR
THE YOUTH OF RURAL MONTANA

by

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Chapter I

Introduction.

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem.

A minister in Montana who is well acquainted with the rural situation, writes

"We have encountered half-grown children who had never heard the Lord's prayer, and High School Young People bewildered by the opportunity to go to Sunday School. These people (of rural Montana), are not ignorant nor barbarous."¹

They simply have had no opportunity for this type of training. The report of this Montana minister reveals in a concrete way just what the religious education problem is in rural Montana. In other words, they need trained Christian Leadership that they may receive proper and adequate religious instruction. But just how the religious needs of the youth of rural Montana, where isolation and poverty predominate, are to be met is a very difficult matter. It is hoped that this study will be a very definite help toward the solution of this problem.

B. Sources.

This study will be based on; first, the conditions in the rural communities themselves, so far as the social, economic, historical, and educational fac-

1. Weage, Avery D.; "Home Mission Work in Montana", in Congregationalist (Home Missionary Number) 1930 (p.341)

tors are concerned; second, the results of a survey made of the religious situation in the Congregational Churches of rural Montana; third, the religious needs of adolescence, based on the writings of recognized authorities in the field of "Psychology of Adolescence"; and fourth, the writer's own experience in religious work in Montana.

C. Method of Procedure.

A general background of the State of Montana is given first, but only from the standpoint of the Church. It must be recognized, however, that social and economic conditions affect the life of the Church. For instance, the Church situation would be altogether different in an urban community than in a rural community. The wealth and school life and density of population, would necessarily determine to a very large degree the type of program and the equipment to be used in the Church of a given community. Because of the importance of the social, economic, historical and educational factors in the life of the Church, one whole chapter of this thesis will be given to the description of these factors.

Of course the major portion of the time and study will be devoted to the study of the Church and the specific religious needs of its youth and then a suitable program for more adequately meeting those needs will be built. This study is limited

to the Congregational Churches of Rural Montana and the results of this thesis should be considered from that point of view.

The term "Larger Parish", as it shall be used here, simply means a group of Churches working together under the leadership of one leader or staff of leaders. The different Churches co-operate in order that together they may be able to carry on a better program for each individual Church than would ever be possible with each Church carrying its own burdens alone. So far as I have been able to find out, "Larger Parishes" are standardized in neither name nor method.

Chapter II

The Range Country.

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The Range Country

A. Introduction.

Montana lies in the midst of the great "Range Country" found in the western portion of the United States. Just what the "Range Country" is, may be seen from the following statement; it is

"A vast expanse of endlessly stretching plains, dun-colored table-lands, mysterious buttes against a far horizon, and always the tremendous, almost incredible distances--this is the typical Range Country."¹

Roughly speaking, the Range area comprises the states between the middle west and far west, and includes a wide variety of landscape. There are all of eight states with parts of others included in this vast and picturesque area. It contains a million square miles over which are spread four million people--about a third less than are crowded into New York City.

Of this Range country of a million square miles, Montana alone has 146,572 square miles. It has more square miles than Ohio, Indiana and Illinois combined. In fact, it is the third largest state in the Union and within its borders could be placed all of New England, and still there would be enough room for New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland. It

1. Belknap, Helen O.; "The Church on the Changing Frontier". (p. 19)

is a mammoth state of 94,078,080 acres. This land falls about equally into three classes: farm lands, grazing lands and mountain lands, each class comprising about thirty million acres. These three classes are not distinctly separated and lands of all three may sometimes lie close together.²

As for location, Montana has been called the keystone state of the Great American Northwest. It lies between the 104th and 116th meridians of longitude and west of Greenwich and between the 45th and 49th parallels of north latitude.³ Montana is bounded on the north by Canada, on the east by North and South Dakota, on the south by Wyoming and Idaho and on the west by Idaho. The Rocky Mountains cross the western part of the state, with the Bitter Root range at the extreme western side, the country east of the Rockies slopes off into vast plains and smaller valleys between smaller hill elevations. The important rivers of the state are the Missouri, the Yellowstone, Madison and Bitter Root.

The population of Montana is 536,332 people, according to the 1930 census report. Since 1920 Montana has had a decrease in population of as many as 12,557 people or 2.3 per cent. It is the only state in the Union to have a decrease. There are only 3.8

2. Cf Montana; Resources and Opportunities, (p.30) 1928

3. Cf Ibid. (p.29).

persons per square mile in Montana as compared to 420.0 in New Jersey or 115.7 in Illinois. In spite of the fact that Montana ranks third in size, it only ranks 39th in population, there being only nine states with a smaller population.

B. A Brief Sketch of History.

Custer's fight is said to have marked the beginning of a new era in Montana. This terrible fight, which took place in the year 1876, in which Custer and his entire command of 264 men were completely exterminated by 5,000 Sioux and Cheyenne Indians, stirred the nation to action and a determination to clear the section once and for all of the hostile Indians, who were preying upon the settlers and menacing survey crews for the Northern Pacific Rail Road Company, which was then pushing its way through South Dakota. Within little more than a year, all the Indians had been driven back to the reservation, and, except for a minor outbreak or two which only involved a few individuals rebelling against the rule of an Indian agent, the "sound of a gun in organized conflict has not since been heard". This marked the emergence of Montana from what we might call an "uncharted wilderness to a modern commonwealth".⁴

In 1863 Montana became organized as a territory and gained statehood in 1889, it being the forty-first to become a state. Although there is still

4. Cf Ibid (pp. 18,19).

much open country in Montana, it can no longer be looked upon as a real "frontier". For instance, within a short distance from where Custer and his command fell, is now located the world's largest wheat farm, and the history of the state in the last fifty years is largely that of the development of its growing industries.⁴

C. Economic Status of Montana.

Economically, Montana is suffering a great deal at the present time. This is at least partially shown by the fact that the population of Montana between 1920 and 1930 has decreased rather than increased. One would think that in such a vast country, thinly populated, there would be a distinct increase. This decrease in population is accounted for by the fact that between the years 1910 and 1918 there was a period of great prosperity, mining was at its height, the farmers were getting large yields in their crops and high prices for their marketed products and as a result during this period money became plentiful and easy to borrow. But from 1918 down to the present date Montana has experienced "Hard Times". Especially has it been very difficult for the Ranchers and Farmers. They have suffered acutely from the sharp and sudden drop in prices of all farm products, and, with the exception of those in the irrigated sections which are comparatively small, they have suffered

greatly from a long and continued drouth. Although the rancher and farmer was quite "well off" a few years ago, he now considers himself fortunate if he is in debt for only a few thousand at the present time. For the most part, the farmer is bitter. He feels that something is wrong with the "system". He can hardly be blamed when crops bring no profit, while taxes seem to be higher than ever. The hard times that prevail at the present time are undoubtedly making the ranchers and farmers do more serious thinking than they have ever done before, especially about taxes, farm conditions, and the marketing of farm products.⁵

E. T. Divine writing on "Montana Farmers", in "The Survey" magazine, gives the farmers' position:

"Montana farmers are much like other American producers, urban and rural, but they are even harder hit than most of their fellow countrymen, except, of course, unemployed town workers. They share in the general calamity of relatively low prices for agricultural products and they have also just passed through several years of unprecedented drouth. Freight rates are high and burdensome, and the things the farmers have to buy are still high in proportion to the prices which they get for their grain and stock. These farmers are therefore in debt, and are borrowing more than they can. They are actually, and not merely in a chronically distorted imagination, having difficulty in paying their interest and taxes; and if their equity is small they are losing it."⁶

The above report was given in December 1921.
My experience in six different communities in Montana

5. Cf Belknap, H. O.; "The Church on the Changing Frontier" (p.48).

6. Divine, E. T.; "Montana Farmers", in The Survey for Dec. 17, 1921 (pp. 426-427).

this past summer (1930) in Golden Valley and Wheatland counties, and from reports from others who have their abode in the state, proved to me that at least in some sections in Montana the hard times have not let up. If anything, the condition is much worse. For instance, often when driving along the main highway, I have counted as many as three and four empty farm homes to one that is occupied. According to the last census report, twenty-two out of the fifty-five counties of the state have a decrease of population. Nine of the counties have had a change in area since 1920 and five new counties have been formed since that time, so it was impossible to tell whether there had been any increase or decrease in these fourteen counties. That leaves nineteen counties with an increase compared to twenty-two counties with a decrease, and the counties with the decrease in population are found scattered quite generally over the entire state. On the other hand, however, prosperity is found quite generally throughout the state in spots. These spots being the irrigated sections, which includes about 2,000,000 of the 94,078,080 acres of the entire state; a little of the dry farming of the western portion of the state; and then of course the rich mines of the state, especially those found in the mountains. Montana is really outstanding in its mineral resources. The 1925 census gave \$79,261,284 as the value of the

coal and metals. The state is second in silver output, seventh in gold and first in semi-precious stones. The Petroleum output in 1926 was 5,048,000 barrels.⁷

Taking the state of Montana as a whole in comparison to other states, we see some very interesting things concerning her wealth as compared to her size and rank in population:⁸

Chart I

A Comparison of the size, population and wealth of Montana with other states.

| <u>STATE</u> | <u>RANK IN SIZE</u> | <u>RANK IN POP- ULATION</u> | <u>WEALTH</u> |
|--------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| New Jersey | 45th | 10th | \$11,794,189,000 |
| Pennsylvania | 32nd | 2nd | 28,833,745,000 |
| Montana | 3rd | 39th | 2,223,189,000 |

But these figures are apt to be very misleading due to the fact that a few individuals may have control of the major portion of the wealth. This can in some measure be accounted for by the fact that \$203,503,250⁹ represents the value of manufactured products of only 565 establishments employing 14,242 employees, as compared to \$149,031,000¹⁰ for all farm products from a total of approximately 49,000¹¹ farms in the state.

7. Cf "The World Atlas", 1930 (p.499).

8. Cf Ibid (pp.499-506).

9. Cf Ibid (p.499).

10. Cf "Montana: Resources and Opportunities", 1928 (p.122).

11. Cf Ibid (p.103).

There is no doubt but that Montana is predominately rural. This is shown somewhat by the fact that there are about three farms to every employee in the manufacturing establishments mentioned above. And yet the total value of farm products is only about two-thirds the total value of manufactured products.

One must also take into consideration the fact that a large number of the so-called farms are large ranches employing many men. For instance, the largest wheat farm in the world is found in Montana and there are many large cattle and sheep ranches.

D. The Educational and Social Status of Montana.

Considering the many handicaps which the state of Montana faces, such as being sparsely settled, having undeveloped roads and the majority of the people being extremely poor, financially, we find here an excellent public school system.

With the exception of extremely sparsely settled sections, there is a school within reasonable distance of every child. The type of schools found in Montana can be seen by the following figures as reported in the last biennial survey. There were 2,359 one-room schools, 152 two-room schools, 152 village schools in third class districts, 156 schools in towns and cities in the first and second class districts, and 191 cities, towns and larger villages are provided

with either district or county high schools.¹²

Montana, of course, has a free public school system, the school revenues being derived from several sources. The income derived from investments of the permanent school fund and from leases of school lands constitutes an annual revenue to school districts of about \$7.70 per census child. There is in each county a levey of six mills per dollar on all taxable property which furnishes a fund distributed to all districts on the census basis. In some counties this amounts to as much as \$40 per census child. And then there is a uniform county levey for high schools distributed to high schools of the county on the basis of attendance and number of teachers employed. But by far the greatest portion of funds necessary to maintain a school is derived from a special levey on the property of the school district.¹³

The majority of schools in Montana have terms nine months in length. No district may have its high school accredited unless its term is at least 170 days of actual teaching. School districts with extremely low taxable valuations because of tax exempt lands, and for that reason having difficulty in raising funds for a nine months term, may secure aid from the common school

12. Cf Biennial Report of Supt. of Public Instruction
of Montana, 1930 (p.32).

13. Cf "Montana: Resources and Opportunities", 1928 (pp.107,108).

equalization fund. This fund is apportioned annually by the State Board of Education, to needy districts that meet certain specified requirements.¹⁴

Montana schools compare favorably with any other state, in equipment and architectural design. The State Board of Health and Superintendent of Public Instruction must grant their approval of building plans before a building may be constructed. Many rural districts have built and equipped cottages for the use of teachers, and some village schools and several county high schools have dormitories where children from a distance are taken care of during the week. Then, practically all high schools have gymnasiums as a provision for physical development.¹⁴

The requirements for public school teachers are also high. No one can secure a certificate to teach in Montana without forty-eight quarter hours, which is equivalent to twelve units, of professional training in addition to a four-year high school course. These requirements, with the passing of examinations, qualify teachers for rural and small village positions. Teachers in larger places are required to be graduates of standard Normal Colleges if they teach in elementary schools or of accredited Universities if in High Schools. The average length of service of Montana's 6,421 teachers is about four years.¹⁴

14. Cf Ibid.

A course of study, published by the Department of Public Instruction, is supplied to every elementary and rural school teacher in the state. This course is very carefully worked out and it is of such excellence that it has been favorably commented upon by leading educators in many other states. All high schools of the state must meet certain standards and many of the larger high schools are members of the Northwest and North Central Accrediting Association.¹⁵

Institutions of higher learning are also of a very high order. The University of Montana at Missoula, which comprises twenty-five teaching and research units with twelve schools and colleges at the University in Missoula, four colleges and three schools at the State College at Bozeman, the State School of Mines and a Bureau of Mines at Butte, and a Normal College with a teachers Service Division directed by the State Normal College at Dillon, and Eastern Montana Normal School at Billings. In addition to these teaching and research units, the State College at Bozeman directs the work of the Agriculture Experiment Station and the Agricultural Extension Division. The various units of the University operating under the control of the State Board of Education own 3,817 acres of land.

15. Cf Ibid (p.108).

These various units also own some one hundred buildings with the total value of land, buildings and equipment amounting to over \$7,000,000.¹⁶

Other institutions of higher learning are the Polytechnique Institute (Congregational) at Billings, the "Presbyterian College of Montana" at Deerlodge, and "Montana Wesleyan University", at Helena.

A special interest has been taken in the Rural School in Montana. At a session of the state legislature (in 1914), a law was passed adding to the State Department of Public Instruction, a special inspector of Rural Schools, whose whole time is given to personal visits to country schools, conferences with patrons and teachers, learning of their local needs and acquainting them with the best things in rural education that are available.¹⁷

The Social life in Montana would compare quite favorably with that of any of the other states so far as the city life is concerned. But in the great open spaces (the Range) and in the villages and rural communities there is very little in the way of organized recreation or social life. It can all be pretty well summed up in the terms "Community picnics" and "Public dances", which may be alright when properly conducted and so far as they go. But it is needless to

16. Cf Ibid (p.106).

17. Cf "The Resources and Opportunities of Montana", 1914 (p.144).

say that they are inadequate.

The State of Montana as a whole, does have a wealth of natural recreational resources in its beautiful parks such as the "Yellowstone National Park", and the "Glacier National Park". Besides about one third of the state is covered with wooded mountains, with beautiful mountain streams flowing through their valleys. In fact, Montana is unsurpassed, scenically.

But still this does not meet the ordinary social and recreational needs of the average rural community in Montana. And this leaves a great opportunity for the Church to come in and organize and maintain clubs of all sorts such as will meet the needs of the individual community. Traveling Libraries and the like might also be added. The special need is to give the Youth of Rural Montana similar opportunities and advantages as are had by the town and city youth. This will be taken up in detail in the last chapter.

E. Summary.

Montana lies in the midst of the Great Range Country of the United States. It is the third largest state in the Union with its area about equally divided in three different classes; farm lands, grazing lands and mountainous lands, with each class comprising about thirty million acres.

The population of Montana is 536,332 people according to the 1930 census report, which is a decrease of 12,557 people since the 1920 census. The state ranks thirty-ninth in population and third in size.

Custer's last fight is said to have marked the emergence of Montana from an uncharted wilderness to a modern commonwealth. It gained statehood in 1889, being the forty-first to become a state.

Economically Montana is suffering a great deal. Especially is this true of the ranchers and farmers. However, there is some prosperity in the few irrigated sections of the state and wherever mining is carried on. Montana is fundamentally rural and it is in the rural sections where the financial suffering is the greatest.

Educationally, Montana ranks very high, especially is this true, when one considers the great handicaps the state is facing. Most of the schools are nine months in length and the teacher requirements are high. The institutions of higher learning are also quite adequate for the needs of the state. Special interest has been taken in the rural school and a special inspector of rural schools has been an office of the State Board of Public Instruction since 1914, to provide for the best that is available in rural education.

The social and recreational life in the villages and rural communities in Montana is very lacking. The natural recreational resources for the people of this state are not surpassed in any state, but there is no trained leadership to guide the youth in taking advantage of what is available for them.

Chapter III

The Religious Education Background
of the State of Montana.

Chapter III

The Religious Education Background of the State of Montana

1. The Survey

A. Introduction.

A questionnaire was sent out to the Congregational Churches in Montana with a request for data on the Religious Education Program of the Rural Church. A copy of the letter and questionnaire are given in the two following pages. In reply many wrote personal letters and sent literature regarding their work besides filling out the questionnaires. Seventy-two per cent of the rural churches responded. However, this figure does not include a number of inactive rural churches which had neither pastor or church clerk. It was impossible to get information from these communities. The names of the churches, their pastors and clerks were secured from the "Congregational Year Book" for 1929. The map on page twenty-five will show that the thirty-six churches from which information was received, are quite well scattered throughout the state, and, therefore are not confined to one section only but of the entire state generally.

235 East 49th Street
New York City, New York.
May 2, 1930.

I am writing you for certain information regarding church work in the Congregational churches in Montana, especially as regards the young people. Having worked among the churches of our denomination in South Dakota, I am looking forward with considerable interest to a continuation of that work in your state this coming summer. My present plan is to work under Mr. Rice, the state superintendent, in Student Summer Service Work.

I am seeking this information in order that I may better understand and plan for the problems that I expect to meet. If you will spare me the time and effort necessary to fill out the enclosed sheet I shall not only appreciate it, but will be better prepared to tackle the religious education problem that faces all those who work with young people in this state. Let me assure you that this information will be regarded as confidential. I am not seeking information on any particular churches but am rather concerned with discovering general facts and on this basis working out a program of religious education that may be of value to others as well as to myself.

I am thanking you in advance for any help that you may give me. A reply at your earliest convenience will be doubly appreciated.

Very sincerely yours,

A STUDY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM
OF THE RURAL CHURCH IN MONTANA

Name of Church _____ Location _____

Pastor _____ Address _____

Church Clerk _____ Address _____

Church budget for last year \$ _____ Approximately how much of this was spent for church school, Christian Endeavor, or other religious education work? \$ _____

Church Membership _____ Approximate S. S. Membership _____

AGE NORM OF CHURCH SCHOOL: (Indicate approximate number of each age group)

Male (1-12 yrs.) _____ (13-25 yrs.) _____ (26-40) _____ (over 40) _____
Female (1-12 yrs.) _____ (13-25 yrs.) _____ (26-40) _____ (over 40) _____

No. of Church school classes _____ No. having separate class room _____

Describe amount and nature of your Church school equipment: (Bibles, song books, blackboards, pictures, maps, etc.) _____

Name of Church school song book _____

Does your Church school use graded lesson materials? (Yes or No) _____ Name of lesson material used _____

Lesson of Church school session _____

Length of class session _____ Number of men teachers _____

Number of women teachers _____ Describe the average educational training of your teachers _____

Describe briefly the usual program of the Church school: (A typical program copied on the back of this sheet would be appreciated.) _____

Does your church school have organized recreation? _____

How often? _____ What is the nature of it? _____

Do you have a C. E. or similar young people's organization? _____

Membership? _____ How are its topics chosen? _____

Describe nature of its weekly program _____

Do you have a D. V. B. S. each year? _____ Membership _____

Length of daily session? _____ No. of weeks conducted? _____

Number of leaders used? _____

What are the chief problems that you face in the work of your Church school? _____

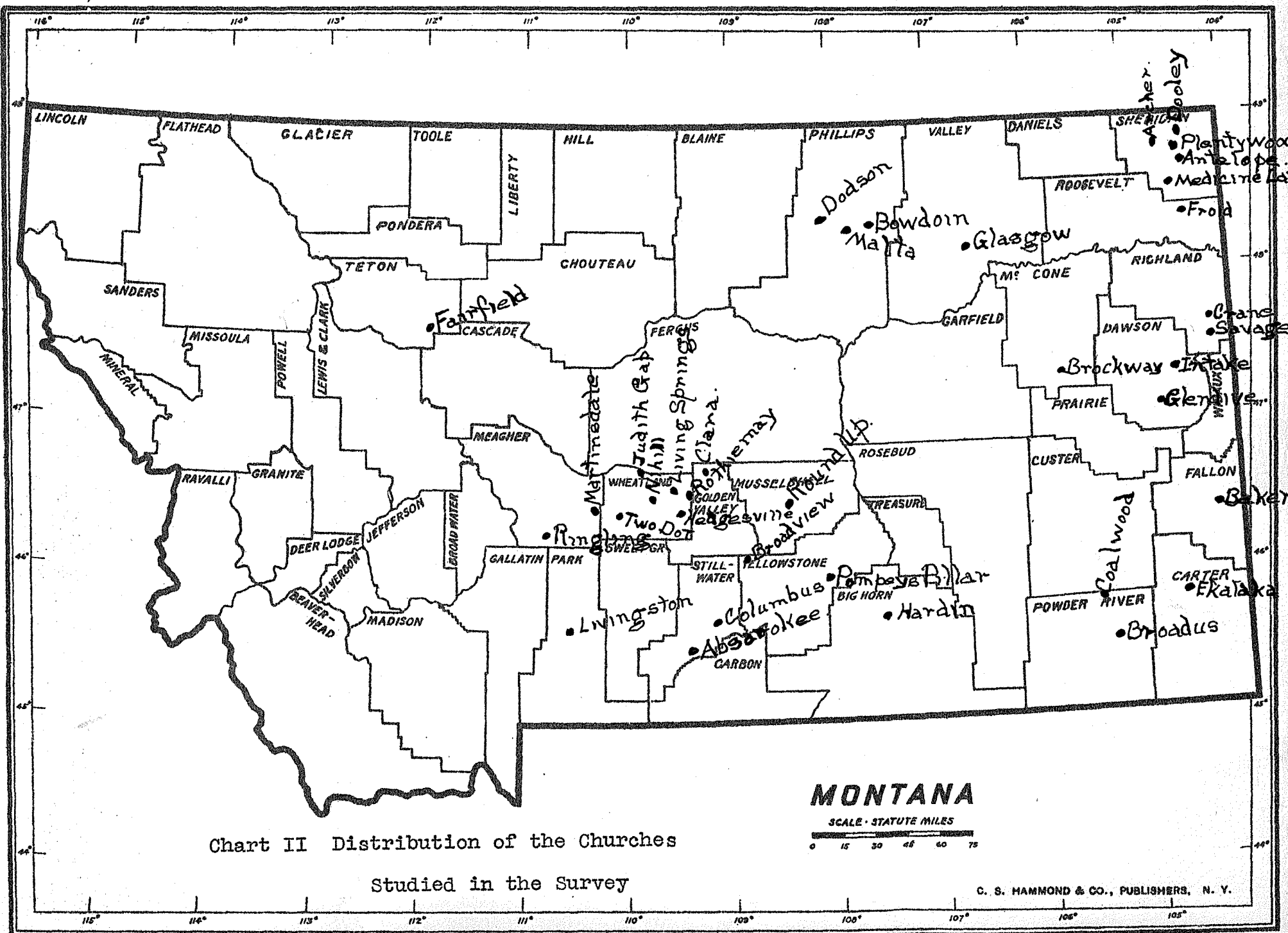


Chart II Distribution of the Churches
Studied in the Survey

MONTANA
SCALE - STATUTE MILES
0 15 30 45 60 75

B. Major Points.

In the analysis of the material, the major points were found to be as follows: (1) Membership; (2) Equipment; (3) Program of the Sunday School; (4) Young People's Work; (5) The Vacation Church School; (6) Educational Training of the Teachers; and (7) Problems of the Church.

C. Membership.

Chart III

Membership

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Total Sunday School Membership:-- | 2,428 |
| 2. Total Church Membership:-- | 1,917 |
| 3. Total V. C. S. Membership:-- | 734 |
| 4. Total Y. P. S. Membership:-- | 423 |

It is interesting to notice that the Sunday School membership, here, is larger than the Church membership. The total enrollment of 734 for the Vacation Church School represents the total for fifteen Schools. The remaining twenty-one communities had no Vacation Church Schools. The total enrollment of 423 for the Young People's Societies also represents the total for fifteen organizations. The other twenty-one communities had no Young People's organizations.

D. Equipment.

In the table below the facts show that the equipment is very inadequate in all but thirteen of the thirty-six Sunday Schools. And only in seven of the total number of Sunday Schools is it good. This leaves twenty-three of them with poor equipment, which number have a total enrollment of 1289 pupils or fifty-three per cent of the total enrollment of all the Sunday Schools. The enrollment of the seven Sunday Schools with good equipment is much larger in proportion to those with poor equipment. This fact indicates that it is only the larger Sunday Schools that have good equipment. However, none of the Sunday Schools could be regarded as having excellent equipment. The Sunday Schools which indicated they had Bibles, charts or pictures, blackboards and tables, besides their regular graded lessons, and good song books for youth, were classed as having good equipment. Those having only song books, Bibles, blackboards and the International Uniform or group graded lessons were put in the fair class. While those having only adult hymn books, a few Bibles and International Uniform lessons or less, were put in the poor class. This is the basis upon which the following classification was made: (see Chart IV on next page.)

Chart IV

Sunday School Equipment

| <u>EQUIPMENT</u> | <u>No. OF S.S.SCHOOLS</u> | <u>TOTAL MEMBERSHIP</u> | <u>PER CENT</u> |
|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Good | 7 | 718 | 31 |
| 2. Fair | 6 | 421 | 17 |
| 3. Poor | 23 | 1289 | 53 |

E. Program of Sunday School.

A summary of the types of Programs, as given below, reveals the fact that only nine of the thirty-six plan their programs carefully and in the remaining twenty-seven Sunday Schools very little or no planning is done. However, there are almost as many children in the nine Sunday Schools as there are in the twenty-seven, again revealing the superior work carried on in the larger Sunday Schools.

In this summary "Grade one" represents the one well planned program, and the gradation is gradually downward from the well planned under "grade one" to the very poorly planned programs under "grade five". Several factors entered into the making of this classification. That is, whether the church and church school had well trained leadership or not, the quality and quantity of their equipment and the type of the sample program sent determined the classification. For example, if the church had no pastor, the church school poorly trained leaders and very inadequate equipment,

and the sample program of the church school consisted of only a couple songs, the Lord's Prayer, class period and dismissal; it is quite evident that little or no planning was done. On the other hand, if the church and church school had good leadership, good equipment, and the sample programs were worked out in detail around a definite theme with major and minor points and mimeographed copies made for each member of the church school, it is quite evident that considerable time, backed up by understanding, had been spent in planning. Each step between these two extremes was judged on this basis.

Chart V

Type of Program

| PROGRAM | NO. OF S.SCHOOLS | TOTAL MEMBERSHIP | PER CENT |
|-------------|------------------|------------------|----------|
| Grade one | 1 | 90 | 4 |
| Grade two | 2 | 327 | 13 |
| Grade three | 6 | 682 | 28 |
| Grade four | 15 | 860 | 35 |
| Grade five | 12 | 469 | 19 |

F. Young People's Christian Endeavor Work.

Of the total of thirty-six churches, only sixteen have Young People's Societies. Thirteen of this number have a discussion period and three have a varied program. As for organized recreation, one church

seemed to put a fair amount of stress on it, while two others emphasized it a little. The other thirteen societies had no organized recreation. It must also be pointed out that in the other twenty churches nothing whatever is done, as far as Young People's work is concerned.

Chart VI

Nature of Young People's Program

| <u>PROGRAM</u> | <u>NO. OF Y.P.SOCIETIES</u> | <u>ENROLLMENT</u> | <u>PER CENT</u> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Discus- sion only | 13 | 332 | 81 |
| 2. Discus- sion and socials | 3 | 91 | 19 |

G. The Vacation Church School.

The questionnaire shows a total enrollment of 734 in the Vacation Church School. This is an exceedingly small enrollment when compared to the total Sunday School enrollment of 2,428, indicating that comparatively little is being done in Vacation Church School work. Only forty-two per cent of the total number of churches have ever had Vacation Church Schools and many of these for only one or two seasons.

H. Training of the Leaders in the Sunday School.

Twenty-three Sunday Schools reported the number of teachers used. Of this number only one indicated that some special training was being given to

the teachers in a special Teachers' Training Class in the Sunday School. This Sunday School used a total of twenty-three teachers. The remaining Sunday Schools have a total number of 149 teachers and thirty-six of this number or twenty-four per cent have Normal School and College degrees and are teaching in the public schools. Eighty-two teachers or fifty-five per cent have had no special training. Thirty-one teachers or twenty-one per cent were unclassified.

Chart VII

The Training of Religious Leaders

| <u>TYPE OF TRAINING</u> | <u>NUMBER OF TEACHERS</u> | <u>PER CENT</u> |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Special training in teaching Religious Education | 23 | Only <u>one</u> Sunday School |
| ----- | | |
| 1. Normal School and College degrees | 36 | 24 |
| 2. No special training | 82 | 55 |
| 3. Unclassified | 31 | 21 |

I. Problem of the Churches.

The questionnaire indicated that the major problems of the various churches surveyed could be summarized according to the table given below. The figures at the right of each problem represent the number of Churches with that particular problem, and also, the

relative percentages are given:

Chart VIII

The Problems of the Churches

| <u>PROBLEMS</u> | <u>NUMBER OF CHURCHES</u> | <u>PER CENT</u> |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Lack of trained leadership | 20 | 56 |
| 2. Lack of equipment | 17 | 47 |
| 3. Lack of Parent Co-operation | 12 | 33 |
| 4. Lack of Pupil Interest | 7 | 19 |
| 5. Refusal of teachers to prepare for work | 6 | 17 |
| 6. Losing older children | 5 | 14 |

2. Conclusions Revealed by Survey

There are certain definite conclusions revealed by this survey which will have a definite bearing on planning a suggested program to meet the religious needs of the youth in these rural and semi-frontier sections. They are briefly listed here, without comment, just as the survey revealed them.

A. The total Sunday School membership is larger than the total Church membership, whereas in the Vacation Church School and the Young People's Societies the membership is very small, showing that very little is being done in Religious Education, outside the Sunday

School, for the children and Young People.

B. Most of the Churches have poor equipment, and many of them have very poor equipment, whereas none can be said to be well equipped.

C. Seventy-four per cent of the church programs are poorly planned, and only three of the Church Schools have well planned programs.

D. Fifty-six per cent of the churches have no Young People's Societies. Of the forty-four per cent that do sponsor Young People's Work, only three of them have anything more than a period of discussion.

E. Fifty-eight per cent of the churches have no Vacation Church Schools and of the forty-two per cent that did sponsor them it was for only a year or two.

F. One church indicated that they had a Teachers' Training Class in their Church School. Of the remaining teachers reported on, twenty-one per cent had Normal School or College training, forty-seven per cent had no special training and eighteen per cent were unclassified.

G. Problems of the Churches:--Fifty-six per cent of the churches indicated that lack of trained leadership was a problem; forty-seven per cent---lack of equipment; thirty-three per cent---lack of parent cooperation; nineteen per cent---lack of pupil interest; seventeen per cent---refusal of teachers to prepare; fourteen per cent---losing older children.

3. Conclusions From Other Sources Than The Survey

Further light may be thrown on the Church and Church School situation in Montana by the following statements gleaned from various sources:

A. That the Rural fields in Montana are not over-churched is shown by the fact that the leading denominations of the state have co-operated in 'allocating' its territory to the "religious care and undisputed responsibility of one or more denominations."¹ In many places the Larger Parish method is being used as a means of caring for churches, thus combining several fields into a circuit with a Parish Council responsible for the work.²

B. The great scarcity of Christian leaders and the type of leaders needed is indicated by the following statement from the State Superintendent of Congregational Churches:

"Our greatest need is for consecrated Christian folk and for genuinely sacrificial leadership on these fields where isolation is marked, poverty is ever present, and where despair rules in dry years instead of hope."³

C. A minister who came to the Montana field a few years ago gives some of his experience in The Con-

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1. Henry, F.E.; "The Western Front", p.741 -- The Congregationalist and Herald of Gospel Liberty, Jn.5,1930
 2. Annual Report of Congregational Church Extension Boards, 1931; p. 26.
 3. Ibid, p. 27.

gregationalist. The following quotation will be interesting as well as helpful in this study:

"We have encountered half-grown children who had never heard the Lord's Prayer; and high school young people bewildered by the opportunity to go to Sunday School. These people are not ignorant, nor barbarous."⁴

They simply have had no opportunity for this type of training. The above statement fits very well with my own experience in one community during the summer months of 1930.

D. A Committee, composed of some of the leaders of the Congregational Church Board, made a survey of the Montana Church situation and the following findings were worked out:

"The need of educating our whole constituency to the economy of adequate equipment for larger parishes. A full community service must be given to gain maximum community support. Community houses and parish buses, in many cases, are essential. Mission Service cars with adequate support for great mileage must be had if the work is to be done. Church centers are small, but total constituencies are on a par with good-sized town churches. Hence the 'Plant' must in large measure be 'Mobile!'"⁵

"The need of unifying and strengthening the parish through 'branch membership', the Every Member Canvass, 'All-parish days' and lay help."⁵

"The need of a larger ministry in Montana's long season of impassable roads through a home department church, furnishing Church Services for adults by mail, as well as Sunday School helps for the children."⁵

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4. Weage, A. D.; "Home Mission Work in Montana", p.341, The Congregationalist and Herald of Gospel Liberty, 1930
5. Avery, O. P.; "Surveying a Remaining Frontier", pp.752-754, The Congregationalist, S. 1927 (Am. Miss. Number)

4. The Need Revealed

The conclusions of the survey and those gleaned from other sources reveal certain definite outstanding needs of the youth of rural Montana. These needs will be met in the suggested program in chapter five. The needs which this study has revealed are as follows:

A. A good deal more needs to be done in the field of the Vacation Church School and the Young People's Society. So far, comparatively little has been done along this line.

B. The equipment of the Church and Church School needs to be given considerable attention and better quality secured.

C. A great deal more work needs to be done in planning the program of the Sunday School and Young People's Societies.

D. Over half of the Churches indicated that lack of trained leadership was one of their greatest problems.

E. The Larger Parish method needs to be used more extensively in the Rural and Open Country districts.

F. The Sunday School is the most important work of the Rural and Open Country Churches and, therefore, needs to be built up in accordance with the best to be found in the material and methods and principles given

us by the leaders in this field.

G. Something needs to be done for the youth in districts which are isolated from all Church and Sunday School affiliations.

Chapter IV

The Religious Needs of Adolescence.

Chapter IV

The Religious Needs of Adolescence

A. Introduction.

Chapter ^{three} revealed the religious situation as it is in Montana. From this study we were able to see, in a general way, the religious needs of the Youth of Rural Montana. It is our purpose in this chapter to show, in more or less detail, the specific religious needs of youth, based on the writings of recognized authorities in the field of "Psychology of Adolescence".

That religion plays a very important part in the life of the adolescent is very well shown by the following quotations:

"Youth has to find some center of personalization, and for this God alone is adequate."¹

"Religion has to do with the profoundest realities that can engage the attention."²

"In the development of adolescent personality---the total potentiality of response an individual possesses for meeting life situations---the religious aspect plays a prominent role."³

"Under favorable conditions, religion occupies a very important place in the life of the maturing boy or girl. It satisfies his groping for a fundamental, synthesized understanding of the whole realm of experience. It gives him a sense of values, a sense of personal relationships and obligations. It facilitates the formation of high ideals of unselfish service. It gives him help in attaining that self-control and self-discipline which characterize strong person-

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1. Moxcey, Mary E.; "The Psy. of Middle Adol." (p.173).
 2. Tracy, Frederick; "The Psy. of Adolescence", (p.191).
 3. Pechstein, L. A. and McGregor, A. Laura; "Psy. of the Junior High School Pupil", (p. 149).

ality. It re-enforces his moral character. It aids him in resolving many conflicts of impulses and desires, and thus assists him in attaining sound mental health. Praise, prayer, and other elements of worship may enrich and deepen his life, and add much to its wholesomeness and happiness. Religion in reality involves personal devotion to a Supreme Being, and can provide a unifying force for all that is highest and best in youth's nature."⁴

It is, therefore, very important in the building of our program that we know the religious characteristics and religious needs of adolescence. The important points are given in this chapter without much elaboration. The needs revealed by this chapter and chapter three, and the general conditions of rural Montana itself, as is shown in chapter two, will be used as the basis for working out a program of Religious Education for the Youth of Rural Montana.

B. The Religious Need and the Physical Life.

Adolescence is the period during which there is marked physical development. During this period youth emerges into manhood and womanhood. We see a rapid development of the large muscles in early and middle adolescence and the development of the muscles of finer function in later adolescence.⁵ Consequently the adolescent likes to show his endurance and skill and power. This characteristic can very well be used in urging youth to develop a fine, strong, well-proportioned physique. In early adolescence the size of

4. Brooks, F. D.; "The Psy. of Adolescence", (pp.341-342).

5. Cf. Tracy, Frederick; "Psy. of Adolescence", (p.30).

the body practically reaches completion and during middle and later adolescence is nature's time for adjusting the mutual relationship between the different parts of the body, thus getting the individual balanced and in smooth running order for adult life.⁶ In other words, this is the time, if ever, and especially in middle adolescence, when all disintegrating tendencies need to be corrected.⁷

Seeing that adolescence develop right attitudes toward their bodies is extremely important, for their physical life.⁸ Tracy has expressed this very well in the following:

"Every shade of feeling and every variety of thought, all manner of moods and fancies, desires and aversions, loves and hates, purposes and ambitions, seek their outlet, and find their realization, through the mechanism of physical expression.....If the body is strong, well nourished by proper food, air and sleep, and well trained and hardened by proper work and exercise, then the mind has unhindered opportunity for its own free expression and full self-realization."⁹

These first two periods of adolescence are also the time when habits are formed the easiest and habit forming always follows the law of exercise.¹⁰ So Christian leadership should see that right habits are formed through proper and intelligent guidance of

6. Cf. Moxcey, Mary E.; "The Psy. of Middle Adol."(p.56)

7. Cf. Ibid, (p.39).

8. Cf. Brooks, F. D.; "The Psy. of Adol." (p.170).

9. Tracy, Frederick; "The Psy. of Adol." (p.24).

10. Cf. Moxcey, Mary E.; "The Psy. of Middle Adol."(p.51)

all physical activities, as well as the mental, social and spiritual activities which will be discussed a little farther on in this chapter.

When we come to the period of later adolescence we find that the individual's bodily development is practically complete, and growth now becomes a process of discovering and making use of the abilities already in the organism. He is coming to a sort of "hardening or fixing process" as the nervous system approaches the "stability of adult life".¹¹ As the later adolescent discovers and develops his abilities, it is natural for him to want to use them not only for his own satisfaction, but because of his altruistic spirit (which will be discussed later on in this chapter), he will want to use them for the good of others. Therefore, the responsibility of the Church in the development of the physical side of the later adolescent might be taken care of by giving him or her responsibility in, for example, taking charge of scout hikes, teaching the younger boys and girls how to swim, and the like. In other words, the later adolescent needs a Church job with responsibility and challenge to it.

Youth has a very definite need of sex instruction and if the Christian leader sees that this is not properly taken care of in the School and Home,

11. Dr. Mudge, E. Leigh; "The Psy. of Later Adol."(p.19)

he must assume responsibility in giving it. But great care should be taken on the part of the leader and he should never attempt to give information until he has studied the subject thoroughly, knows just what information should be given, and how it should be given.¹²

In conclusion it should be said that the Church should take the responsibility of seeing that the young people are given definite instruction in how to live a clean, active, free and natural Christian life.

C. Religious Needs in Educational Lines.

It will be best to consider each of the three periods of adolescence separately here for there are many marked differences in each period.

Early Adolescence: This is when the individual begins to develop a more independent mental outlook and becomes more critical of established customs and practices. Although religious doubts are more characteristic of later periods, we must remember that it begins with the early adolescent. A sudden development of new interests is also apparent in this period, which continues to grow throughout adolescence. Early adolescence is also marked by the tendency, on the part of the boy or girl, to day-dreams and imagination.

12. Cf. Tracy, Frederick; "The Psy. of Adol.", Chap. X, and Df. Stewart, Frederick W.; "A Study of Adol. Development", Chap. V.

They are also highly susceptible to suggestions. Sometimes, however, the suggestion of the parent or teacher is not followed because of a stronger suggestion from some other source.¹³ Therefore, the intellectual religious needs for this age must be based on something positive, active, and practical. Then too, because of their tendency to day-dreams and because of their imaginations, and consequently their intense interest in great heroes, their lessons should be personalized in heroes. The curriculum for this age must be filled with biographies of men who were great in some active field of service; biographies of outstanding missionaries, reformers and patriots.¹⁴

Middle Adolescence: This is a time of great emotional thinking. The Middle Adolescent loves to put his thoughts into writing, in the form of letters, diaries, stories and poems. The brighter boys and girls show a keen interest in literature.¹⁵ If tactfully handled, the middle adolescent responds quite readily to the adult mind, for loyalty is strong here.¹⁶ By the end of this period the person has almost reached maturity and likes to be treated more or less as an adult.

13. Cf. Mudge, E. Leigh; "The Psy. of Early Adol." Chap. V.
14. Cf. Raffety, W. Edward; "Church-School Leadership" (p.189)
15. Cf. Moxcey, Mary E.; "The Psy. of Middle Adol." (pp.85,86)
16. Cf. Ibid, (pp.87-89).

Religious education has the responsibility here of continually making Jesus Christ more real to the hearts and minds of these boys and girls, to give them more responsible tasks, take advantage of their increasing powers, and to help them discover more and more the meaning of truly following Christ. The method of this instruction should be determined largely by the boundless capacity of the individuals of this age for loyalty and activity. If these are to be adequately employed they must be in personal loyalty to Jesus Christ and in service to His cause.¹⁷

Later Adolescence: Here we find relatively little change in the powers of sense perception or imagination or memory. But there is great development in the power of thought, greater interests in business, machinery, visual art, music, love stories of literary form.¹⁸ We also find at this period, a better control of the emotions, a more ready acceptance of authority, and the development of a life philosophy.¹⁹

Thus we see that the religious educational needs of the later adolescent are so numerous and of such wide variety that it will take a very large variety of activities to meet his needs. In fact, it is a serious problem as to just how the Church is to meet

17. Cf. Moxcey, Mary E.; "The Psy. of Middle Adol." (p.91)

18. Cf. Mudge, E. Leigh; "The Psy. of Later Adol." (pp.23-27)

19. Cf. Ibid. (p.14).

such a variety of needs. Their needs may be summarized as follows: A curriculum that is vital in substance, stated in a positive way, and which gives the adolescent a Christ religion and one that is reasonably constructive, functional and virile, rather than a creedal, ritual or book religion. They must receive an intelligent understanding of the Bible, and be led to an intelligent, well-grounded faith in Jesus Christ.²⁰

D. Religious Needs From a Social Point of View.

Early Adolescence. Because of the age and development of the early adolescent child, the play life should be largely physical. All social activities should be worked through the group and be according to the interests of the child.²¹

Early adolescence is the time when a new social spirit is awakening and boys and girls like to do things for the glory of the team, the class or the club. There is great delight in all athletics. They play hard and will tax their strength and endurance to the utmost to show their power and skill.²²

They need very systematic guidance and opportunity for wholesome outlet for their boundless energy. Care should be taken that the right attitudes be developed in their play life. Other social needs

20. Cf. Raffety, W. E.; "Church-School Leadership"(p.189).

21. Cf. Mudge, E. L.; "The Psy. of Early Adol."(pp.80-82).

22. Cf. Ibid. (P.79).

for this age, so far as the Church is concerned, are good associates in work and play, a religious leader or older brother as a chum and friend, a Church fellowship that is aggressive and vital, and an opportunity to give expression to their abundance of energy and altruistic spirit, through directed and challenging social service.

Middle Adolescence. At this period play life is becoming more objective and is perhaps a little more social, but on the whole the same principles and needs as given under the heading Early Adolescence, apply here.²³

Later Adolescence. The play and social life of the adolescent now takes the form of recreation.²⁴ The social side of adolescence is perhaps the most important aspect of their life, and it is in later adolescence that this important aspect reaches its height. The hunger for companionship, at this age, is so great that something very definite should be done by the Church to provide wholesome social life.²⁵ This fellowship should include both that of the same sex and of the opposite sex. There should be large groups in order to give youth an opportunity to choose his or her intimate friends

23. Cf. Raffety, W.E.; "Church-School Leadership" (pp.188-189).

24. Cf. Mudge, E.L.; "The Psy. of Later Adol." (pp.86-89).

25. Cf. Ibid. (pp.72-74, 83).

with some degree of freedom. Also small groups should be provided for them so that they might have a variety of social contacts.²⁶

Because of the strong altruistic spirit and the service motive of the later adolescent, it is very important that he receive definite leadership training in the Church-School so that he may develop in the right way. Then, when he has been trained as a leader, he should be given a responsible position in the Church's varied activities, such as the organization and management of the Church-School, teaching in various departments, directing the music of the Church-School, taking charge of recreational leadership, taking active part in various kinds of missionary and community service activities, taking care of Church property, and doing lay preaching and deputation work.²⁷

This is also the time when youth needs guidance in the choosing and development of their hobbies. Certainly no better field is to be found anywhere than the Church, for opportunities of connecting the service motive with their hobbies.²⁸

E. Religious Needs and Spiritual Development.

The spiritual needs of the adolescent are practically the same for the three different periods,

26. Cf. Ibid. (pp.74-76).

27. Cf. Ibid. (pp.78-83).

28. Cf. Ibid. (pp.93,94).

the difference lying in the degree of development in the individual at each period. In other words, the adolescent must be given opportunity to grow spiritually, his training must lead him to a growing appreciation of, and experience in, true fellowship and communion with God through Christ. He needs to be led into the development of a prayer life that will be real and natural, through the sense of the need of prayer and worship in his everyday life. Sunday worship with its prayers, scripture, and hymns must be well planned and made inspiring.²⁹

Youth should ultimately come to an intelligent and well grounded faith in Christ as the Son of God and in the Bible as a means of knowing God and coming to the true knowledge of Christ. Yet it must be understood that this faith is not to be given to the adolescent directly from some older person.³⁰ Youth needs to be given the opportunity to arrive at his own conclusions through his own study and experience. In other words, to put it in figurative language, youth does not need anchorage nearly so much as it needs the open sea and the opportunity to sail on this sea on his own initiative.³¹ Of course,

29. Cf. Stewart, Frederick W.; "A Study of Adol. Development", (pp.180-187).

30. Cf. Brooks, F.D.; "The Psy. of Adol.", (pp.338-341).

31. Cf. Pechstein, L.A. and McGregor, A. Laura; "Psy. of the Junior High School Pupil", (p.154).

he will need advice from the experienced, and if the proper relation exists between Youth and Adults, this advice will be sought and given.

If the child has had anywhere near the proper spiritual training, by the time he is in the later adolescent period, his religious experience will have an inner warmth and intimacy and God will be very real to him. This spiritual fellowship was impossible for him in childhood. This experience will be marked by vital personal attitudes toward God who is a Spirit and still a Heavenly Father and whose presence is a deeply intimate factor in the lives of His children.³²

There is one very important religious need of adolescence which has not yet been mentioned. It is the need of a good religious guide and instructor. This applies to each of the three periods of adolescence. This religious leader needs to be one of a very high order. One that is intelligent, patient, sympathetic, positive but not dogmatic, tactful in dealing with Youth's problems, a genuine Christian, and if this leader be a business or professional man or woman he or she must be a successful one.

A very good summary of all these points has been given by Raffety in his book, "Church*School

32. Cf. Mudge, E. L.; "The Psy. of Later Adol."(p.132).

Leadership,"³³ which will, besides giving a good summary to this chapter, throw a little new light on the subject at hand. For early and middle adolescence it is as follows:

- (1) "Christ as a personal Friend whom they can know, trust, love and introduce."
- (2) "An older brother or sister or teacher as a chum."
- (3) "Bible truth made attractive and vital."
- (4) "Prayer life that is real, natural."
- (5) "Church fellowship that is genuine, aggressive."
- (6) "Sunday worship with scripture that is instructive, sermon that is interesting and songs that are inspiring."
- (7) "Religious instruction, graded to their needs, rich in best biographies; i.e., great doers, missionaries, reformers, patriots."
- (8) "Expression through directed and challenging social service; for they need to think, feel, will and do for others."
- (9) "Wholesome environment at home, at school, on the street and in the community, in which to grow a normal life."
- (10) "Good associates in work or play."
- (11) "The opportunity to live a free, natural Christian life as boys and girls."

The following is a list of the spiritual needs of Later Adolescence:

- (1) "Intelligent, well-grounded faith in the Bible as the word of God."
- (2) "Intelligent, well-grounded faith in Christ as the Son of God."
- (3) "Experimental knowledge of Christ as a personal Saviour and Friend."
- (4) "A real sense of the need of prayer and worship in one's everyday life."
- (5) "A Church which does business for the King."
- (6) "Religious instruction that is reasonable, virile, functional and constructive."
- (7) "A teacher who is intelligent, patient, sympathetic, tactful in dealing with young people's doubts."
- (8) "A religious guide who is positive but not dogmatic."

(9) "For a Church-School teacher, a successful business or professional man or woman whose life is above reproach."

(10) "Fellowship of genuine Christian comrades."

(11) "A Church job which has a challenge to it."

(12) "To realize that physical prowess, business success, cultured personalities should be consecrated to Christ and His service."

(13) "A Kingdom program which acknowledges Christ as the world-conqueror."

(14) "A daily demonstration on the part of their elders and superiors of the practicality of the Christian religion."

(15) "Training for educational, social, and spiritual leadership of boys and girls."

(16) "A vocation chosen which will honor Christ and in which there is possibility of constant growth and ever-widening influence and usefulness."

(17) "A conception of Christ as one who can use the best abilities of the ablest men and women and who can satisfy the highest and holiest of human ambitions."

Chapter V

A. Suggested Program of Religious Education

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A Suggested Program of Religious Education

Our study in Chapter two brought out the fact that Montana has a very good public school system. Those in charge of the public school work have overcome great difficulties and have developed a system of which they can be proud. But now what of the Church? Can the people of Montana look upon what the Church is doing for their youth with as much pride as they can when they consider the accomplishments of the public school system? Admitting that the Church faces much greater difficulties and that it does not have anything like the financial backing the public schools have, we must still admit that the Church has fallen far below par. It makes one's heart ache when one goes out into the rural fields and finds youth actually hungry for the Gospel of Christ, and idle hands needing guidance in the meaning and opportunities of Christian service, and yet no one to lead them.

A. What are the Needs of Youth as Revealed by Our Previous Study?

A brief summary of the needs of youth, as our previous study revealed them, will be given here

that we may have them clearly in mind as we suggest a program to meet their needs. They need to know Christ as a personal Friend and Saviour; Bible truth made attractive and vital to them; to be led to a prayer life that is real and natural; wholesome Church fellowship; opportunities for Sunday worship; opportunities for challenging and directed Christian service; a religious leader who is intelligent, patient, sympathetic and tactful; Vocational and Avocational training; general religious instruction that is reasonable, virile, usable and constructive; and opportunities for filling up their leisure time with wholesome and varied recreation. In other words, they need the best that can be given them for the fullest development of their religious life as was pointed out in chapter four.

B. What Is the Situation As It Now Exists In Montana?

We shall now briefly summarize the situation in which we must work, as was shown in detail in chapters two and three, so as to have before us the difficulties we must face in building up a suggested program and the ways of using it in the community.

First, we must recognize that rural Montana, for the most part, is, so far as finance is concerned, in a very discouraging condition at the present time.

Then, as has been previously pointed out, Montana is predominately rural and parts of it even in a "semi-frontier" condition.

Secondly, as for the social life in rural Montana, practically nothing is done by the Church in organized recreation. For the most part, youth are left to drift into their own forms of recreation. Without guidance, it is quite likely that they drift into the wrong forms of social and recreational life, more often than into the better type of social life. Yet Montana is unsurpassed so far as natural recreational resources are concerned.

Thirdly, it has been revealed that, on the whole, the youth in the rural fields are receiving comparatively little religious and spiritual training. What little they are receiving shows lack of planning, lack of equipment and lack of trained leadership back of it. It has also been pointed out that a great deal needs to be done in the way of meeting the needs of youth in isolated districts where there is no opportunity for the youth to come to the Church.

In the fourth place, if there is any one thing this whole study has revealed as being the greatest need in the churches of Rural Montana, it is consecrated and well trained leadership.

C. A Suggested Program for Meeting the Needs.

It is possible for the Church to meet the needs of the Youth of rural Montana. To be sure, it is difficult, but it can be done. In suggesting a program, it will be best to have a specific situation in mind. Therefore, we shall take the communities in which the writer worked during the spring and summer months of the year 1930, as an example. For convenience we shall call this field the Judith Gap Parish. It is found in the Wheatland and Golden Valley counties in the central part of Montana. The Judith Gap Parish is quite typical of the rural fields of Montana in that the people are suffering a great deal, financially, because of poor crops and the low prices of farm products. The people are living apart with poor roads between them. Some are even in isolated sections, and during the summer of 1930, a group of children was found, going to school during the summer months because the mountain roads are impassable in the winter time, who had never had any connection with any Church or Sunday School, and seemed perfectly amazed to have the opportunity to learn about Christ and a chance to read the Bible. In fact, all of the needs, as pointed out under sections A and B of this chapter, are the needs of this Parish.

The Judith Gap Parish has six different preaching points which are the only Protestant Churches in the entire area of about six hundred square miles with a population of approximately 1,500 people. (See Chart IX, page 59.) However, there are two small Catholic Churches in the territory. All of the Church centers, including the Catholic, are inactive, except two of these of the Protestant denomination. But these two have only a preaching service and a Sunday School session.

In planning constructive suggestions for a program for this territory, we shall first briefly give the contents of the program and then suggest how it may be applied to the Judith Gap Parish. The suggested contents of the program are as follows:

RELIGIOUS:

1. Sunday worship services at all points every week.
2. Church-School with Home Department.
3. Vacation Church School for two weeks in each of the six communities each summer.
4. Week-Day Church-School.
5. Young People's Societies, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.
6. Leadership training courses.

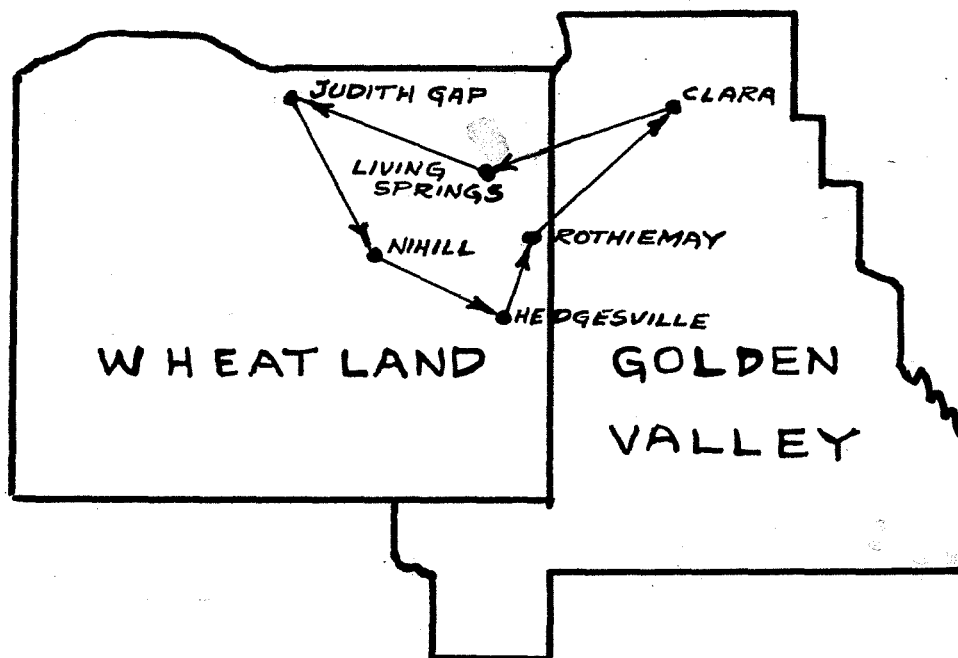


CHART #9

THE JUDITH GAP PARISH

7. Young People's Conferences in the mountains each summer.
8. Open-air and special-feature services.
9. Opportunities for Youth to take part in the financial support of missions.
10. Definite guidance of youth in a variety of service activities in and around their own community.

EDUCATIONAL:

1. Occasional vocational guidance addresses and some definite training in vocational guidance in Sunday School and Young People's Societies.
2. A Traveling Library and Home Reading Courses of religious books.
3. Sex instruction.
4. Agricultural Clubs.
5. Educational films.

RECREATIONAL:

1. Hikes.
2. Socials.
3. All-parish picnics.
4. Religious dramatics.
5. Winter carnivals.
6. Mid-summer meets---Field day.

We shall now consider the application of the program to the Judith Gap Parish. We shall as-

sume that it is financially possible to have two Christian leaders, one a Pastor and the other a Social Worker with a distinctly Christian motive, in charge of the work. One half of the finance is to come from the local field and the other half from the Home Mission Board. However, the aim will always be to make the field as nearly self-supporting as possible.

The two leaders, suggested above, are to work together, but one of them is to be primarily responsible for the spiritual development of youth and the other leader primarily responsible for the educational and recreational work. However, there will be a sharing of the work connected with Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Summer Conferences, Young People's Societies, Leadership Training courses, Week-day Religious Education, Vacation Church Schools, and Pastoral visitation.

The first thing necessary, in going into this field, is to canvass the whole area for which this parish is responsible, and locate every family and individual for which the minister and his Church should be responsible. Learn the most important facts about each family, such as, number of children, their ages and names, whether a church member or not, and the like. A regular card should be secured or

printed giving space for all these points. This will save a great deal of time and trouble. This survey should be made about once a year in connection with pastoral calling.

After the first survey is finished, a detailed map should be made of the entire Parish, with the location of every road, river, home and church on it. It should then be placed in a convenient place so as to be easily accessible. From this study, each leader should map out his or her work in detail. The home and headquarters of both leaders could be at Judith Gap, since this is the largest place and because the greater part of the work will be here.

We shall consider the work of the Pastor first. There are six preaching points, and each one should have a service at least every other week. That means the Pastor must preach three times a Sunday; morning, afternoon and evening. He could take Judith Gap, Nihill, and Hedgesville the first Sunday, and Rothiemay, Clara, and Living Springs the next Sunday, and so on. The order should be changed from time to time, so that the Pastor can visit each Church School at least once a month, and see that the work is carried on as it should be. This will also give him the opportunity to conduct the leadership training course at each Church School.

The Social Worker should be responsible for all the activities listed under "Educational" and "Recreational", and to see that Youth are given something definite and regular in these activities. A varied and well-planned program will also be essential here.

The two men are to share in the work of the Young People's Societies, Club work, Week-day Church Schools, Leadership Training courses, and Vacation Church school.

The study of the Montana situation revealed the fact that nothing was being done in the way of Young People's Societies in the Judith Gap Parish. It will be necessary for the two leaders to have the Young People's Societies meet on week nights. Each leader should be responsible for three of the Churches. Since the Youth of rural Montana are not receiving adequate opportunity for the development of their recreational and social life, the purpose of these meetings should be threefold: recreational, social, and discussion.

The religious leaders should be responsible for seeing that the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are supplied with trained leadership.

Week-day Church school should be conducted in the Judith Gap Parish as it would be conducted in

any other community. But in the ultra-rural communities where the children do not have opportunities of the Church school, the Week-day Church school can play a very important part in their religious life. The survey suggested on page sixty-one will reveal the fact that there are some children in this Parish who are not receiving religious instruction. But this need not be so, for every child that attends the public school can receive religious instruction. The thing necessary is to have the children remain an extra hour at the school some day during the week, during which an hour of religious training can be given. This can also be used as a solution to the problem some communities face in holding Sunday School during the long, cold winter months when roads are impassable most of the time. The children must attend school, and most of them would not mind staying an extra hour.

The Vacation Church School again has a very important role in the ultra-rural communities. As one who worked in this field for a number of years has said,

"When many of the children have never seen a Sunday School and some of them have never associated the divine names with anything but coarse language, a Vacation Church School is needed with serious objectives in religion."¹

The people in these isolated sections are so poor and

¹L. Johnson, Elmer H.; "The Vacation Church School", (p.1).

so scattered that it is impossible to organize a well-planned religious educational system with full time workers in each community. So the best that can be done is to have a religious worker come into these sections for specific religious instruction only. One of the best opportunities for doing this is to have the Young People meet with the children for a couple of weeks during the summer months in the Vacation Church School. This not only gives opportunity for definite religious instruction and spiritual development, but also gives an opportunity for leadership training for the adolescent, in letting them take charge of some of the work of the younger classes. For instance, letting the adolescent girl and boy take charge of the hand work and other minor activities for the younger children. My experience in six different communities last summer proved to me that this system for the Vacation Church School worked very well. The courses to be used in the Vacation Church School in these sections should be the best of the regular lessons ordinarily used in the Sunday School, or at least a course of lessons definitely based on the Bible.

Since good, trained, Christian leadership is one of the greatest needs of the rural communities, a special stress should be put on this work. Every

available opportunity to give youth responsibility in different tasks connected with the Church work, such as leading Scout troupes, teaching Sunday School classes, being responsible for various activities in the Young People's Society; taking active part in all service activities, Foreign and Home Mission work as well as definite service activities in the local communities; and the like. These can be planned in connection with various organizations of the Church and Church-School.

D. Suggested Equipment.

Because of the financial situation of the Judith Gap Parish, it will be necessary for the directors of the work to have only one set of equipment, for the most part, to be used at each community. Therefore, this equipment must be so arranged and of such nature that it can easily be picked up and taken from one place to another. The following is a suggestion:

1. A Parish Service car and truck.
2. A motion picture machine and a generator.
3. A mimeograph machine.
4. A set of good hymn books for children and youth.
5. A set of Bibles.
6. A set of tools for the social and recreational director.

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