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### The City System of Week-Day Schools

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to develop. Many strong local leaders have been developed who are assets to the community as well as to their local churches. Every coöperating church, and that includes them all, is stronger because of the presence of the Malden Plan.

The annual budget has grown from \$250 the first year to \$13,000 for the current year. The first five years were used to create an organization and a setting in which to place the last unit in the system—week-day religious schools. During the current year these schools have been inaugurated. There is now in successful operation one grade school and two junior high schools. All teachers are college graduates who have majored in religious education. There is daily supervision of class-room work and all lesson outlines must be approved before the lessons are taught. There is a supervisor of music and worship. Every child in the system has been given an intelligence test. A system of records and reports is being developed. The educational directors have been planning the curricula for several years and all lesson material is being carefully developed. It is confidently expected that week-day religious schools will become an integral part of the educational program of Malden just as rapidly as resources and trained leadership can be developed. The united coöperation of all the churches of the city which has made possible the phenomenal achievement of the past six years may be counted upon to insure the continued success of the movement.

## The City System of Week-Day Schools

WILLIAM G. SEAMAN\*

We are all agreed that all the types of organization for week-day schools have their place and, among them, certainly is the one I am to discuss. I should like the privilege of changing the title somewhat, for I wish to speak not of the city alone. The present title might leave a wrong impression, namely, that this type is applicable only to the city. May I, therefore, call it the "Community System"? For I think it is applicable to a rural region as well as to a city.

The two types: the school of the individual congregation and the community type, are not necessarily exclusive. For instance, it is now possible to provide, in some places, for two hours a week of week-day religious instruction, but there are more hours we could have if we had the resources to train the children, and I am wondering if, along with the community effort, there is not a place for an effort by the individual church. It depends somewhat upon our emphasis which we will put first. If we feel: Here is the child, and every child has the need for religion, and has the right that religion should be brought to bear upon his life; if we feel that, the great passion in our lives, we shall then, perhaps, work from the community point of view. If on the other hand, we, feel, here are the children of our own church and we wish to make them efficient members of an organization that shall bring the kingdom of God on earth,—if that is our aim, we shall feel the need for the individual church school. Ought we not to have both? I can assure you, nothing but lack of resources has kept my own congregation from having a school of its own during the week for taking our own chil-

\*The Rev. William G. Seaman, Chairman of the Board of Religious Education, Gary, Indiana; a stenographic report of his address at the Conference.

dren and striving to make them just what the training camps tried to make the soldiers. They were American citizens before, but they tried to make them efficient parts of a great organization to drive back the forces of evil. In like manner every congregation should train its children for a war of conquest to take the whole of society for Christ.

Now as to advantages in the community system: First, there is the financial advantage. There is no wasting of funds in overlapping; and, then, you may command larger resources. You may make an appeal to some people you could not appeal to otherwise.

Second, there is a geographical advantage in a community of any size because, quite likely, the churches are, as they are with us, centered at certain places, and there are public schools not easy to reach from any church. A very distinct advantage in the community type lies in the fact that it can locate its school rooms near every public school.

Third, there is a numerical advantage. If we could have the schools of individual churches along-side public schools and run them on a broad gauge, they could secure the attendance of most of the children, but, after all, there are some people a little hostile to denominationalism about that, and the public-school authorities cannot lend themselves to advocating a school that is denominational. I think you will feel the force of that. So far as my experience goes the public-school men are quite as interested as we are, and the public school men can lend themselves whole-heartedly to a school of a community-system type,—one that is not at all denominational. This helps to secure the attendance of children who could not be reached otherwise. We tried in one school to see how large a percent of the children we could secure, and we reached just one hundred percent. Practically all of the children can be reached therefore, where there is no denominationalism in the school.

Fourth, there is a very decided advantage by way of educational standards in the community effort. You can command full-time teachers. There are not many communities in America where the individual church could get the children at such times as to make the employment of a full-time teacher practical. And the salaried, thoroughly trained, full-time teacher is the key to educational standards. On no other basis can our teaching of religion and morals be put in as high a basis as is the teaching of secular subjects in our public schools.

After all, the great advantage of the community type of school lies in the spiritual results. If I understand Prof. Shaver in his Survey, he says the teaching in the community school is somewhat thin. I should like to differ and say I think exactly the opposite is true. The things that separate us are the things that are decidedly thin. The things in which we are united are the things which are fundamental. There is absolutely no necessity, from the experiences I have had, of having anything thin in the teaching at all. I heard a great Russian speaking about his people some years ago who asked, "What can you expect of a people to whom the great question is whether the cross shall be made with three fingers or two?" We may ask with equal force, "What can you expect when we are emphasizing certain small things that separate us?" Jesus spoke of a distinctive value in unity. He prayed that we might be one that "they might believe." Unity in religion has great apologetic value. That is one of the biggest things in the community type of school for religious training.