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COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

WALTER S. ATHEARN, M. A.*

I. GENERAL OUTLINE. The Malden School of Religious Education has developed from a conviction on the part of many of the active church leaders of Malden that an adequate program of religious education for the children of a community involves many problems which can only be solved by community co-operation. Chief among these problems is the training of religious teachers and leaders for the Sunday schools, week-day religious schools, mid-week recreational activities, and other religious agencies of the community. The establishing of the Malden School of Religious Education is the initial step in a program which is gradually developing into a thoroughly co-ordinated system of religious education for the city of Malden.

The Malden Plan includes the following elements:

I. *The Malden Council of Religious Education.* This council consists of those citizens of Malden who are actively interested in the development of an efficient system of moral and religious education for the whole city. The council is incorporated under the laws of the State of Massachusetts as an educational agency. It is a permanent, non-denominational organization devoted to the moral and religious welfare of the entire city, regardless of denominational, racial or social differences.

The following program, adopted by the unanimous vote of the Council, will indicate the scope of its work for the city:

- (a) The development of a city system of religious education.
- (b) The unification of all child welfare agencies of the city in the interest of the greatest efficiency.
- (c) The supervision of a complete religious census of the city with special reference to the religious needs of children and young people.
- (d) The direction of educational, industrial and social surveys for the purpose of securing the facts upon which a constructive community program can be based.
- (e) The creation of a community consciousness on matters of moral and religious education.

For the development of the above program the Council holds regular meetings for free and frank, open-forum discussion of definitely assigned topics which have been carefully studied by mem-

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bers of the Council. The literature of the subject under investigation is made available to the members through the co-operation of the Malden City Library and a special reading course under the name of *The Malden Leaflets* is issued on problems of vital and immediate interest to the city of Malden. The following "Malden Leaflets" have been issued: "Religious Education and American Democracy," "The Correlation of Public Schools and Church Schools." "A Community System of Religious Education"—This leaflet gives a detailed description of the Malden System of Religious Education as projected by the Council.*

The work of the Council is supported by voluntary contributions of citizens who wish to have a part in perpetuating the moral and religious life of the city. Just as citizens endow public libraries, hospitals and other philanthropic institutions, the citizens of Malden wish to give of their property to perpetuate the moral and spiritual life of the city.

2. *The City Board of Religious Education.* This Board consists of nine members, elected by the Malden Council of Religious Education, Inc. It has general charge of all the schools conducted by the Council. It sustains substantially the same relation to the School of Religious Education as a Board of Education holds to the administration of a system of public schools. This Board will elect a director of the school, approve the faculty and curriculum recommended by the director, formulate rules and regulations for the school, and have general supervision of its work. The Board will make an annual report to the Council in harmony with the provision of the By-Laws.

3. *A City Superintendent of Religious Education.* This officer has general supervision of the city system of religious education. He will furnish expert educational advice to the Council and the Board of Education, direct the schools established by the Board, stimulate professional growth in the teaching body of the churches of the city, and have general oversight of all non-denominational community movements in religious education.

4. *A System of Sunday Church Schools.* Every church has a peculiar responsibility to the children of its own members. There are special denominational interests which must be cared for by each local church. The community organization claims no authority within the local churches. It does for the churches certain community services which can best be done by co-operative effort. It is, however, the purpose of the community supervisors to assist each school in a local church to the highest degree of efficiency. No com-

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munity system of religious education can be successful which neglects the Sunday schools in the local churches.

5. *A System of Week-day Church Schools.* An adequate program of religious education for the American people demands more time than can be secured on Sunday. A system of week-day church schools must be established in every community. The problems involved in operating such schools are discussed at length in "Malden Leaflet, No. II."

6. *A City Training School for Teachers and Leaders in Religious Education.* This school should do a high grade of university extension work. It should be, in fact, a night college of religious education, doing for religious education in the city the same character of work that city normal colleges do for public education.

The Malden School of Religious Education has been successfully launched. During the school year 1916-17, it enrolled 601 different students, representing eleven religious bodies, forty-one different church schools and nineteen different towns and cities. The most representative citizens of the community were enrolled in the school, and a very high grade of work was done in all departments.

The foregoing system of religious education will develop as rapidly as leadership and public sentiment will permit. The plan must grow out of the community's needs; it must be in every sense non-denominational, and each forward step must come as the normal development of a carefully planned and thoroughly representative community program.

II. FUNCTION OF THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL. The democratic state has established the machinery for the administration of justice and equal rights, and for the transmission of intellectual and vocational values to posterity. Local governments are kept close to the people and voluntary associations are active agents in preventing mal-administration and initiating new and better methods for promoting the well being of society. *The voluntary association is an assential part of the organization of a democracy.*

The machinery with which a democracy sets each new generation on the shoulders of the race, and thus perpetuates the intellectual, vocational and social achievements of the race is the public school system. Compulsory attendance laws and an enlightened public sentiment bring the children and the schools together and a continuity of racial achievement is secured. *The democratic state has the machinery to guarantee to the future an intelligent and industrially efficient citizenship.*

But the democratic state has not yet established the machinery which will conserve and perpetuate the moral and spiritual achieve-

ments of the race and guarantee that the citizenship of the future will be dominated with the highest moral and spiritual ideals. Democracy must learn how to make intelligence and righteousness co-extensive. A new piece of machinery must be created and made a vital, integral part of the life of every community. This new piece of machinery must spiritualize our citizenship just as the public school makes it wise and efficient. A skilled hand and an informed mind must be united with a good heart to produce a citizen safe for the democracy of the future.

The community that can build this new piece of machinery will write a new page in the history of democratic government.

The Malden Council of Religious Education is a voluntary association organized for the specific purpose of building the machinery which will conserve and perpetuate moral and spiritual values, just as other agencies perpetuate intellectual and vocational values.

PROGRAM FOR 1917-1918.

I. *Popular Lecture Course on Religious Education.*

The Council offers the citizens of Malden the following lectures. Each lecture is given by an acknowledged specialist. There is no admission fee. A silver offering will be received to apply on the budget of the Council:

1. Nov. 13. Building Character Through Children's Choirs. An illustrated lecture. Prof. H. Augustine Smith, Boston University.
2. Dec. 6. The Bible and Community Life. Bishop Edwin H. Hughes.
3. Jan. 16. Miss Margaret Slattery.
4. Feb 14. Architecture and Religion (Illustrated). Mr. W. L. Mowll, formerly lecturer on Architecture in Harvard University.
5. Feb. 28. Architecture and Religion (Illustrated). Mr. W. L. Mowll.

II. *Public Programs of Malden Festival Chorus.*

The Malden Festival Chorus meets weekly for rehearsals at the Parish House of the First Baptist Church, at the following hours: Grammar Grade Girls, 4:00-5:00 o'clock, and Grammar Grade Boys, 5:00-6:00 o'clock, Tuesday. Sunday: High School Girls, and mixed Adult Chorus, 3:30-4:30 o'clock. Two public programs will be given in Boston during the year, and two in Malden.

III. *Meetings of Council for Study of Specific Problems.*

The Council meets four or five times each year for open forum discussion and for definite study of special topics which are of im-

mediate interest. Four special commissions have been appointed for the study of important community problems, as follows:

1. Commission on Community Music, Festivals and Pageants.
2. Commission on Week Day Religious Schools.
3. Commission on the Co-ordination of Malden's Community Welfare Agencies.
4. Commission on Relationship of Public, Church, Parochial and Synagogue Schools.

The following meetings will be held during the year: (1) *November 15*. Subject: Function of the Council and Program for 1917-1918. (2) *January 10*. Subject: Community Music, Festivals, and Pageants. The program will be in charge of the Commission on Community Music. (3) *February 21*. Subject: Week Day Religious Schools—Local Problems. The program will be in charge of the Commission on Week Day Religious Schools. (4) *March 21*. Subject: The Co-ordination of Malden's Community Welfare Agencies. Program furnished by the Commission on Co-ordination of Community Welfare Agencies. (5) *May 9*. Second Annual Meeting of the Council. Program furnished by the Board of Directors of the Council. Submission of Annual Report of the City Board of Religious Education. Election of officers. Special speakers will be present.

IV. *Conference Meetings of Special Groups.*

From time to time, during the year, the Council will call together special groups of teachers and other leaders of moral and religious agencies to discuss the professional and technical problems involved in a community program of religious education.

V. *The Malden School of Religious Education.*

This school meets every Tuesday night. (For complete program see Second Annual Announcement of the Malden School of Religious Education).

ANNUAL MEETING

MARCH 5, 6, 1918

Hotel McAlpine, New York City