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The Waverly Schedule of Worship

A. O. CALDWELL*

At the Easter Communion last year eighteen unusually fine young people were received into full membership in the Presbyterian Church of Waverly, N. Y. They had come up through the various classes of a closely graded Sunday school. They had been taught by an able devoted corps of teachers. With one or two exceptions they belonged to church families and their home influences were of the best sort. They had been carefully prepared for church membership by a Pastor's Instruction Class that had lasted twelve weeks. Emphasis was laid in this class on the fact that in joining the church we expected them to be present at its regular services. The morning service, they were told, was not intended for older people only but for all our members. When they were examined by the session, according to our system, each one was individually interviewed. The Elders, acting by agreement, in their questions inquired specifically concerning this point of attendance at the regular morning service of the church. In each case one of the older men gave his testimony concerning the value of the church services and urged fidelity to them.

The first Sunday after Easter all these new members were present. The next Sunday half of them were present. Within a month after their reception into membership not one was present at the church service. Their attendance continued, despite personal appeals, to be very irregular. They were in Sunday school which follows church but did not come until that hour. They were back into what had been their custom since infancy to come to Sunday school at noon. The bell at ten thirty summoned the gray heads, but not them.

This not unusual experience is responsible for the initiation of our new schedule. It made pastor and session face the problem. It made us see the inevitable result. Within a very few years the Sunday-school classes to which these children belonged would begin to break up. Some would go away to school. Others would take up work in larger places. The remnant would become discouraged. Their loyalty had been not to an institution or to an ideal but to a group and the group would break up. How could we expect these children whom we had almost taught to believe that they were not expected to go to church, suddenly at the critical time to get the habit of church attendance. We had received eighteen members into the church. Their names would be carried on the books, but how many would be loyal, energetic church members all their lives? This first communion should be the beginning of a new loyalty and devotion. For many it would prove the climax instead of a beginning. It would be the climax of an old childish loyalty that already they were almost ready to leave behind them.

For this state of affairs there may be and probably are many causes. The roots of this problem of the loss by the church of the youth it has nurtured, lie deep in the conditions of our modern life. But the church is in part at least directly responsible. By its bad program it has made a

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problem that might have arisen almost inevitable and harder to solve. It has made a clearly marked division in its church life between its adults and its children and has provided no adequate methods by which the children who have from infancy shared in its Sunday-school program may pass over into the larger loyalty. The bridge that the revival methods offered is discredited and largely abandoned. The church will lose its youth as long as it continues to train them in a bad practice. The time has come to train them from the first in the habit we expect them to continue in to the end.

Considerations such as these led to the adoption after some hesitation of a simple change of schedule that had long been advocated by two or three. We had morning Worship from ten thirty to eleven forty-five and Sunday school from twelve to one. Now we have one united service, "Morning Worship and Bible Study" from ten thirty to twelve forty. All are expected to be present at the opening of the church service. Parents are urged to bring the whole family with them and sit in the family pew. One teacher has a pew where the ushers may seat children coming without their parents. Several children whose parents do not attend church have been adopted for the church service by other adults, and made to feel at home in their pews. The regular church service with a Responsive Reading, a Scripture Passage, Hymns and offertory and the pastoral prayer (somewhat shortened and made a vivid and concrete prayer rather than a theological soliloquy), makes a worship period which closes at eleven five. During the singing of a hymn specially chosen as a good marching piece, the children of the Beginner's, Primary and Junior Departments leave the auditorium to take up their program. The young people remain with the adults during the sermon period.

The schedule of services is as follows:

MORNING WORSHIP AND BIBLE STUDY

Presbyterian Church, Waverly, N. Y.

10:30. All ages, adults, young people and children assemble for Morning Worship.

10:30-11:05. Church Worship Period.

11:05. Children in the Beginners, Primary and Junior Departments leave auditorium to take up Sunday School work.

11:05-11:35. Sermon period for Adults and Young People.

11:35-11:40. Close of Church Period.

Hymn, Prayer, Silent Prayer.

11:40-11:45. Period for greeting strangers and visitors and to find places for class period.

We urge everyone to remain for the Bible Study period which follows.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT

(Prayer Meeting Room)

11:45-12:00. Departmental Opening.

12:00-12:25. Class Period.

ADULT DEPARTMENT

(Auditorium)

11:45-12:25. Class Period.

PRIMARY AND JUNIOR DEPARTMENTS
(Upstairs)

- 11:05-11:40. Departmental Work. Exercises. Story Hour. Memorizing Bible texts and hymns.
 11:40-11:50. Children's Worship.
 11:50-12:25. Class Period.

BEGINNERS' DEPARTMENT
(Ladies' Parlor)

- 11:05-12:25. Motion Songs. Stories. Pictures. Drills.
 12:30. All departments reassemble in the auditorium for the closing exercises.
 12:30-12:40. Closing Exercises.
 Report of Secretary. Announcements by Superintendent, Closing Prayer and Hymn.
 12:40. Don't leave the church without a friendly word to visitors and strangers. The church is a fellowship.

Relations of Sunday School and Week-day Work

Where a well-organized week-day school of religion exists what remains for the school meeting on Sunday? If it is granted that it is desirable to have some kind of a program on that day what should it be? Here is the answer as it is being worked out in the Congregational Church of Gary, Indiana, under the direction of Miss Marie Leberman, one of the regular teachers in the week-day Church schools.

I. PROGRAM OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

1. Worship.
 - (a) Based on the hymns, prayers, and scripture passages learned in the day school.
 - (b) The worship program should be carefully planned, much emphasis placed on it and plenty of time devoted to it.
2. Instruction.
 - (a) The curriculum should include those subjects not included in the curriculum of the day school.
 - (b) Suggested subjects:
 1. Thorough study of Biblical pictures.
 2. Hymnology.
 3. Missions (not given in day school).
 4. Biblical plays.
 5. Pageants, cantatas, special-day programs.
 6. Instruction through the moving picture.
 7. Church history.
 8. Church membership.
 9. Christian citizenship (based on principles of Christian conduct taught in day school).
3. Expression.
 - (a) Telling of stories learned in day school.