This article was downloaded by: [University of Otago]

On: 05 October 2014, At: 13:05

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954

Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK

Religious Education: The official journal of the Religious Education Association

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/urea20>

Policies for College Instruction In Religious Education

George A. Coe.

Published online: 30 Jul 2010.

To cite this article: George A. Coe. (1920) Policies for College Instruction In Religious Education , Religious Education: The official journal of the Religious Education Association, 15:3, 167-172, DOI: [10.1080/0034408200150306](https://doi.org/10.1080/0034408200150306)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0034408200150306>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is

expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
<http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

Policies for College Instruction In Religious Education*

GEORGE A. COE.

Let us suppose that a college that already has a department of education should undertake to extend the scope of its instruction so as to serve the church school as well as the state school; what courses should be given? The question applies, of course, to colleges that have a Protestant outlook, and, being independent, are free to teach and to promote religion. In certain sections of the country, and in at least one of the larger denominations, this is a matter of immediate and vital moment. The plans that are now adopted will establish precedents, so that it is good policy not only to move in the right direction but also to go as far as possible.

A question that is met at the outset is this: Do not the existing courses in educational psychology, history of education, and methodology meet the chief part of the need, so that the addition of the Bible and a little information about the Sunday school will complete all that the college need aspire to? On this point the decisive consideration lies in the question, How far is there identity between the problems that confront a college graduate when he applies for a state teacher's license and those that confront one who would teach the Christian religion in the present schools of the churches? That there are some identities is obvious; that there are great diversities is equally obvious. The temptation of the college will be to underestimate these differences.

One perplexing difference lies on the surface. A collegian who studies education in order to obtain a state certificate is looking forward to a professional, full-time occupation that shall yield him financial support, whereas nearly all our prospective students of religious education expect to be nothing more than amateurs who give only their leisure to the work of teaching.

Other differences grow out of the diverse aims of the state and the church respectively. It is true, splendidly true, that the central aim of public education, good citizenship, implies concern for moral character, so that there is certainly an area in psychology and methodology that the two sorts of teacher should possess in common. It is true, likewise, that teaching religion includes, just as public school teaching does, subject matter that calls for grasp of facts, drill, and organized intelligence. Yet it remains true that by far the major part of the public school teacher's energies must be given to developing in the pupil sorts of skill and sorts of knowledge that lie nearer the periphery than the center of moral issues. The teacher of religion, on the other hand, has as his main field precisely these central issues—these issues conceived, moreover from the exalted standpoint of the highest religious consciousness.

* A statement prepared for The Board of Education of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

The things of the spirit have to be constantly present to the teacher of religion; the spirit of worship must always be within, or at least closely associated with, every process. The resulting contrast between state teaching and church teaching arises not from any general or abstract philosophy of education, but from the necessities of a situation in which so-called general education and religious instruction have to be separated in time and in institutional control.

A further diversity arises from the specific character of our religious aims. We are not to teach religion in general, being content with a merely atmospheric faith, but the Christian religion with its sharp-edged demands upon life. Not only do the aims of this religion outrun those of the state; at vital points the mind of Christ is in conflict with the spirit of the modern state. Moreover, in some respects Protestant aims and Catholic aims are opposed to each other.

These exceedingly important differences between the two sets of school problems cannot but lead to important modifications in the curriculum of such colleges as we have in mind. We will assume—without guaranteeing the truth of the assumption—that these colleges already teach the Bible from the modern point of view, and that they do it as well as they teach any part of history and literature. We will assume, further, that they have a course that makes clear the aims of Christian living, the typical issues and difficulties that it encounters in our time, and the chief methods that it employs for nourishing the life of the individual and for transforming the world into a family of God. These courses should not be classified under the head of religious education, but under religion and literature. They will be required, however, of all candidates for a certificate in religious education, just as English language is requisite for a state teacher's certificate.

We are now ready to state the specific aim of the contemplated instruction in religious education. It is to promote expertness in church schools by supplying them with trained workers and intelligent supporters, and to do this as rapidly and economically as possible. This corresponds in the main with the aim of courses intended to prepare students for the state certificate.

Expertness is to be understood as control of processes by foresight based upon scientific analysis. Instruction in religious education should not consist in handing over to the student ready-made devices and programs, but in informing and training him so that he analyses situations and judges them in the light of known laws, whether of the body, or of the mind, or of social interaction. Granted this conception of expertness, credit might properly be given for observation work, and for practice under supervision.

The material that is to be presented to college students of religious education should be selected by reference to the functions to be performed by these students in church schools, not by reference to an ideal of logical completeness or even of symmetry. Intensive work upon restricted material so as to produce certain attitudes and readi-nesses—

scientifically intelligent ones, of course—is to be preferred to spreading out the student's mind thinly over a whole science or a whole history. The teacher of educational psychology, or of the history of education, or of methodology is bound to feel some difficulty here. He, as a professional specialist, thinks his material in a comprehensive whole, and he is rightly concerned for adequacy of detail and adequacy of evidence at each point. It is natural and desirable, too, that he should yearn for intellectual progeny like himself. But such yearning, properly interpreted, is desire that some of his students should go forward into graduate and professional studies. If the college is able to offer such studies, so much the better. But the main problem of the undergraduate college concerns the ninety-nine students who will not become professional workers in religious education rather than the one who may go forward in this direction. Moreover, educational psychology itself provides ground for expectation that introducing students to a few sharply focalized problems that they feel to be important will be an effective recruiting process for advanced courses. No doubt restriction of field and intensive study within it imply hard work for the professor. He may even feel that he is called upon to sacrifice his subject. Nevertheless, we may question whether anything more is demanded than application within the college classroom of standards and methods that the students are to be taught to use in their own future teaching.

Let us now endeavor to determine the sorts of subject matter toward which these considerations point.

Educational Psychology—Our religion is "a religion of the heart." Its central demand is neither knowledge, nor belief, nor ceremonial performances, but certain attitudes and sensitivenesses that issue in purposes and conduct in the ordinary relations of life. These attitudes, etc., are more specifically described by such terms as love and good will. It is the desire of the Christian that all relations between persons, whether between man and man, or between man and God, should be brought under the control of these motives in all the earth. This involves struggle of impulse against impulse, the achievement of self-conquest and freedom, the idealizing processes called faith and hope, the social integration of men, and the experience of worship. The psychological problems involved in the growth of a child into such a personality are predominantly dynamic and social. Therefore, special attention should be given to these topics:

1. Original nature, particularly native tendencies that underlie social and anti-social attitudes and conduct.
2. Habit formation, with special stress upon the formation and transformation of likes, dislikes, prejudices, admirations, loyalties, and opinions.
3. The nature of thinking, particularly the dynamic phases, as: What makes anything interesting, what starts thought going, how to study, the part that thinking has in attitudes, purposes, and ideals.

4. How a self is formed, and how social attitudes, connections, and groups are formed and modified.

5. So-called "transfer of training". This topic is of extraordinary importance for teachers of religion, not only because of defects in general school tradition, but also because of the ecclesiastical separation of the sacred from the secular, of religious experience from religious conduct, and of religious doctrine from religious experience.

On three conditions these needs can be met by the general course in educational psychology. The first is that the main energy of the students of religious education be devoted to these topics. An opinion may be ventured that candidates for the state certificate will be benefited rather than injured by giving similar emphasis to these dynamic phases of mind. A professor who is convinced that this is so might then provide for both sorts of students by merely varying the assigned reading, observation, and reports. A second condition is that abundant concrete cases used in exposition be drawn from the moral and religious sphere, so that students will form a habit of thinking psychological principles in terms that are near to the teacher's problems. Here again there should be no difficulty in handling the two groups of students together. The third condition is that the course be not too long. It should be made to fit proportionately into a group of courses for which only a limited total amount of time can be had. On this point more will be said in a later paragraph.

Teaching the Christian Religion: Principles and Methods. If there were no limits upon the available time, three separate courses—one on Principles, one on the Religious Life of Children and Youth, and one on Methods—would be desirable, perhaps. Some colleges may be able to give more than one of these courses, but others will have to incorporate something of each in a single course. The result need not be fragmentariness nor scattering. For any vital teaching of method will make constant reference to its basis, on the one hand, in the characteristic moral and religious reactions of the young, and, on the other hand, in the purposes of the Christian religion. These two, together with educational psychology, which we assume that the student has already studied, constitute the chief foundations of method. To a large extent, especially in worship, in coöperation, and in daily conduct, method is, most of all, just the procedure of our religion itself in the terms of a child's problems and a child's solutions of them. The "principles" of Christian education, on the other hand, can all be described in terms of the actual life of the young under appropriate nurture. Therefore, students who already have a background of knowledge of the Christian religion and knowledge of educational psychology may well go directly to the study of methods that have already been successful in our church schools. These methods should be presented as concretely as possible, and the student should be helped to analyze them until he sees clearly why they succeed. Such analysis will cause him to see also, of course, why some methods fail partly or wholly.

The soul of method thus conceived is motivation—the awakening of motives, and the development of sustained, intelligent purposes, initiative, character in whole situations. This is vastly different from the “pedagogy” that conceived its function to be that of laying smooth tracks by which ideas might be transferred from the text-book or the mind of the teacher to the mind of the pupil. For example, a whole situation at the beginning of a lesson period in a church school includes physical surroundings and equipment, the persons present (what they signify, and particularly what attitudes they have toward one another), the mental “set” of this or that pupil, and the experiences that have just preceded (as worship)—all these as well as the “lesson material.” Analysis of what a child of a given age does in such a situation can be at once a study of children, of method, and of theory of Christian education. It must now be obvious that the ordinary courses for teachers in the state schools do not suffice for this purpose. A wholly new course must be introduced.

History of Education. This subject can contribute directly to the teaching of religion by clarifying both purposes and processes, and by giving them social perspective. Our present standpoints, whether they result from long ripening or from fresh experiments, gain sharper definition and fuller meaning when we compare them with their predecessors and competitors. Moreover, religious education, being only a part of education, needs to realize its relations to the other parts. The portion of history that is best adapted for performing this service is the history of education in the United States. It should include the development of the Sunday school and the present reform movement; it should give careful attention to the changing relations between church and state, and a liberal portion of time should be devoted to recent educational movements under the influence of social and economic conditions. The other parts of the history of education may well be available as electives, but not one of them, not even the general history of Christian education, can wisely be substituted for the course just described. Clearly, no separate course in history is necessary for the students here under consideration, but only the inclusion of certain topics (inherently appropriate) within a general course on education in the United States.

The Administration of Christian Education. Here is a distinct field that requires treatment by itself. The problems of building and equipment, support, curriculum, worship, departmental organization, supervision, training of workers, week-day instruction, education in the family, community coöperation, records and reports, and much more, furnish rich subject-matter that needs to be gotten home not only to workers in the church school but also to all laymen—to those who have the children, pay the bills, and bear the burdens of the community. If these topics seem strange in a college, it is only because they are new. In the end they will seem as much in place as the present courses on the administration of state school systems, courses on the United States government, and courses on business administration.

Any student who masters the four courses here described together with the prerequisites already mentioned, may properly receive a teacher's certificate in religious education. By way of parenthesis one may remark that meaty courses like these, if well taught to students who are kept conscious of the objective, will help to redeem college life from the aimlessness, the dawdling, and the lack of intellectual interests of which there is so much complaint. Finally, what proportion of a student's four years of study will be required for these four topics? My own estimate is from one-eighth as a minimum to one-fourth as a maximum. The best policy at present is to plan for the minimum in order to reach the largest possible number of students. Assuming that fifteen hours a week is the standard for students, I judge that really vital courses could be given in each of the four subjects with the following distribution of time: Educational Psychology, three hours a week for a year; Teaching the Christian Religion, two hours a week for a year; History of Education in the United States, three hours a week for a half year; Administration of Christian Education, two hours a week for a half year. The requisite courses in Bible and the Christian Religion may be expected to require a minimum total of ten semester hours.

The Inter-Church Religious Education Survey*

WALTER S. ATHEARN

1. OBJECTIVE OF THE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SURVEY DEPARTMENT.

This department was organized in July 1919. Its objectives, approved by the Survey Group, are as follows:

Facts—Such a body of vital comparable facts as will guide in building national, state, and denominational programs of religious education.

Tools—Such a body of standardized technique—norms, tests, standards—as will provide a new and better method of measuring and directing the processes of religious education.

Methods—Standardized methods for guiding local churches and communities and surveying conditions, building, programs, testing results and determining budgets.

2. PROCESS OF CONDUCTING AN EDUCATIONAL SURVEY.

Before organizing the department the director created a "blue print" which would guide each step in the process of conducting the

*A statement of the activities and achievements of the American Religious Education Survey Department of the Interchurch World Movement of North America for the period beginning July 1, 1919, and ending May 15, 1920. Prepared by Prof. Walter S. Athearn, of Boston University, Director of the American Religious Education Survey Department of the Inter-Church World Movement.