This article was downloaded by: [The University of Manchester Library]

On: 01 December 2014, At: 07:01

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>

METHOD OF SCHOOL AND CHURCH IN MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Clyde Weber Votaw Ph.D.^a

^a Professor , The University of Chicago

Published online: 10 Jul 2006.

To cite this article: Clyde Weber Votaw Ph.D (1909) METHOD OF SCHOOL AND CHURCH IN MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, Religious Education: The official journal of the Religious Education Association, 4:5, 410-417, DOI: [10.1080/0034408090040504](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0034408090040504)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0034408090040504>

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>

METHOD OF SCHOOL AND CHURCH IN MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

CLYDE WEBER VOTAW, PH.D.
Professor, The University of Chicago.

The function of the school and the function of the church are often conceived in such a way that the two institutions are regarded as having different aims which do not overlap, thus: The function of the school is to furnish knowledge and intellectual training—to teach reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, geography, history, literature, and the sciences. The function of the church is to teach religious doctrine, faith and worship, the history and features of ecclesiastical organization, and ethical ideals and principles, with their application to individual and social conduct. The school, then, aims to make men intelligent and skillful, the church aims to make men wise and good. The school trains the head, the church trains the heart. This appears to be the current received view of school and church. If then we answer our question from this point of view we will say: The school does not have it as its aim to effect the moral and religious element in education—what it may accomplish morally is only by-product; therefore it does not have occasion to consider method in this direction.

We have, however, an essentially different view of the function of the school that is becoming clearly recognized by many educators and is on the way to establishment as the only correct conception of the function of the school, namely: The business of the school is to make boys and girls into men and women—into strong, good, useful and happy brethren and citizens. The material and method of all the school instruction and training are to be determined by this aim. Character and efficiency are the supreme things to be developed. Intellectual equipment and discipline are essential to character and efficiency, so that the school will not give less attention to these; but the intellectual work of the school will be placed and kept distinctly auxiliary to the higher moral objective of the school. The children will be taught how to read, write, spell and cipher, not only to make them able, keen and successful commercially, but also and supremely to make them wise, right, just, loving, noble and helpful

in their relations with one another. What ability they acquire for bread-winning is to be consecrated toward a higher goal. The bread-winning is to be made subordinate to the achievement of moral character and social efficiency. We should work for food, clothing and shelter not as the end of our striving, but as the preliminary conditions or basis of our moral and spiritual attainment.

If this conception of the school's task is the better one, and the National Education Association in 1905 affirmed that it is so,* the public schools are assuming a moral function. Not only are the schools to assist in the moral instruction and training of the young; still more, *they are to make the moral aspect of education dominant in their whole process.* This will undoubtedly require great changes in the schools. But these changes are likely to come with rapidity. The educational leaders will be able to work out the new function of the school, now that they have grasped it and set themselves to its realization.

We recognize also that there is arising a somewhat different idea of the function of the church, namely, that it is an educational institution. We are now classifying the church with the other institutions and agencies of education. We are rating it according to what it is accomplishing for moral and social progress. We are requiring that the church also shall first of all make men and women. As this primary function of the church becomes established, the self-propagating purpose and activity of the church recede into the background, because an institution that is useful is in no danger of extinction; the sectarian ideas, enthusiasms and strivings fade out, because the welfare of humanity as a whole absorbs the attention and verifies the effort; the inculcation of theological doctrines diminishes as the old philosophies give place to new, and the practical problems of life—moral and social—become the vital ones; the religion of the ancient book yields to the religion of present-day experience, as the modern world works out its own ideas and methods of salvation; the contemplative, individualistic, and supernaturalistic

* The official declaration reads: "The ultimate object of popular education is to teach the children how to live righteously, healthily, and happily; to accomplish this object it is essential that every school inculcate the love of truth, justice, purity, and beauty through the study of biography, history, ethics, natural history, music, drawing, and manual arts. * * * The building of character is the real aim of the schools, and the ultimate reason for the expenditure of millions for their maintenance."

type of religious thought and life is being superseded by the active, social and scientific way of considering and accomplishing things.

The conclusion then is, that the school and the church are both aiming in quite a new way to effect the moral and religious element in education; and that a new method must also be found for bringing to realization the new aim. Will this new method be identical for both institutions?

Of course not—at least not for a long time yet. Even if an identity of method were desirable (and not many would so hold), the history, status and consciousness of each institution would lead it to a somewhat different way of doing its part in moral and social education.

In some respects the school has the advantage. It reaches the children five days in the week and five hours in the day, twelve times or perhaps twenty-five times as much as the church reaches the children. Also, the school is supported by the regular taxes of the community, so that its resources are extensive and guaranteed. Also, the school represents the whole community instead of limited groups with special ideas and ways. Also, the entire working force of the school is professionally trained for educating the children and a standard of efficiency is enforced, while the church workers are mainly amateur. Also, the school employs and is controlled by the modern scientific knowledge and method, while the church in general clings to the traditional ideas and ways of doing things.

The church, on the other hand, has the advantage of precedence in the field and of prestige in moral and religious education. Through the centuries the church has been the chief guardian and teacher of morality; men look to the church to define moral obligations, and to inspire them to moral living. The minister is looked up to as the one who should in his own living supremely exemplify the moral ideal, and by his advice and assistance help others to be good and do good. The church building has the respect and affection of the community beyond that bestowed upon any other building, even the school house. The church equipment, resources and workers are valuable and efficient. It would be a great waste not to use, and to use as effectively as possible, all the machinery, energy, wisdom and

spirit of the church for moral and social progress, and to develop this great agency for the education of the young.

Recognizing, then, that the primary aim of both school and church is to effect the moral and religious element in education, what shall be the method of each in doing its part? * Space permits only some general observations.

I. THE METHOD OF THE CHURCH.

1. The church will wish to adopt the scientific basis of education, taking a biological view of the child. This means that growth and nurture will be understood; that the child will never be treated as an adult, or humiliated by reason of his childhood; that his life will be recognized as a real and worthwhile life throughout his childhood years; that he will be accorded his own way of thinking things and doing things; that his rights will be respected, and his personality esteemed.

2. The church, therefore, will neither neglect the child, nor coddle him, nor patronize him, but just treat him like one of the family—as in truth he is. The denominational churches, which at present have only adopted children, will somehow come around to the position that the children of Christian parents are born into this church family and belong to it all the way up. The institution will cease to be for adults only, with a juvenile probationary department out of which the children may in time graduate into the church.

3. The church will not seek to indoctrinate the children with the massive theology that has accumulated through the centuries. The children cannot use much of this adult theology—they can neither understand, nor criticize it. They need some concrete religious ideas that will help them to get along practically during their adolescent years, but not the doctrinal elements of the catechism nor the catechetical method of instruction. Such doctrinal ideas as they are given will be presented to them more as a working hypothesis of the universe than as a final metaphysics or an absolute revelation. In order that when they reach mature years they may without confusion and distress of mind make such reconstruction of their theological conceptions as modern scientific thought is apparently conducting us to.

* This task is really a triangular one, for the home is a third agency of like importance and aim with school and church; but the present theme is limited to the last two.

4. The church will continue to use ritual and liturgy, and for the children not less than for the adults. But it will find a way of keeping religion as a life more prominent and essential than religion as a set of liturgical performances. It will succeed in showing the symbolic nature of the rites in such a manner as to prevent the traditional mystical conceptions of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

5. It will interpret the doctrines and rites of the church in such a way as shall accord with our best historical-ethical ideas of love, forgiveness, justice, the administration of the universe, and the life and work of Jesus.

6. The church will make religion appear to be primarily a right attitude toward and a right kind of life. Religion is always to be interpreted essentially in terms of life, and to the child more exclusively so than to the adult. There are two aspects of religion, both of which the church will wish the child to acquire and to develop in: (1) The attitude toward life, the universe, God, which we call faith, reverence, worship, trust, devotion, prayer, self-committal, the realizing of the unseen, a sense of relation and wholeness to God and his universe, a sense of calm and peace, and assurance for ultimate salvation. (2) Aspirations for the ideal, the sense of obligation to be and to do the right, the principles of individual and social righteousness, right feelings, impulses, motives, purposes, habits and acts.

7. The church will so shape and conduct its organizations for the instruction and training of the young—its Sunday school and its Young People's Society, which should be co-ordinated—that full justice will be done to the fundamental pedagogical principles, "Learn to live by living," "Learn to do by doing." This means a limited amount of formal instruction in morals and religion; a large amount of personal contact and interchange between the pupils themselves and with their teachers; much genuine and helpful activity; more acquaintance with life as it is, for the purpose of acquiring useful knowledge, moral standards and impulses, and sound moral judgment; therefore the planning and conducting of topical courses of study for the young people based upon modern conditions, problems, needs and opportunities, which will put them into immediate relation with the thoughts, feelings, toils and struggles of the people

about them, show them where and how to take up their portion of the world's work, awaken in them the moral, spiritual and social impulses and set their choices and will to do a man's—a woman's—part.

II. THE METHOD OF THE SCHOOL.

1. The school, without diminishing its effort to equip and train the intellect, will aim above all to develop the moral nature of the child, to train his moral judgment and his will, to promote in him character and social efficiency. In the very process of teaching him reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic, the school will cultivate in the boy and the girl right habits, right attitudes of mind, right motives in work, right uses to which these arts of civilization can be put. The idea will be established that one's gifts and abilities are not given him for selfish purposes, but in order that he may become a good, happy, useful member of the great human family.

2. The school will teach the child and youth self-respect and respect for others. Respect for self, in order that he may refrain from all that injures him or dishonors him as a man, and may hold himself steadily to the achievement of those traits, qualities, deeds and services which make up manhood. Respect for others, in order that he may regard and treat all persons with the high regard, consideration and brotherliness which belong to one's fellowmen. In this way can be secured a common recognition and observance of what is right for each and for all, so that no one shall interfere with the rights of others or himself find his own rights impaired.

3. The school will seek to develop in the child the sense of responsibility. It will find the way to cultivate in him a regard for his moral, social, civic obligations. He will come to see, as he advances through the years of study and training, that men are not free to do as they please unless they please to do right; that there is a human ideal that society holds before him and requires him to follow; that there is character to be achieved and useful work to be done. No man lives to himself alone, but to his fellowmen, for the attainment of a perfected humanity; and he only can truly succeed who makes the common good his aim, who is responsive from within to the laws of the uni-

verse and to the promptings of a strong, well-trained, controlling conscience.

4. It is not to be expected that the public school will (at least in the near future) attempt formal religious instruction in the sense of inculcating specific theological or ecclesiastical doctrines. But religion in the sense of moral ideals and obligations, social aims and duties, civic righteousness and human progress—this will be the primary object and effort of the school. There may be found a way to use the Bible for instruction and training along these fundamental lines of manhood; the Bible furnishes much material that the school might well turn to account for the development of character and service, without any sectarianism, mysticism, or speculative doctrine. It would be necessary to select biblical material that would be suitable for childhood and youth, and to use it in accordance with pedagogical principles.

5. The textbook method of education has been too exclusively employed in the schools; "book-learning" is in disrepute; knowledge is not the proper aim of grammar school, high school or college; life is the aim—life of high quality and efficiency. Knowledge is not to be neglected, but it is a means to an end; and it is only one of several means for developing manhood and womanhood. The public school is finding the way to use the additional essential means of education—the industrial and domestic arts, the gymnasium and playground, the collective activities and relationship of social groups, forming acquaintance with our social institutions by visiting them and seeing them work, discovering the civic benefits and duties by studying municipal organizations, getting at the meaning of life by actual contact with those who are living for the best things and in the best way.

6. Less formal instruction and more actual living is desirable. Sitting at desks five hours a day is an abnormal method of educating children—it is physically injurious, and it fails to develop properly their moral qualities. It forces comparative inaction in the years when action is abundantly needed. Energy, spontaneity, impulse, initiative, experiment, impulse and ambition are all suppressed or preverted by this method. The natural development of the child's character and efficiency is hindered. It is not the restless, inattentive, talkative boy that is wrong, but

the rigid school system. Probably every subject that is taught children by a formal, textbook-desk method could be taught more quickly, pleasantly and efficiently by the laboratory method, in which the usefulness of the thing learned could be seen and practice with it could be immediately acquired. The school life should be real life; the children should have real things to do; there should be social organizations, social interchange, social co-operation.

7. Only in this way can the moral problems of life be met concretely and dealt with practically. Moral training lends itself least to the formal textbook method. Books are to be used in moral training, but "so many pages a day" of cramming and recitation will not accomplish the desired results. The committing to memory of moral precepts, the theoretical inculcation of duties and virtues, will not, sufficiently, take hold of the elemental forces that determine thought, feeling, choice and action. Morality taught in that way seems abstract, and remains much apart from actual life; it assumes a place in a "field of apperception" that is eclipsed when a concrete emotion, impulse, desire or ambition dominates the consciousness. Moral training must be fitted on to real living. The school should provide such a varied set of occupations, situations, activities and relationships as shall give rise to a host of immediate, concrete and useful ethical problems, individual and social. In grappling with and solving these real problems, that arise naturally in the day's work at school, the boys and girls will develop character and efficiency. As they acquire knowledge and skill they will also acquire the moral and social sense, judgment, impulse and purpose.

8. Practically considered, with reference to education, morality is religion, and religion is morality. Religion has also a theological aspect—the consciousness, worship and service of God. Though the public schools do not now teach this aspect of religion, they at least do not oppose it. Meanwhile they are setting themselves to teach the other half of religion—the moral half. And it now devolves upon them to give the children a full moral education.